

***Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment***

***2020 Report***

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Purpose of the Needs Assessment

According to section 101(a)(15) of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended* by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) a comprehensive assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in the state is to be conducted jointly every three years by each state’s vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency and SRC (ICBVI Board) in order to inform the State Plan for vocational rehabilitation services.

In response to this mandate and to ensure that adequate efforts are made to serve the diverse needs of people with disabilities in Idaho, The Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI) entered into a contract with the Center for Continuing Education and Rehabilitation (CCER) at the University of Washington for the purpose of jointly developing and conducting an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals who are blind or who are low vision in Idaho.

The Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI) assists blind and visually impaired persons to achieve independence by providing education, developing work skills, increasing self-confidence and helping them remain employed or prepare for employment. This comprehensive needs assessment focuses on the Vocational Rehabilitation program and on the needs of individuals eligible for those services.

The assessment was designed to be responsive to federal regulations and answer important questions about the population eligible for ICBVI services and their vocational rehabilitation needs. Information gathered for the assessment will guide ICBVI in its strategic plan and goal development for the next three fiscal years, 2020-2023. In particular, the assessment and report are required to address the needs of (1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities; (2) Individuals with disabilities who are minorities; (3) Individuals who have been unserved or underserved; and (4) Students and youth with disabilities. In addition, the assessment and report address the vocational rehabilitation service needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system as identified by those individuals and personnel assisting those individuals through the components of the system. Finally, the assessment and report address the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State of Idaho.

Description of Needs Assessment Process

The ICBVI needs assessment was designed in accordance with the VR Needs Assessment Guide (2009) published by the Rehabilitation Services Administration and involved sequential phases of data collection and analysis as follows:

* analysis of a variety of existing demographic and case service data relevant to individuals who are blind or low vision,
* electronic surveys and telephone interviews conducted with current and former ICBVI customers and ICBVI staff), and
* Key informant interviews with individuals identified as knowledgeable about the needs of individuals with disabilities in the State including representatives of organizations that provide services to potential or current clients of ICBVI.

This phased approach was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data to describe in breadth and depth the vocational rehabilitation needs of people with who are blind or low vision in the State. The use of multiple data collection methods strengthens the validity of the needs assessment findings. Thus, the particular strengths of the methodology used in the Idaho ICBVI needs assessment are 1) the triangulation of data from different sources, 2) the utilization of multiple methods of data collection, and 3) the integration of quantitative and qualitative data throughout the needs assessment process.

ICBVI conducted the needs assessment to identify the current and changing vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals who are blind or who are low vision in the State of Idaho. Input was solicited from a broad spectrum of stakeholders including current and former ICBVI customers, Key Informants, and ICBVI staff. The data that appear in this report are relevant to the following activities:

* projecting needed services and redeployment of services,
* identifying common and unique needs of specific sub-populations,
* identifying perceived gaps in vocational rehabilitation services, and
* providing data and a rationale for the development of the State Plan and amendments to the Plan.

Limitations

All research methods are subject to limitations; therefore, it is important to highlight some of the methodological issues that may limit the ability to generalize these needs assessment findings to the population of people who are blind or who are low vision in Idaho.

First, the existing data utilized in this report were not originally collected to identify the rehabilitation needs of people who are blind or low vision in Idaho; as such, the analysis based upon secondary data is speculative and the conclusions drawn are tentative. The data from these sources are often presented as estimates. Many of these estimates have been drawn from small sample sizes and may have substantial margins of error. In addition, the definitions of disability vary across data sources. Some of the approaches used to define disability by these data sources included diagnosis based, function based, and service based. Readers are encouraged to consider their knowledge of state and systematic factors impacting the vocational rehabilitation of people with disabilities in Idaho when interpreting the findings presented in this report. The reviews of existing data should also be viewed within the context of the additional activities (surveys and key informant interviews) that comprised the needs assessment.

Second, for both survey and interview methods, there is the potential for bias in the selection of participants. The findings that are reported reflect only the responses of individuals who could be reached and were willing to participate. Additionally, the information gathered from participants may not represent the broader perspectives of all current and potential stakeholders in ICBVIs’ program. Data gathered from Key Informants, for example, may reflect only the needs of individuals who are already recipients of services to the exclusion of those who are not presently served. Therefore, although efforts were made to gather information from a variety of stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process, it would be presumptuous to conclude with certainty that those who contributed to the surveys and key informant interviews constituted a fully representative sample of all of the potential stakeholders in the ICBVI vocational rehabilitation process in the State.

The Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation at the University of Washington conducted a comprehensive assessment of the rehabilitation needs of persons with blindness and vision impairments in Idaho at the request of the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI). The purpose of the assessment was to provide information on met and unmet needs to incorporate into ICBVI’s state plan as well as in the planning and quality assurance activities of the agency. This report describes the methods used and results of this research.

The research questions that guided the needs assessment activities and analysis are as follows:

* What does the ICBVI target population look like?
  + What is the prevalence and regional distribution of prospective ICBVI clients including students transitioning from high school and individuals who are blind or low vision from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. ?
  + What is the regional distribution of ICBVI staff and branch offices, and does the distribution reflect the overall client population estimates?
  + What is the regional distribution of contracted job development providers, and does the overall distribution reflect the overall client target estimates?
* What are the primary barriers to employment and service needs of ICBVI clients?
  + What are the primary barriers to employment for ICBVI clients?
  + What services do ICBVI clients need to support achievement of employment goals?
  + Do the barriers and service needs of individuals who are underserved or unserved by ICBVI vary?
* How can ICBVI services best support client efforts to achieve positive employment outcomes?
  + What are the strengths of ICBVI services?
  + What limits the accessibility and availability for prospective and/or current clients?
  + Are services adequately available to ICBVI clients through vendors?
  + What kinds of staff support are most important for providing high-quality services?
* How do ICBVI partnerships with outside stakeholders or organizations support high-quality services?
  + What strategic changes to ICBVI service provision, if any, are likely to improve employment outcomes for clients?
  + Are individuals who are blind or low vision served through the other components of the statewide workforce system?
  + How are pre-employment or other transition services provided to students, and how are these services coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA for youth and students with disabilities?

The four major activities of this assessment included:

* A review of existing data sources for the purpose of identifying and describing ICBVI’s target population and sub-populations statewide.
* Electronic Surveys or individual interviews with ICBVI clients served within the time frame October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019.
* Electronic Surveys of ICBVI staff.
* Key informant interviews with individuals identified as knowledgeable about the needs of individuals who are blind or low vision in Idaho.
* Employer interviews.

A comparison of the common themes that emerged from the various data sources (key informant interviews, client surveys, staff and employer surveys) was conducted to validate the information gathered. The results of the surveys and interviews with clients, staff, employers and key informants was organized into seven categories:

* Barriers to Employment for individuals who are blind or who are low vision.
* Services and Service provision in addressing the needs of individuals who are blind or who are low vision living in Idaho.
* Service provision to individuals who are blind or who low vision from racial or ethnic groups, and/or geographic areas.
* Transition services from school to work for youth who are blind or who have low vision.
* Partnerships with community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), and other agencies/organizations that serve individuals who are blind or who have low vision.
* Provision of services through the American Job Center Network to individuals who are blind or who are low vision.
* Employer services specific to individuals who are blind or who have low vision in Idaho.

Table 1.1 provides a summary of the number of respondents by method and group.

Table 1.1: Summary of Results by Method and Group

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Group and Count | | | | |
|  | **Clients** | **Key Informant** | **Staff** | **Employer** | **Total** |
| Individual Interview | 9 | 11 |  | 9 | 29 |
| Electronic Surveys | 99 |  | 25 |  | 124 |
| Totals | 108 | 11 | 25 | 9 | 153 |

Summary

**Barriers to Employment for individuals who are blind or who are low vision.** The lack of transportation in both rural and urban areas of the State was a barrier mentioned by clients, staff, and key informants. Societal and employer attitudes toward individuals who are blind or low vision was another emerging theme. Personal barriers including self-efficacy and self-perception posed barriers to employment. Lack of access to assistive technology and training was mentioned as a barrier by all respondents.

**Services and Service provision in addressing the needs of individuals who are blind or who are low vision living in Idaho.** Several individuals indicated the need for additional staff across the state. Many mentioned the need for additional funding for ICBVI to reach their goals in the provision of services to individuals who are blind or who are low vision. Several respondents indicated the need for more job exploration and job placement services.

Increased visibility of ICBVI, especially in rural areas of the state was a theme mentioned by respondents. Most respondents seem to understand that ICBVI has limited resources; however, in partnership with other agencies the agency might be able to increase its reach and visibility across the state. Societal attitudes, family attitudes, and employer attitudes regarding individuals who are Blind or low vision continues to be a major barrier in Idaho.

Training for college personnel and providers in working with clients who are blind or who have low vision was another theme that emerged.

The lack of transportation both in rural and urban areas seems to influence the delivery of services as well as impeding clients in the pursuit of their employment goals.

Overall most respondents indicated that ICBVI is an organization with dedicated staff who do a very good job of serving individuals who are blind or who are low vision in Idaho with the current available resources. Again, the need for increased funding to support the expansion of services was mentioned.

**Services to individuals who are blind or who have low vision from racial or ethnic groups, and/or geographic areas.** Blind or low vision Individuals who are Hispanic or American Indian may be underserved by ICBVI. The existing data indicated a low percent of American Indians served by ICBVI. American Indians who are blind or who have low vision may be served through tribal vocational rehabilitation programs across the State.

Almost all respondents commented on the rural nature of Idaho and the difficulty in providing services with limited financial and staff resources. Along this theme the lack of information in rural areas about ICBVI was also noted.

**Transition Services to youth who are blind or who have low vision.** Most respondents indicated although there areas needing improvement, ICBVI has made significant strides in improving services to transition aged youth. Other common themes that emerged in this area included the need for more exposure to work by transition-age youth prior to exiting the school system. Work readiness and work experience were identified as major service needs to transition aged youth.

A common theme that emerged was the use of CRPs in working with transition aged youth as a way of serving all schools across the state. The most common themes that emerged in this area were:

**Partnerships with community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), and other agencies/organizations that serve individuals who are blind or who have low vision.**

Increasing the training to CRP staff about blindness and related issues was mentioned as a theme by many respondents. Several key stakeholders recommended expansion of the use of CRPs across the state.

**Provision of services to individuals who are blind or who have low vision through the American Job Center Network.** The most common themes that emerged in this area indicated that the American Job Center Network is trying to improve services to individuals who have a visual impairment. However, the front line staff do not always have the knowledge or expertise. Continued collaboration and cross training between the two organizations was recommended by most respondents.

**Employer services specific to individuals who are blind or who have low vision in Idaho.** Most respondents indicated employer attitudes was a major barrier in the employment of individuals who are blind or who have low vision. Increased outreach to employers is needed to address their concerns in hiring as well as the provision of assistive technology.

**Business services specific to individuals who are blind or low vision in Idaho.** The majority of the respondents recommended increased employer engagement across the state. Another emerging theme along these lines is increasing partnerships with organizations and people who are already working in the area of business engagement such as IDVR, the American Job Center Network, and CRPs.

**Intended Outcome of the CSNA**

It is anticipated that ICBVI and the ICBVI Board will use this information in a strategic manner that results in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services designed to address the current needs of individuals who are blind or who have low vision who seek employment. This information may also assist ICBVI in communicating and collaborating with organizations that play a role in serving individuals who are blind or who have low vision throughout the State.

Analysis of Existing Data

**Description of Data Sources**

A variety of existing data sources were reviewed for the purpose of identifying and describing ICBVI’s target population and sub-populations statewide. These sources include the following:

* United States Census Bureau 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) which is sent each year to a random sample of over 3.5 million households.
* United States Social Security Administration (SSA) data for 2017-2018
* Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind 2019-2020
* ICBVI case service data for FFY 2018.

Data from the ACS was used to describe the prevalence of disability in Idaho and the U.S. by various demographic factors. The ACS is a continuous data collection effort conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau used to produce annual estimates at the national, state and local level on the characteristics of the United States population. It replaced the decennial Census long form and collects information on an annual basis from approximately 3 million addresses in the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) data was used to describe the number of recipients of SSI and SSDI with visual disabilities in Idaho.

Additionally, data from the Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind (IESDB) was used to estimate the number of transition-age youth with disabilities in the State. The State of Idaho Vocational Rehabilitation Programs use the age of 15 as the introductory age for the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services. The IESDB has been serving the State of Idaho since 1906, and is established under Section 33-3401 of Idaho Code with the purpose of providing supplemental educational services, early invention/education, consultation, and transition support to families and local school districts throughout the state of Idaho.

Finally, FFY 2018 ICBVI case service data was used in making comparisons with the available estimates of disability. The ICBVI data used in this section was for all cases closed between 10/1/2018 and 9/30/2019.

With the exception of the data received from IESDB and ICBVI, the statistics are estimated, which means that the numbers found in a sample are extrapolated to the entire population. The ACS data uses sophisticated statistical techniques that lead to the estimates with great accuracy.

**Prevalence of Blindness and Visual Impairment in Idaho and the U.S.**

This section examines the population estimates and the demographic characteristics for individuals who are blind or who have low vision in Idaho and provides a comparison with national data. In identifying individuals with a visual disability, the ACS asks the question of all ages, “Is this person blind or does he/she have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?”

According to 2017 ACS estimates, 2.9% of the population reported a visual disability in Idaho, which is a higher than the percentage reported in the U.S (2.3%). It should be noted that the population reporting a visual disability in Idaho increased from 2.3% in 2015 to 2.9% in 2017. As indicated in Table 2.1 the percentage of Idahoans with a visual disability who are male (50.1%) is higher than the corresponding national percentage (48.8%) while the percentage of Idahoans with a visual disability who are female (49.9) is lower than the corresponding national percentage (51.2%).

Table 2.1: Prevalence of visual disability by gender among non-institutionalized people for Idaho and the US in 2017

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | Number in US Population w/visual disability | Percent in US Population w/visual disability | Number in Idaho  population w/visual disability | Percent in ID Population w/visual disability |
| Male | 154,419,680 | 48.8% | 20,373 | 50.1% |
| Female | 161,607,961 | 51.2% | 19,691 | 49.9% |
| Total | 316,027,641 | 100.0% | 40,064 | 100.0% |

*\*Note: Based on data from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS).*

Table 2.2 compares the prevalence of visual disability for Idaho and the U.S. by age. The prevalence of visual disability by age in Idaho was slightly lower than the percentages in the US in all age ranges with the exception of two age ranges. The percentage of individuals living in Idaho with a visual disability ages 18-34 (1.31%) is slightly higher than the US population (1.13%); and in the age rage 75+ the percentage of individuals living in Idaho with a visual disability (11.32%) is also slightly higher than the US population (9.72%).

Table 2.2: Prevalence of visual disability by age among non-institutionalized

people for Idaho and the US in 2017

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age | US Percent Population w/visual disability | Total | Idaho Percent Population w/visual disability | Total |
| Ages 5 and under | 0.34% | 88,590 | 0.25% | 287 |
| Ages 5-17 | 0.87% | 463,850 | 0.83% | 2,616 |
| Ages 18-34 | 1.13% | 828,194 | 1.31% | 4,731 |
| Ages 35-64 | 2.43% | 2,970,172 | 2.2% | 7,164 |
| Ages 65-74 | 4.30% | 1,170,246 | 3.82% | 5,270 |
| Ages 75+ | 9.72% | 1,869,146 | 11.32% | 10,330 |
| Total | 2.4% | 7,301,608 | 2.9% | 40,064 |

*\*Note: Based on data from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS).*

**Prevalence of Blindness and Visual Disability by Race in Idaho and the U.S.**

The demographic data for visual disability by race or ethnicity is lacking in some of the available data sets. For example, the data for Black/African Americans and American Indian and Alaska Natives with a vision loss are not available for Idaho as the sample sizes are so small the data is not statistically significant.

Table 2.3 illustrates the prevalence by race/ethnicity and vision disability in Idaho and the U.S. based on 2017 ACS estimates. The prevalence of vision disability for Idahoans is higher than the U.S. in two categories, white and other. The prevalence of vision disability for White Idahoans (2.9%) is higher than in the U.S. (2.4%). The prevalence of vision disability for Idahoans who identify as Other (4.0%) is higher than in the U.S (1.5%). The percentage of Idahoans who identify as Hispanics with vision disability is the same (2.1%) than the percentage of Hispanics with a vision disability in the US.

Table 2.3: Prevalence of Disability by Race or Ethnicity and Vision Disability for Idaho and the U.S. in 2017

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Idaho | | U.S. | |
|  | Percent of population  w/vision disability | Number | Percent of population  w/ vision disability | Number |
| White/Non-Hispanic | 2.9% | 40,064 | 2.4% | 4,584,672 |
| Black/African American | N/A | N/A | 3.0% | 1,175,538 |
| Native Am. or Alaskan Native | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Asian | 1.0% | 224 | 1.4% | 246,013 |
| Other | 4.0% | 2,455 | 1.5% | 284,155 |
| Hispanic/Latino Origin | 2.1% | 4,471 | 2.1% | 1,246,313 |

*\*Note: Adapted from Lauer, E. A. & Houtenville, A. J. 2019. Annual Disability Statistics Supplement: 2018. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability.*

**Employment Rates**

Table 2.4 compares the employment rates for individuals ages 21-64 years of age who report a visual disability in Idaho. The employment rates for people with visual disabilities is higher than those with any disability in Idaho. However, the employment rate for Idahoans with a visual disability is lower than those without a disability. According to the 2017 ACS estimates, the employment rate for Idahoans with a visual disability is 55.7% while the employment rate for Idahoans without a disability is 78.7%. The gap between the employment rates of working-age Idahoans with and without disabilities is 35.2%.

In 2017 the percentage of Idahoans with visual disabilities who were not working but actively looking for work was 6.3 percent, compared to those individuals with any disability (12.2%) and those without a disability (6.6%). [A person is defined as not working but actively looking for work if he or she reports not being employed, but has been looking for work during the last four weeks].

In 2017 the percentage of Idahoans with visual disabilities who were employed full-time, full-year was 40.8%, compared to those individuals with any disability (26%) and those without a disability (57.3%).

Table 2.4: Employment rates for individuals with vision loss 21-64 in Idaho Working, Not Working but Actively Look for Work, and Full-time Employment in 2017

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Employed | | Not Working but Actively Looking for Work | | Full-Time/Full Year Employment | |
| Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number |
| With a vision disability | 55.7% | 14,100 | 6.3% | 700 | 40.8% | 10,300 |
| With a disability | 43.5.% | 52,400 | 6.6% | 4500 | 26.5% | 31,900 |
| Without a disability | 79.7% | 635,300 | 12.2% | 21,000 | 57.3% | 462,400 |

*\*Note: Adapted from Erickson, W., Lee, C., von Schrader, S. (2017). Disability Statistics from the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Yang Tan Institute on Employment and Disability.*

**Estimating Unmet Needs: Comparison of Data to ICBVI Service Provision**

This section examines the demographic characteristics of ICBVI case service data for FFY 2018 and compares it to population estimates and demographic characteristics of individuals who are blind or who are low vision in Idaho. The ICBVI data used in this section included cases closed between 10/1/2018 and 9/30/2019 where eligibility for services had been determined. As indicated previously it is important to keep in mind some individuals with visual disabilities may not wish to utilize the services of ICBVI, may have disabilities that are not sufficiently severe to warrant ICBVI services, or may voluntarily be out of the work force. Furthermore, significant differences between the characteristics of the ICBVI population of clients and the characteristics of the population of people with disabilities in the State indicate that information beyond that which is presented in this report is needed in order to determine the reason for these differences.

According to the US Census estimates in 2017 for individuals age 18-64 who are blind or who are low vision, 20,953 individuals in the state reported a vision disability (see Table 3.1). In FFY year 2018 (10/1/18-9/30/19) ICBVI served 412 individuals. This constitutes 2.4% of the population of people ages 18-64 who have a vision disability in Idaho. Data from Table 3.1 also indicates that the percent of men with vision disabilities ages 18-64 is higher than the percent of women with vision disabilities in the state (50.1% and 49.9%). The FFY 2018 ICBVI client data indicates more men with vision disabilities ages 18-64 received services (50%).

Table 3.1: ICBVI Clients Compared to People with Vision Disabilities in Idaho by Sex in 2017

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ICBVI | | Idaho | |
| Percent of open and closed cases | Number | Percent of population w/vision disability | Number |
| Male | 50.0% | 207 | 50.1% | 20,373 |
| Female | 47.1% | 193 | 49.9% | 19,691 |
| Does Not Wish to Identify\*\* | 2.9% | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100.0% | 538 | 100.0% | 40,064 |

*\*Note: Based on data from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS 2017).*

**Race and Ethnicity**

Table 3.2 provides data on the racial and ethnic characteristics of ICBVI clients served in FFY 2018 and individuals with vision disabilities in the state of Idaho. Individuals who identified as white comprise the highest proportion of both the ICBVI caseload (94.6%) and people who are blind or who are low vision the state (77.4%). Individuals who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native constitute the smallest proportion of the ICBVI caseload (.9%) while according to ACS estimates the percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native with visual disabilities in Idaho is 8.3%. In all other racial or ethnic categories, the ICBVI caseload data presents a higher proportion of individuals than the ACS estimates. It appears that the American Indian/Alaska Native with visual disabilities group may be underserved by ICBVI. However, many of these individuals may receive services from the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs in Idaho.

Table 3.2: ICBVI Clients Compared to People with Vision Disabilities in Idaho by Race or Ethnicity in FFY 2018

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ICBVI | | Idaho | |
| Percent of cases  served | Number | Percent of population  w/vision disability | Number |
| White | 94.6% | 390 | 81.2% | 40,064 |
| Black/African American | 1.4% | 6 | 0.9% | 467 |
| Native Am. or Alaskan Native | 0.9% | 4 | 8.3% | 4,086 |
| Asian | 1.2% | 5 | 0.5% | 224 |
| Hispanic | 11.4% | 47 | 0.9% | 4,471 |
| Other | 1.6% | 7 | 5.0% | 2,455 |

*\*Note: The race and ethnicity categories in this table are adapted from the ACS 2017. ICBVI offers individuals a more expansive list of categories from which to choose and thus approximately 7 individuals identified with two racial/ethnic categories. The race and ethnicity categories offered by ICBVI were collapsed in order to make comparisons between the two data sets.*

*\*\*Adapted from Erickson, W., Lee, C., von Schrader, S. (2017). Disability Statistics from the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Yang Tan Institute on Employment and Disability.*

**Geographic Representation**

Appendix A provides a full list of counties in Idaho comparing ICBVI FFY 2018 cases with ACS estimates for people in the state who reported a visual disability in 2017. Table 3.3 indicates those counties with the highest percentage of ICBVI clients with open and closed cases in FFY 2018. The data show that almost a quarter of the ICBVI cases were in Ada County (22.3%), followed by Nez Perce (8.9%) and Kootenai (8.5%). There were no ICBVI cases reported for FFY2018 in the counties of Adams, Boise, Butte, Camas, Caribou, Clark, Franklin, Lemhi, Owyhee, and Valley. According to ACS data, Camas County has the highest percentage of people reporting a visual disability relative to the entire population (6.7.1) whereas Teton had the lowest percentage of people reporting a visual disability (.5%). Sixteen (3.5%) ICBVI cases reported living out of the state.

Table 3.3: ICBVI Clients Compared to People with Visual Disabilities in Idaho by Selected Counties in FFY 2018

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ICBVI | | Idaho | | | |
| Percent of open and closed cases FFY 2018 | Number | Percent of population w/visual disability | Number | Percent of population w/visual disability ages 18-64 | Number |
| Ada | 22.3% | 92 | 1.8% | 8,132 | 1.0% | 4,669 |
| Bannock | 5.8% | 24 | 2.9% | 2451 | 2.2% | 1810 |
| Bonneville | 1.5% | 6 | 2.9% | 3,263 | 2.3% | 2,512 |
| Canyon | 8.3% | 34 | 2.2% | 4,710 | 1.7% | 3,496 |
| Kootenai | 8.5% | 35 | 2.1% | 3,128 | 1.5% | 2,303 |
| Nez Perce | 8.9% | 37 | 3.3% | 1,325 | 2.6% | 971 |
| Twin Falls | 3.6% | 15 | 2.4% | 1962 | 5.5% | 1,434 |

*\*Note. Adapted from ICBVI FFY2018 case service data and U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, “Disability Characteristics 2013- 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.”*

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Benefits**

The data sets used to look at recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Benefits (SSDI) included information from the Social Security Administration (SSA) and from the Cornell University Yang Tan Institute on Employment and Disability (YTI). Both data sets use different same age criterion in their estimates. Using the SSA data set, estimates for individuals with visual disabilities 21-64 years who received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits in Idaho, and in the ICBVI caseload were compared. In 2017, 10.4% of the population ages 21 to 64 with visual disabilities in Idaho received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) where as 26% of ICBVI clients whose cases were open or closed in FFY 2018 received SSI (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: ICBVI Clients Compared to SSI Beneficiaries with Visual Disabilities Ages 21 to 64 in Idaho in 2018

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ICBVI | | Idaho | |
| Percent of Open and Closed Cases | **Number** | **Percent of disability population with visual disabilities receiving SSI** | **Number** |
| 26% | 107 | 10.4% | 2,600 |

*\*Note*: Adapted from ICBVI FFY2018 case service data and U.S. Social Security Administration Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics *SSI Recipients by State and County, 2017.*

Additionally, 3.4% of individuals living in Idaho with visual disabilities received Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) whereas 23.8% of ICBVI clients, whose cases were open or closed, received SSDI (see Table 3.7).

Table 3.5: ICBVI Clients Compared to SSDI Beneficiaries in Idaho in 2018

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ICBVI | | Idaho | |
| Percent of open and closed cases | **Number** | **Percent of SSDI**  **Recipients with a Visual Disability** | **Number** |
| 23.8% | 98 | 3.4% | 629 |

*\*Note: Adapted from ICBVI FFY2018 case service data and U.S. Social Security Administration, Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, 2018.*

Transition Services: FFY 2020

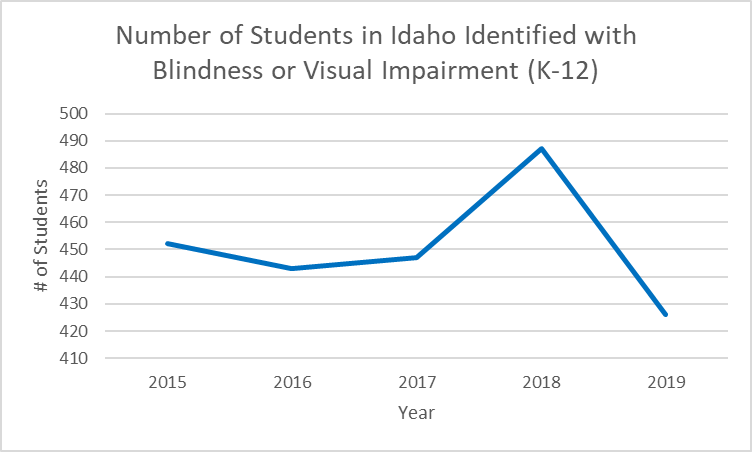
The State of Idaho Vocational Rehabilitation Programs use the age of 15 as the introductory age for the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services. For the purposes of this forecast, ICBVI utilizes data at the state level from the Idaho Educational School for the Deaf and Blind (IESDB).

The IESDB has been serving the State of Idaho since 1906, and is established under Section 33-3401 of Idaho Code with the purpose of providing supplemental educational services, early invention/education, consultation, and transition support to families and local school districts throughout the state of Idaho. According to statute: *“The goal of IESDB is to assist school districts and state agencies in providing accessibility, quality and equity to students in the state with sensory impairments through a continuum of service and placement options.”* IESDB has seven outreach offices that serve all LEA’s across the state of Idaho.

For the purposes of this analysis, the data received from IESDB proved to be the most reliable for this relatively small and unique population. National data sets are fraught with limitations, considering the wide discrepancies in numbers of youth with blindness or visual impairments as compared with actual state-level (IESDB) data sets. Additionally, those individuals identified by IESDB meet the legal definition of “student with a disability”, while national data sets only provide aggregate data and do not delineate to this level.

Chart 1.0 represents the number of K-12 students in Idaho who have been identified by IESDB with blindness or a visual impairment (as defined under Idaho statute). Since 2015, the number of students identified rose from 452 to a peak of 487 in 2018. However, in 2019 the number fell to 426. How this will affect the number of students in the vocational rehabilitation program over the next several years will depend on whether the decrease in 2019 continues in succeeding years or trends up once again.

Chart 1.0 Prevalence of Students with Blindness or visual Impairment in Idaho, 2015-2019



*Data Source: Idaho Educational School for the Deaf and Blind, 2019*

In the 2017-2018 academic school year, there were 111 students ages 14-21 diagnosed with blindness or a visual impairment, as defined in Idaho Code Section 67-5402(2).

In the 2018-2019 academic school year, there were 87 students ages 15-21 diagnosed with blindness or a visual impairment, as defined in Idaho Code Section 67-5402(2).

In the 2019-2020 academic school year, there were 156 students ages 15-21 diagnosed with blindness or a visual impairment, as defined in Idaho Code Section 67-5402(2).

Table 4.1 illustrates Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) engagement of all students identified by IESDB for FFY18 to FFY20. In FFFY 2018, ICBVI provided Pre-ETS to 70 students ages 14-21 during this period (63% of the 111 students identified by IESDB). In FFY 2019, ICBVI provided Pre-ETS to 75 students ages 15-21 (86% of the 87 students identified by IESDB). In FFY 2020, ICBVI projects providing Pre-ETS to 80 students ages 15-21 (51% of the 156 students identified by IESDB). Increases were largely due to the collaboration with IESDB, LEA’s, and other state and regional partners. The projected decrease in percentage served in FFY2020 is due to the large amount of growth in students identified by IESDB. Limitations of staffing and other budget constraints at ICBVI make it unrealistic to project providing services to the same percentage of students. ICBVI will, of course, make use of available resources to provide services effectively to as many students as possible.

Table 4.1: Percentage of Blind and Visually Impaired Pre-ETS Eligible Students in Idaho

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FFY** | **Number of Students Identified by IESDB** | **Number Served with**  **Pre-ETS by ICBVI** | **% of Identified Students Served** |
| 2018 | 111\* | 70 | 63% |
| 2019 | 87 | 75 | 86% |
| 2020\*\* | 156 | 80 | 51% |

\**The 2018 data set included 14 year old students*

*\*\* Projected*

Projections are based upon the data provided by the IESDB (ratio of potential new cases vs the number of current students who may no longer be eligible for Pre-ETS during FFY2019):

1. Current number of students projected to participate in Pre-ETS during FFY 2020 is 80.
2. Estimated number of students who will no longer be eligible for Pre-ETS in June 2020 is 5.
3. Number of 14 year old students identified by IESDB who will turn 15 during FFY 20 is 27.

In FY 2018, ICBVI projected serving 70 students required and coordinated Pre-ETS at an average cost of $2,817 per individual (Table 4.2). In FFY 2019, ICVBI projected serving 72 students required and coordinated Pre-ETS at an unchanged average cost of $2,817 per individual. ICBVI estimates a 10% increase in Pre-ETS participants. ICBVI is assuming flat costs for Pre-ETS of 2,817 per student.

Table 4.2: ICBVI Funds Available for Authorized Pre-employment Transition Services (Projections)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Pre-ETS Reserve | Required & Coordinated Expenditures | Average Cost | # Served | Percent Increase Anticipated | Available for Authorized Activities |
| FFY 18 | 390,987 | 197,190 | 2,817 | 70 | -- | 183,797 |
| FFY 19 | 390,003 | 211,275 | 2817 | 72 | 3% | 178,278 |
| FFY 20 | 418,290 | 225,360 | 2817 | 80 | 10% | 192,930 |

Client Surveys

**Methods**

**Instrument**: The instrument used for the survey of ICBVI clients (see Appendix B) was developed by the UW CCER Research Team in consultation with the ICBVI leadership. The instrument was designed to capture participants’ perceptions in the three major areas: their employment-related service needs; their experiences in accessing ICBVI services; and their recommendations, if any, for improving ICBVI services. Participants were also asked to provide specific demographic information in order to describe the sample group.

**Participants**: Participants for the ICBVI client survey were recruited from all individuals who received services during the time October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018. Participants included both current and former ICBVI clients. The sample group consisted of 412 ICBVI clients.

**Data Collection:** Prior to the inauguration of the survey, efforts were made to alert ICBVI clients of the process. ICBVI staff were sent a brief description of the process by the ICBVI Director via email and instructed on how to answer any questions posed by clients. The survey of ICBVI clients was conducted from November 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019. The survey was managed through Catalyst, an online software tool utilized by the University of Washington. Although this particular survey tool is one of the most accessible and user-friendly instruments, additional accessibility issues were addressed in the pre-testing phase. As a result, the questions were revised allowing for more open-ended responses requiring additional time on the part of the research team in coding the responses.

Emails with links to the electronic questionnaire were sent to those clients who had shared their email address with ICBVI. The online survey remained open for approximately two months due to the holiday season (November-December). Telephone calls were initiated with the 26 clients without email addresses. In both the emails and the telephone interviews, a statement of the purpose of needs assessment and how the client’s data would be used and protected was provided. Participation in the survey was voluntary.

The research team experienced some challenges in contacting individuals via phone. Often a voice message was left asking the individual to call back. In several situations the phone numbers provided to the research team were not currently working. Three attempts were initiated by the research to team to contact each individual client. When contact was achieved, the interviewer entered the data into Catalyst during the telephone interview.

**Confidentiality:** Numerous efforts were made to ensure the confidentiality of participants’ responses. ICBVI provided the research team with the clients’ name, email address and phone number. Participants were not required to provide their names, phone numbers, or physical addresses on the electronic questionnaire. In addition, the research team aggregated responses to the electronic questionnaire prior to reporting results and all client information will be destroyed following the completion of the project.

**Accessibility:** Several measures were taken to ensure accessibility of the survey process. Questionnaires created with Catalyst met the accessibility and usability standards required by principles of universal design. During the pre-testing phase, several accessibility issues were identified and corrected. Open-ended questions allowed respondents more freedom in their responses. All participants could choose to respond by phone rather than completing the online questionnaire. Finally, in instances where an individual could not complete the questionnaire due to his or her disability, a family member, guardian, or personal care assistant could respond on behalf of the individual.

**Data Analysis:** Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. The research team analyzed the open response results for themes or concepts that were expressed with a degree of consistency by the respondents.

**Completed Surveys:** Participants completed 108 questionnaires out of 412 possible clients, for a response rate of 26.2%. The number of responses to the survey met the requirement to make statistically significant conclusions at the 95% confidence level according to the online calculator (Pierce, R., 2018) with a .483 margin of error. The cost in both financial and human resources did not justify an effort to increase the response rate. The use of multiple data collection methods from different sources strengthens the validity of the needs assessment findings.

**Findings**

**Demographics of Respondents:** Of the 108 completed questionnaires, 102 (92%) were completed by the person with the disability, four (4%) were completed by a family member or guardian, and two individuals did not respond to this question. Current clients of ICBVI comprised 68% (n=73) of the respondents while individuals with closed cases comprised the other 32% (n=34). One respondent did not answer this question. Of those that responded, 54% (n=57) were employed, 45% (n=48) were unemployed, and three people did not respond to the question.

Of the participants reporting gender, 55 (51%) were female, 51 (47%) were male, and 2 (1%) indicated they preferred not to disclose. One individual did not answer this question.

The survey provided an option of seven groupings of ages across the life span. Individuals 40 to 49 years of age comprised the majority of the sample (21%; n=22), and the second largest age group was 50 to 59 at 20% (n=22).

Additionally, participants were asked to identify their race/ethnicity,with the option ‘prefer not to answer’. The majority of participants identified as Caucasian (90%). Ten individuals identified as Hispanic (9%). (See Appendix C for a complete list of responses for race/ethnicity).

Participants were also asked to name the county in which they lived. Most respondents live in Ada County (23%), followed by Canyon (10%) and Nez Perce (7%). Four individuals indicated they live outside the state of Idaho. Table 5.1 provides a summary of these participant characteristics; see Appendix D for a complete list of responses by county.

Table 5.1: Client Survey Demographics

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Demographic | | Percent | Number |
| Gender |  |  |  |
|  | **Female** | **51%** | **55** |
|  | Male | 48% | 51 |
| Race/Ethnicity |  |  |  |
|  | **Caucasian** | **84%** | **90** |
|  | Hispanic | 9% | 10 |
|  | Native American | 2.8% | 3 |
|  | Prefer not to disclose | 2.8% | 3 |
| County |  |  |  |
|  | **Ada** | **23%** | **25** |
|  | Canyon | 10% | 11 |
|  | Nez Perce | 8% | 8 |
| Employment Status |  |  |  |
|  | **Employed** | **54%** | **57** |
|  | Unemployed | 46% | 48 |
| ICBVI Status |  |  |  |
|  | **Current Client** | **68%** | **73** |
|  | Former Client | 32% | 34 |

*Note: Frequencies less than 1% are not reported for any response*

Secondary Disabilities: Participants were asked to identify any secondary disabilities in addition to blindness or low vision. The open-ended responses were analyzed and condensed into existing categories or sorted into new categories. Eighty three individuals identified one or more secondary disability. Participants identified arthritis (19%), hard of hearing (18%), diabetes (17%), behavioral/mental health (12%). with the most frequency. Table 5.2 provides a summary of the responses.

Table 5.2: Client Survey Secondary Disabilities

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Secondary Disability | Percent | Number |
| None | **22%** | **24** |
| Arthritis | **19%** | **16** |
| Deaf/Hard of Hearing | **18%** | **15** |
| Diabetes | **17%** | **14** |
| Behavioral/Mental Health | **12%** | **10** |
| Traumatic Brain Injury | 8% | 7 |
| Learning Disability | 8% | 7 |
| Cerebral Palsy | 6% | 5 |
| Intellectual/Developmental Disability | 5% | 4 |
| Other | 25% | 21 |

**Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals:** Participants were asked to identify the most significant barrier to reaching their employment goals. ICBVI clients indicated vision loss and related issues (27%), Transportation (6%), employer attitudes (6%), and confidence/self efficacy (6%) with the most frequency. The “Other” category included individual comments that were singular in nature and specific to the individual participant. Table 5.4 provides a list of the most significant barriers identified by ICBVI clients.

Table 5.3: Client Survey Most Significant Barrier to Achieving Employment Goals

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals | Percent | Number |
| None | 15% | 16 |
| Vision loss and related issues | **27%** | **30** |
| Transportation | **6%** | **7** |
| Confidence/Self-efficacy | **6%** | **7** |
| Employer Attitudes | **6%** | **6** |
| Secondary Disability | 5% | 5 |
| Job Market/Job Availability | 4% | 4 |
| Counselor Attitudes | 4% | 4 |
| Health related issues | 3% | 3 |
| Education/Training | 3% | 3 |
| Age | 3% | 3 |
| Lack of technology/training | 3% | 3 |
| Other | 8% | 9 |

Additional questions regarding barriers to employment were asked of participants. Thirty nine participants (36%) indicated limited public transportation made it difficult to access ICBVI services. Participants (23%) indicated that access to a regional office/counselor was a barrier. Approximately 21% of the participants indicated that a lack of information about the services available from ICBVI made it difficult to access ICBVI services. Overwhelmingly (98%) participants indicated language barriers were not an issue in accessing ICBVI services. 23% indicated they had experienced difficulties in accessing their counselor. Most participants (78%) indicated they have had sufficient time with their counselor.

Participants were asked if they had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult to access ICBVI services. Eighty-three percent of the participants indicated they did not have any additional barriers to accessing services. A couple of comments (below) focus on the ICBVI staff/organization in identifying barriers.

* They know a lot about blindness but are week on combined disabilities.
* My rehab counselor doesn’t understand, is not compassionate. I was told I could try one AT and if it didn’t work could get another. Was not allowed to get the other when the first didn’t work.

**Service Needs:** To more precisely target the needs of clients, a series of questions were asked of participants regarding specific service needs to achieve their employment goals. Table 5.5 indicates the three most helpful services participants received.

**Most Helpful Services:** Participants were asked to identify the three most helpful services they received to reach their employment goals. As this was an open-ended question, the responses were analyzed and condensed into categories. ICBVI clients identified Assistive Technology (74%); Counseling in relation to the disability (51%); Life Skills Training (40%) and Career Counseling and/or Employment Exploration (37%). A total of 11 participants did not respond to this question. Table 5.5 provides a breakdown of the collapsed service categories.

Table 5.4: Client Survey Most Helpful Services

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Most Helpful Services | Percent | Number |
| Did Not Respond | .9% | 10 |
| Assistive Technology | **74%** | **72** |
| Life Skills Training | **41%** | **40** |
| Career Counseling and employment exploration | **38%** | **37** |
| Guidance in assessing interests and abilities | **32%** | **31** |
| Guidance in choosing a school or training Program | 22% | 22 |
| Physical Restoration services | 14% | 14 |
| Job Skills Training/Placement | 12% | 12 |

Participants were asked if there were any other services that they might need to achieve their employment goals. Sixty-one percent of the participants indicated no additional services were needed. This was an open-ended question, with a variety of responses which were analyzed and condensed into categories. Many of the responses reflected a need for continued service or services that are already currently available. However, it should be noted that although the program and process have been explained to the client on several occasions, there seems to be a lack of understanding by the participants of the range of services ICVI offers. The following are some examples of responses which reflect their understanding.

* Computer skills around typing and a computer as well.
* Job placement, career counseling, if they were to come available in Idaho.
* Probably because of the changing technology that is very possible down the road.
* Working with the employer to provide accommodation around your disability.

**Improvement of Services**: The participants were asked if they had any suggestions for improving the services provided by ICBVI. Thirty-three (33%) of the participants did not respond to this question. Several individuals indicated more emphasis on job placement services and the need for additional staff. A few suggestions for improving services are listed below:

* More training by ICBVI at colleges concerning teachers working with blind students (example, not petting a guide dog).
* ICBVI is a great program that has been there to help a couple of times when I needed it. Although I need a long term plan and no one has provided me on any information on how to achieve that.
* Have a counselor for the Pocatello office.
* Have counselors who are well-versed in combined disabilities.
* Seems to be pretty thin in my county, need more counselors.
* More funding to allow staff to more quickly and adequately service the blind and low vision. More support staff on duty at the Lewiston location.
* Advertise better to the public. Don’t know about services.
* Build relationships with employers. Would improve employment opportunities for those who need jobs.
* Hire mental health counseling for the blind in the state.
* Explain services more thoroughly. There may be services that could help that I don’t know about.
* Sometimes we may be unable to return to the type of job we had prior to vision impairment, but I felt I was only encouraged to the same job with modifications for my situation. I was encouraged to take a computer class, but did not tolerate as the Jaws program’s digital voice constantly interfered with my hearing aids. I was always frustrated and no alternative was offered to me. I wasn’t encouraged to look into other job possibilities.
* Amazing team, just need more time and help with technology.
* The staff and team assembled is second to none and citizens of Gem state are fortunate to have such a dedicated group of professionals to assist individuals with vision challenges.

**American Job Network.** Participants were asked four questions regarding the services from the Department of Labor for individuals who are blind or who have low vision. The responses indicated that 80% of the participants have not tried to use the services from the American Job Network. Of those individuals who indicated they have used the services, 2% indicated they experienced difficulty in accessing the building and 71% indicated difficulty in accessing the programs and services. The American Job Network service found most helpful by respondents was finding employment (32%),

Key Informant Interviews

**Methods**

**Instrument:** The survey instrument used for the key informant interviews was developed by the UW/CCER research team in consultation with ICBVI leadership (Appendix E). The instrument was designed to identify unserved and under-served disability groups (including racial and ethnic groups), explore the needs of transition aged youth, and identify barriers that impede the service delivery to individuals who are blind or who low vision in Idaho.

**Participants:** An initial list of suggested key informants was provided to the research team by the ICBVI leadership. A “snowballing sample” procedure was used resulting in a total of 11 individuals interviewed. All of the interviews were completed by telephone. Often, several phone calls were required to make contact with the individual or to schedule a time for an interview. The individuals interviewed represented a variety of organizations with a wide range of constituencies and a broad geographical scope. All of the 11 key informants interviewed indicated their organization has provided services to individuals who are blind or low vision currently or in the recent past.

**Data Collection:** The key informant interviews were conducted in the period November-December, 2019. Each of the interviews averaged approximately 30 minutes in length. This seemed to indicate that the majority of those interviewed were truly interested in providing relevant and useful information, not only to serve their own constituency but to aid the Blind and low vision community as a whole. Many individuals provided additional information following the interview, such as making more recommendations for additional contacts.

**Confidentiality:** Participants were informed that their responses were confidential and reported in aggregate format only.

**Data Analysis:** The research team followed the standard protocol for analyzing the responses from the participants. The responses were analyzed to identify major themes, which were coded into categories.

**Findings**

**Barriers to Successful Outcomes:** Participants were asked to identify the top three barriers that prevent individuals who are blind or who have low vision from achieving successful outcomes in Idaho. The Key Informants indicated lack of public transportation (28%, n=3), employer misconceptions about blindness (55%, n=6), and personal issues (36%, n=4) with the most frequency.

**Agency Performance**: Participants were asked how effectively the ICBVI is fulfilling its mission of helping individuals who are blind or who have low vision obtain employment. All of the respondents indicated that the organization is very effective, given their resource limitations. The following responses illustrate Key Informant views:

* I think ICBVI overall does a great job. They certainly have gone out of their way to support the clients I have worked with.
* Incredibly successful – do an outstanding job in assisting individuals who they serve.
* I think the current leadership is impacting employment for individuals who are blind.
* Very effective in working with that population that is looking for independence and work ready/going to work.

**Service Needs:** Participants were asked to identify the top three services most needed by ICBVI clients to achieve their employment goals. Counseling and guidance was identified as a top service, followed by living skills training (including O & M), assessment and training in assistive technology, and education/training.

**Improvement of Services:** Participants were asked if they had any recommendations to improve services to individual who are blind or who are low vision in Idaho. The responses varied and difficult to categorize. Several individuals commented that additional funding for services to individuals who are blind or who are low vision needed. Another issue referenced by several individuals is the need for cross training between agencies, particularly CRPs. A sample of the responses follows:

* They need additional funding through the state. I don’t think the Legislature understands the important services ICBVI provides, therefore extensive education with policy makers.
* Commission should take real steps in coordinating services with school districts. Sometimes they have good communication with IESD, but not the school districts.
* More training provided by ICBVI to CRP staff to help us better understand how to help ICBVI clients.
* Rely on CRPs to help with caseloads especially in rural areas.

**Unserved or Underserved:** Participants were presented with a series of questions focused on unserved or underserved populations. For the purposes of the assessment, "Unserved" means people who are blind or low vision who are interested in working and are not receiving services from ICBVI. "Underserved" means people who are blind or who are low vision who are interested in working and are served by /CBVI at less than the percentage of the group in the general population. Three sub-topics included within this larger category are geographic areas, racial/ethnic minority groups, and individuals with secondary disabilities in addition to blind or low vision.

Geographic Areas

In response to the question if they felt there are any geographic areas unserved or underserved, the majority (73%) of the Key Informants indicated that there is a general lack of access to services in rural areas.

Racial/Ethnic Groups

27% (n=4) of the respondents indicated the Hispanic/Latino groups were unserved/underserved. The other two groups mentioned by the Key Informants included 2nd English language barriers - refugee communities (27%, n=3) and the American Indian populations (8%, n=1). Four respondents indicated they were not aware of any racial or ethnic groups who were unserved/underserved.

Secondary Disabilities

Fifty-five percent (n=6) of the Key Informants interviewed indicated that in general they felt the needs of individuals who are Blind or low vision and had secondary disabilities are being met. Individuals with multiple disabilities (developmental disabilities/blind; mental illness disabilities/blind; mobility/blind) were identified as groups who are unserved or underserved. The individual who identified mobility/blind group made reference to the process, not the service. Even though blindness was his primary disability he was asked to access services through IDVR.

**Recommendations to Improve Outreach**: The responses to this particular question were varied and difficult to code into specific categories. Four respondents indicated they did not have any suggestions in improving outreach. Some comments from respondents are indicated below:

* Hiring of staff who understands and has the trust of the community.
* Local counselors are knowledgeable about the available services for individuals with blindness and other disabilities. Not sure how to improve other than additional staff to serve rural areas.
* Market campaign on the services they provide. Lots of programs at ICBVI that people are not aware of. Advertising and sharing.
* Continually keep reaching out with communication. Need to be visible enough to reach out them. DVR had a calendar with individuals with disabilities – something maybe for ICBVI to consider. Place in local districts – reminder of available services.

**Transition Aged Youth Service Needs:** A series of questions were asked regarding transition services. Participants were asked about the needs of transition-aged youth who are Blind or who are low vision, and how well ICBVI and the schools are meeting these needs. Several participants indicated the need for more work readiness training and work experience opportunities. Access to assistive technology in the schools was a topic brought up frequently as well as the need for independent living skills.

* The greatest need is for them to understand and believe they are capable of working and being willing and excited about engaging in that process to figure out what they want to do and start down the path to achieve success in that area.
* Transition from high school to college – tend to get intimidated by the environment.
* Supporting them in becoming independent. Mobility, getting a job, taking care of themselves.
* ICBVI stepped up since WIOA came in – partnerships with schools. MOU good document that works for us all.

A couple of questions were asked of participants about experiences with Pre-ETS (pre-employment transition services. Seven out of the 11 respondents indicated they had not accessed or were not aware of Pre-ETS, with only four respondents indicating they are aware and have used the services.

A question was asked about which of the five required activities was most important. Five individuals did not respond to this question. For those who responded, work based learning experiences were identified as the most important. A couple of comments from key stakeholders:

* While all of them are important and valuable, the work experiences are where the students typically buy in to the idea that they can work and start to become excited about having a career after high school.
* The Workforce Development Council considers work-based learning (through a continuum of learning about work, learning through work, and learning at work) to be a critical strategy to ensure success for both participants and employers.

The participants provided a variety of recommendations to improve transition services to youth who are blind or who have low vision in Idaho listed below:

* Approve, encourage, and fund them to have multiple work experiences so they can figure out what works for them and what doesn’t.
* I think there needs to be more cross-training/collaboration with funding agencies with a focus on technology.
* More collaboration with CRPs.
* Cross-disability training between organizations.
* Marketing campaign on the services they provide.
* SWP needs to be longer in the summer. Also encourage these students to attend the weeklong Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) through the SILC.
* Try to get transition services to clients as young as possible.

**Community Rehabilitation Programs:** Two questions were asked of Key Informants regarding Community Rehabilitation Programs. The first question asked how effective are the CRPs in Idaho working with individuals who are blind or low vision. Participants indicated that overall the staff of CRPs are undertrained and do not know how to work with individuals who are Blind or low vision. Eight participants indicated they were not in a position to comment or did not respond. A few comments are listed below:

* I think that as a whole CRPs are not utilized enough. There are many services that we can offer that are underutilized. I believe that there are a few working with ICBVI, but those that that I see are effective in their work.
* More collaboration with CRP providers.
* Education of providers. Commission should connect with CRPs that are interested and help them develop, share the specialized knowledge.

The other question pertaining to CRPs focused on whether there is a need to develop CRPs to serve a specific group or geographic area. Ten respondents indicated did not respond or indicated they were not in a position to comment. A few comments below:

* Region 4 and Region 5 need more CRP services.
* More education of current CRP staff.

**American Job Center Network:** Participants were asked how well is the American Job Center Network in Idaho meeting the needs of individuals who are blind or who have low vision. Six individuals indicated were not in a position to comment or were unaware of the service provision to individuals who are blind or who are low vision. Several individuals commented below:

* I believe the job centers are improving as they are doing more in-service training with staff. However, I do not know how effective they are for this group. DOL has reduced the number of physical offices and has staff working out of other places.
* As mentioned above, our one-stop system could make significant improvements in coordinating services. We are in the process of developing our WIOA State Plan and one of the goals that is rising to the top is to conduct a gap analysis from the perspective of our clients. This will help move us towards increased collaboration, referrals, and coordination of services.
* For the most part I think they provide good services to individuals with disabilities.

A follow-up question was asked for participants if they had any recommendations to improve services to ICBVI clients. Eight participants did not have any recommendations. See below comments from those key informants who responded.

* Have computers and software in place – what services do ICBVI provide (information sharing; different opportunities such as resume building.
* Increased education about ICBVI services is critical.
* ICBVI needs to work more closely, be more involved in the job search process with the client and the CRP staff.

**Business Partnerships**: Key Informants were asked if they had any recommendations for ICBVI on how to improve business partnerships to engage employers in recruiting and hiring individuals who are blind or low vision. The number of respondents indicated there is a need for more collaboration with CRPs. The comments are listed below:

* Education, develop regional employment committees that include employers and people who are blind and successfully employed.
* Develop on the job training programs, mentorships, internships with employers where individuals who are blind and low vision can learn pre-employment skills and understand work ethics.
* Collaborate with broader disability community.
* Not sure how they are currently doing it. They don’t seem to utilize DOL very much other than specific individuals who are assigned to work with individuals with a disability.
* Another goals of our state plan is to increase coordination on services to businesses as a system. Idaho is too small to have representatives of every program contacting businesses. ICBVI has been a willing partner in discussing coordinated business services, now we need to implement.
* More public contact, outreach, and education. Participating in job fairs for the purpose of educating the employers who are there.
* Participate in employer organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce but only if the effort is going to be put forth to educate and not just be there hanging out.
* Reach out to CRPs to identify opportunities for joint training and staff development.
* Continue efforts to engage with youth.
* If employers knew that they wouldn’t have to provide specialized equipment that may open opportunities.
* Allow access to students as early as possible and work with CRP providers to help.

Staff Survey

**Methods**

**Instrument:** An electronic survey (administered using Catalyst Web Tools) was chosen as the most efficient method of accessing ICBVI staff members (see Appendix E). The research team in consultation with ICBVI leadership developed the instrument. Prior to the issuance of the survey, ICBVI leadership informed all staff of the process.

**Data Collection:** As with the client survey, data was gathered from ICBVI staff using an online questionnaire and managed using the Catalyst software. Participants were sent an e-mail message by the Director alerting them to the survey effort approximately one week before the survey was released.

The electronic invitation and link to the survey was sent to all 40 staff members employed by ICBVI via email. Approximately two weeks later a reminder was sent electronically to the staff. A total of 25 complete responses were submitted for a response rate of 63%. Responses to the survey were confidential and the responses reported in aggregate form.

All survey responses were downloaded from Catalyst and the results were analyzed for fixed response questions. Open-ended questions were analyzed using a point analysis to rank common responses.

**Staff Demographics:** Participants were asked to identify their job titles. Of the 25 respondents, most participants were instructors (40%), followed by vocational rehabilitation assistants (20%). Additionally, participants identified their service areas. Most of the participants served the southern part of the state (53%), followed by north and west. It should be noted that participants may have had difficulty in choosing between south and west areas of the state. Finally, participants indicated how many years they had been in their current positions. Most of the participants had been in their current positions for six to ten years (36%). Table 6.1 provides a summary of these participant characteristics.

Table 6.1: Staff Survey Participant Characteristics

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Participant Demographics | | Percent | Number |
| Job Title |  |  |  |
|  | No Response | 2% | 5 |
|  | **Instructor** | **40%** | **8** |
|  | Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant | 20% | 4 |
|  | Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor | 15% | 3 |
|  | Supervisor/Manager | 15% | 3 |
|  | Support Staff | 10% | 2 |
| Service Area | |  |  |
|  | No Response | 32% | 8 |
|  | **South Idaho** | **37%** | **9** |
|  | North Idaho | 12% | 3 |
|  | West Idaho | 12% | **3** |
|  | East Idaho | 8% | 2 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Years in Position | |  |  |
|  | Less than 1 year | 4% | 1 |
|  | 1 to 5 years | 16% | 4 |
|  | **6 to 10 years** | **36%** | **9** |
|  | 11 to 15 years | 24% | 6 |
|  | More than 15 years | 20% | 5 |

**Barriers to successful employment:** Staff was asked to identify the barriers that prevent people who are blind or who are low vision from achieving successful employment outcomes. This was an open-ended question and the responses were analyzed and condensed into three top barriers. The ICBVI staff indicated the lack of transportation options (56%); personal barriers (motivation, self-esteem, and belief in oneself) (36%); Family barriers (36%) and employer misperceptions about blindness (36%) were the four top barriers that prevented people who are blind or who are low vision from achieving successful outcomes.

**Service Needs:** Staff members were asked to identify the services that were most needed by all ICBVI clients to reach their employment goals. The questions were open-ended and were analyzed and condensed into categories. ICBVI respondents indicated that the four most needed services included blindness skills training (68%); transportation services (38%); soft skills training (24%); and employer engagement (24%). See Appendix G for the full list of service needs identified by staff.

**Access to Services**: Participants were asked to identify the three main reasons that client might find it difficult to access ICBVI services. Of the top four categories, lack of awareness of ICBVI and available services ranked number one (68%), with transportation second (44%), rural areas around the state third (44%), and limited staffing across the state (44%). Table 6.2 lists the challenges to accessing ICBVI Services identified by staff members.

Table 6.2: Access to ICBVI Services

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Access to ICBVI Services | Percent | Number |
| Lack of awareness of ICBVI and/or services provided | **68%** | **17** |
| Transportation | **44%** | **11** |
| Rural areas makeup most of the state | **44%** | **11** |
| Limited staffing across the state | **44%** | **11** |
| Personal barriers including motivation and self-esteem, fear | 24% | 6 |
| Lack of referrals from partnering agencies | 12% | 3 |
| Desire to work – buy-in | 12% | 3 |
| Access to ATC | 8% | 2 |
| Funding of ICBVI | 8% | 2 |
| Inability to use technology to start the process | 4% | 1 |
| Lack of follow-up by ICBVI staff | 4% | 1 |
| Access to AT | 4% | 1 |
| Time for training | 4% | 1 |
| Clients don’t want employer to know | 4% | 1 |
| Delays in service provision | 4% | 1 |
| Data collection requirements by counselors | 4% | 1 |
| Cultural beliefs | 4% | 1 |

**Unserved/Underserved Populations**: Participants were then presented with a series of questions focused on unserved or underserved populations. For the purposes of the assessment, "Unserved" means people who are blind or low vision who are interested in working and are not receiving services from ICBVI. "Underserved" means people who are blind or low vision who are interested in working and are served by /CBVI at less than the percentage of the group in the general population. Three sub-topics included within this larger category are geographic areas, racial/ethnic minority groups, and individuals with secondary disabilities in addition to blindness or low vision.

Geographic Areas

Of the 25 participants who responded to this question, 12 individuals (48%) indicated there were no geographical areas unserved or underserved. Thirteen participants indicated there are geographical areas unserved or underserved with rural areas identified most often.

Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups

The majority (52%%, n=13) of the respondents did not feel that that any racial/ethnic minority groups were unserved/unserved. American Indian/Native Alaskans were identified as the primary group unserved or underserved (28%).

Secondary Disabilities

Of the 25 participants, 24 responded to the questions regarding persons who are blind or who are low vision with secondary disabilities. Fifteen or 63% responded that they are no groups of persons with secondary disabilities that are unserved or underserved. Of the nine that responded yes to this question, there was no agreement as to a specific disability group as a secondary disability to blindness or low vision. One individual did not respond to this question.

Transition Services:Four questions were asked of participants surrounding transition services. Participants were asked to rate the quality of transition services as compared to three years ago. Sixteen respondents rated the quality of transition services as good (64%); Excellent (32%); Okay (4%). No respondent indicated a need for improvement. A couple of comments reflects the respondent’s concerns.

* Constant changes within RSA regarding interpretation of WIOA makes policy and procedure implementation difficulty.
* Services have improved greatly now that there is a better understanding of what is needed and expected.
* I have seen a definite increase in the implementation of transition services and workshops.

Respondents from the staff survey were asked which of the five required activities most important. Work based learning experiences was the respondent’s most frequent choice (N=11 - 52%), with self-advocacy skills (N=4 - 16%) rated as second. One respondent indicated all five required activities are important “they work hand-in hand.” The responses from the other nine staff members varied in such a way it was difficult to organize by category. For example, two staff members indicated they did not know.

Staff were asked the following question: Considering only ICBVI clients who are transition-age youth, do the services needed to achieve their employment goals differ from other ICBVI clients? Fourteen of the 25 respondents (56%) indicated yes. A few comments from respondents are as follows:

* Parents play a big role in transition-age services and they can make or break the student’s participation in services.
* Transition age students are still building a lot of basic skills of independence, and maturity. They need to integrate these skills with the skills of blindness in a structured progression and in collaboration with the school IEP.
* The importance of partnering with the school, parents, teachers and disability services takes an extraordinary amount of time, energy, effort and skills which is not always inherent for the VRC.

The final question regarding transition services asked participants if they had any recommendations to improve transition services to youth who are blind or who are low vision in Idaho. Of the 23 respondents to this question, 57% indicated they did not have any recommendations. All of the comments below illustrate staff member thinking:

* Sponsoring regional activities along with the Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP) activities throughout the year.
* I think we are doing a good job, just keep on keeping on.
* Funding for transportation to activities would greatly help.
* Do more parent education so they can reinforce at home what ICBVI is promoting in our programs (SWEP, VISTA, Leadership, etc.
* Structured curriculum for rehab teachers to utilize.
* Stronger partnering with school districts to develop programs which will encourage these students to meet graded level requirements, develop soft skills training in addition to general interviewing skills.
* Provide them with ATC prior to college or work place.
* Help regions do whole group activities.
* Working together with educators in elementary or middle school. Start earlier.
* Create a summer term for transition age clients and restructure SWEP to be more about the clients instead of serving the staff interests. It seems odd there are little if any staff or assistant coordinators that are willing to return from year to year, that should say something about how the program is managed. I suggest creating a survey for the SWEP staff to review their experience, challenges, and successes. Then encourage administration to listen.

**Community Rehabilitation Services**: This set of questions focused on community rehabilitation services. In responding to the question whether CRPs were effective in working with individuals who are blind or who have low vision, 58% said they were not effective. One person did not respond. Comments included:

* I believe CRPs are doing a good job in some areas but in other areas they need more training in how to effectively working with individuals who are blind or low vision.
* In our area, the CRPs are definitely stepping up to provide the needed services, and they are willing to work hand in hand with our agency to make sure we are all on the same page as far as expectations.

The second question regarding community rehabilitation programs asked staff there was a need to develop CRPs to serve any specific group or geographic area. 67% of respondents indicated there was a need with the most frequent response addressing blindness knowledge and training (84%). The community rehabilitation programs in the North, South, and West areas were identified as needed training.

**Partnership with Idaho Division Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR).** The first question in this set addressed the effectiveness of the partnership with IDVR. The responses varied; however, most staff members indicated that the partnership is doing well. Six respondents indicated they didn’t know or were unsure, and three did not respond. Comments:

* I feel like ICBVI and IDVR work well together and it feels like a partnership in serving clients. It’s nice to see that each agency can contribute to the client’s plan without duplicating services.
* We spend a great deal of time waiting on answers when working with shared clients.
* Although the IDVR office is nearby, I have limited contacts with their office and so it doesn’t feel like much of a partnership.
* I work well with IDVR in this region. IDVR is a great referral source for ICBVI. We are able to share resources, services, information and referral with our co-clients.

In the last question in this set regarding partnership with IDVR, participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of service/delivery/outcomes on shared cases. Eight out of 24 respondents indicated effectiveness was okay (33%); 29% indicated good, 17% said it needs improvement and 8% indicated excellent. Six respondents indicated they were unsure or did not respond. A few comments below:

* Ensuring that shared cases have cooperative staffing of cases would be a more efficient method of ensuring agencies are not duplicating services and ensuring that comparable benefits are taken into account.
* Collaboration takes time, energy and effort from all parties. We are restricted in part because of other expectations and priorities. Collaborating or partnering with ICBVI does not appear to be a priority for IDVR.

**American Job Center Network:** Participants were asked to describe how well the American Job Center Network in Idaho is meeting the needs of people who are blind or who are low vision. Twelve of the 22 respondents 12 indicated they didn’t know or they were not familiar with the American Job Center Network. The following are comments from those who responded:

* I am not sure what the American Job Center in Idaho is? Do you mean Dept. of Labor? In my opinion the Dept. of Labor is not helping people who are blind or visually impaired as well. We have clients who went there for help and basically just told they can use their computers in the lobby and was not offered help with applications, cover letters or resumes.
* Not a noticeable difference from years past. Many of the Labor offices have been shut down creating remote office locations as an example. Many of the employment specialists are not familiar with the unique needs of blind/low vision clients and how to transition that into job seeking/obtainment.
* The clients who choose to access these services are better prepared to apply for work.
* My only experience is that most job centers provide a computer for use by the blind or low vision in their lobby. That is at least something.
* I still hear about offices in the network not being accessible, and computer systems not being accessible by individuals who are blind. I have heard that some offices may have computers that are up to snuff, but they don’t have anybody in the office who can provide support to customers who need to use those computers.
* We have a very good relationship with them, and we have devised and utilized an effective WIOA transition team.
* There are many employers who do not want to bother with training a visually impaired individual or do not have the jobs needed.
* I have limited data or anecdotal stories about how that is meeting needs for clients in my region. I have attended some of the One Stop meetings locally and the information being provided about how the process is evolving seems promising.
* Department of Labor in this region does not know how to assist a person who is blind/VI if that person is already knowledgeable of assistive technology. I do believe the DOL is a good referral source, but I do not believe people who are blind/VI visit the local DOL in this region.
* It doesn’t seem to do much, or at least I do not hear about successful outcomes.

**Other Comments:** The survey allowed participants to provide additional comments:

* I really feel that the ICBVI is giving high quality service to its clients. The staff, for the most part, are very dedicated and go above and beyond the call of duty when serving clients. I have visited other centers that, I personally would not work for. I am proud to be a part of ICBVI.
* I really feel like ICBVI service our clients well and each case is very individualized. Each client has a different level of need and I feel like we are accommodating in helping them become independent and successful in life.
* I am confident in saying that ICBVI clients get exceptional training and services throughout the state of Idaho by very dedicated staff.

Employers

**Methods**

**Instrument:** The survey instrument used for the key informant interviews was developed by UW/CCER research team in consultation with ICBVI leadership (Appendix H). The instrument was designed to identify employer needs in hiring of individuals who are blind or who have low vision.

**Participants:** A list of 24 employers was provided to the research team by the ICBVI leadership. A total of nine employers (38%) agreed to be interviewed. All of the interviews were completed by telephone. Often, several phone calls were required to make contact with the individual or to schedule a time for an interview.

**Data Collection:** The employer interviews were conducted in January, 2020. Each of the interviews averaged approximately 30 minutes in length.

**Confidentiality:** Participants were informed that their responses were confidential and reported in aggregate format only.

**Data Analysis:** The research team followed the standard protocol for analyzing the responses from the participants.

The majority of respondents (89%) indicated they have hired individuals who are blind or low vision in the past. Employers interviewed indicated they were satisfied with the services provided by ICBVI in the process of hiring (78%). Comments are below:

* No, employee was from commission but we had no contact.
* Never had to/not in the hiring process. But with an employee the commission brought Assistive Technology.
* Been a long time.

In answering whether they were aware of the service available through ICBVI to support employers in hiring individuals who are blind or low vision, seven (78%) employers indicated they were aware.

The last question asked of employers was what would help increase the hiring of individuals who are blind or who are low vision. Comments are listed below:

* Tried two times. The first time wasn’t very successful due to the attitude of the blind individual. While the counselor for this person tried her best to manage this and really did a good job; the blind individual who was the employee didn’t show up on time or at all. Sometimes showed a negative attitude on the job and towards the counselor. The second employee we hired did better, had a good attitude and worked with a job coach the entire time. Not sure we are a good fit a business in that many of our positions require the ability to price check and find things in inventory. Found the daily paperwork to complete burdensome and not very helpful in that as the owner I wasn’t always in a good position to review the day to day work. If we were to do it again it would require the use of a coach at all times and a reduction in the amount of paperwork required to complete. Found that working with ICBVI was a good experience and that they were supportive.
* Great experience. Employee is a good asset to the company. Communication with ICBVI is infrequent because the situation is working. The employee communicates directly with me in regards to schedule and if he can’t get a ride. Coaching staff is doing an excellent job supporting employee and helping him to function independently. The only challenge I see for our employee is the need for better wraparound services in the area of health and healthy eating. Our employee struggles with weight and healthy eating. If counseling could be made available to him to help him develop better/more healthy eating habits, I believe this would help him feel better, stronger, and have more energy. We are happy with the placement.
* Depends on the business you run whether it would be possible.
* Provide information to potential candidates so they can inform employer.
* Depends on the position. More knowledge about accommodations.
* The person that was hired needed direct support using the technology on the computer and the need for additional software to complete the work.
* Services from ICBVI were excellent. The staff there did a good job of assisting the individual. The process was terrific and the young man who came in and asked for the job was gregarious at first. He was hired to work in our BDC Phone Center and was doing a great job until his work ethic began to slip. He started coming in late and wasn’t following instructions. Outside family pressures seem to cause a lot of problems for this individual. Despite good help from ICBVI and our internal staff we had to let him go for poor job performance. We would do it again if the right person came along. We haven’t been contacted again by ICBVI for another placement.
* More education about the program.
* Not very many people apply . . .outreach to employees and employers.

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Appendix A Disabilities by County

ICBVI Clients Compared to People with Visual Disabilities in Idaho by County

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ICBVI | | Idaho | |
| Percent of open and closed cases FFY 2018 | Number | Percent of population w/visual disability | Number |
| Ada | 2.2% | 92 | 1.8% | 8,132 |
| Adams | 0 | 0 | 5.3% | 208 |
| Bannock | 5.8% | 24 | 2.9% | 2451 |
| Bear Lake | 0.2% | 1 | 2.8% | 167 |
| Benewah | 0.7% | 3 | 3.5% | 320 |
| Bingham | 0.2% | 13 | 2.8% | 1281 |
| Blaine | 0.2% | 1 | 7.2% | 1553 |
| Boise | 0.2% | 1 | 6.8% | 478 |
| Bonner | 1.7% | 7 | 1.9% | 812 |
| Bonneville | 8.8% | 36 | 2.9% | 3263 |
| Boundary | 0.4% | 2 | 2.3% | 319 |
| Butte | 0 | 0 | 2.5% | 65 |
| Camas | 0 | 0 | 7.1% | 63 |
| Canyon | 8.3% | 34 | 2.2% | 4710 |
| Caribou | 0 | 0 | 2.1% | 143 |
| Cassia | 1.4% | 6 | 2.3% | 539 |
| Clark | 0.2% | 1 | 3.0% | 32 |
| Clearwater | 0.4% | 2 | 4.2% | 321 |
| Custer | 0.2% | 1 | 5.9% | 243 |
| Elmore | 0.2% | 1 | 3.0% | 727 |
| Franklin | 0 | 0 | 2.4% | 317 |
| Fremont | 1.2% | 5 | 2.6% | 326 |
| Gem | 0.4% | 2 | 3.4% | 569 |
| Gooding | 1.4% | 6 | 3.0% | 465 |
| Idaho | 1.4% | 6 | 3.7% | 591 |
| Jefferson | 1.7% | 7 | 2.1% | 577 |
| Jerome | 0.9% | 4 | 2.6% | 599 |
| Kootenai | 8.5% | 35 | 2.1% | 3128 |
| Latah | 3.4% | 14 | 2.3% | 916 |
| Lemhi | 0 | 0 | 3.5% | 271 |
| Lewis | 0.4% | 2 | 4.8% | 184 |
| Lincoln | 0.7% | 3 | 4.2% | 224 |
| Madison | 2.2% | 9 | 1.2% | 487 |
| Minidoka | 0.9% | 4 | 2.7% | 568 |
| Nez Perce | 9.0% | 37 | 3.3% | 1325 |
| Oneida | 0.2% | 1 | 3.9% | 167 |
| Owyhee | 0 | 0 | 4.1% | 471 |
| Payette | 0.9% | 4 | 3.0% | 694 |
| Power | 0.9% | 4 | 3.5% | 270 |
| Shoshone | 1.2% | 5 | 4.1% | 509 |
| Teton | 0.4% | 2 | .5% | 64 |
| Twin Falls | 3.6% | 15 | 2.4% | 1962 |
| Valley | 0 | 0 | 3.7% | 206 |
| Washington | 0.7% | 3 | 4.5% | 445 |
| Out of State | 3.50% | 16 |  |  |

*\*Note: Adapted from ICBVI FFY2016 case service data and U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, “Disability Characteristics 2011- 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.”*

Appendix B Client Survey Instrument

Demographics

1. Identify yourself from the choices below:
   1. ICBVI client
   2. Family member or guardian
2. In addition to Blindness or low vision, do you have any other disabilities? (Check all that apply)
   1. Amputation
   2. Arthritis
   3. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
   4. Autism
   5. Behavioral/Mental Health
   6. Cerebral Palsy
   7. Cystic Fibrosis
   8. Deaf-Blind
   9. Deafness
   10. Diabetes
   11. Drug/Alcohol Addiction
   12. Epilepsy
   13. Hard of Hearing
   14. Hemiplegia
   15. Intellectual/Developmental Disability
   16. Learning Disability
   17. Multiple Sclerosis
   18. Musculoskeletal Disorders
   19. Spinal Cord Impairment
   20. Stroke
   21. Traumatic Brain Injury
   22. Vision Impairment
   23. Other (Please Specify)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your gender?
   1. Male
   2. Female
   3. Other (Please specific)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your race or ethnicity? (Check all that apply)
   1. Caucasian
   2. African American
   3. Asian
   4. Native American/Alaska Native
   5. Hispanic
   6. Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   7. Do Not Wish to Self-Identify
5. What is your age?
   1. 18-21
   2. 22-29
   3. 30-39
   4. 40-49
   5. 50-59
   6. 60-69
   7. 70 and over
6. In what county do you currently live?
   1. Ada
   2. Adams
   3. Bannock
   4. Bear Lake
   5. Benewah
   6. Bingham
   7. Blaine
   8. Boise
   9. Bonner
   10. Bonneville
   11. Boundary
   12. Butte
   13. Camas
   14. Canyon
   15. Caribou
   16. Cassia
   17. Clark
   18. Clearwater
   19. Custer
   20. Elmore
   21. Franklin
   22. Fremont
   23. Gem
   24. Gooding
   25. Idaho
   26. Jefferson
   27. Jerome
   28. Kootenai
   29. Latah
   30. Lemhi
   31. Lewis
   32. Lincoln
   33. Madison
   34. Minidoka
   35. Nez Perce
   36. Oneida
   37. Owyhee
   38. Payette
   39. Power
   40. Shoshone
   41. Teton
   42. Twin Falls
   43. Valley
   44. Washington
   45. No longer living in Idaho
7. Are you employed?
   1. Yes
   2. No
8. Are you a current or former ICBVI customer?
   1. Current customer
   2. Former customer

Barriers to Employment

1. Has limited public transportation made it difficult for you to access ICBVI services?
   1. Yes
   2. No
2. Is access to your regional office/counselor a barrier?
   1. Yes
   2. No
3. Has a lack of information about the services available from ICBVI made it difficult for you to access ICBVI services?
   1. Yes
   2. No
4. Are there language barriers that have made it difficult for you to access ICBVI services?
   1. Yes
   2. No
5. Have you experienced difficulties in accessing your counselor for ICBVI services?
   1. Yes
   2. No
6. Do you feel you have sufficient time with your ICBVI counselor?
   1. Yes
   2. No
7. Have you had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access ICBVI services?
   1. Yes (please describe)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. No
8. What is the most significant barrier to achieving your employment goals?

Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**The next several questions ask you about employment-related services:**

1. Please indicate the services you have found to be most beneficial (Mark all that apply to your situation):
   1. Counseling and guidance in relation to your disability?
   2. Physical restoration services
   3. Life skills or independent living skills training
   4. Guidance in assessing your interests and abilities.
   5. Career counseling and/or employment exploration
   6. Guidance in choosing a school or training program
   7. Assistive technology such as readers, voice recognition software or screen magnifiers.
   8. Job placement
2. If you have received services from ICBVI, what were the three most helpful services you received?
3. Are there any other services you feel you need to achieve your employment goals?
   1. Yes (If yes, please specify)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. No
4. What could ICBVI change to improve their services?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**The following questions are in regards to services from the American Job Network (Idaho Department of Labor:**

1. In the past three years have you ever tried to use the services from the American Job Network?
   1. Yes
   2. No

If you answered “yes” to question #26, please proceed to the following questions.

1. Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?
   1. Yes (if yes, please describe the difficulties you experienced)
   2. No
2. Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs or services at the American Job Network? Please specific:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What assistance did you receive from the American Job Network?
   1. Learning new skills
   2. Assistance with training
   3. Finding employment
   4. All of the above
   5. Other please describe)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix C Demographics

**Client Survey Participant Demographics: Race and Ethnicity**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Race/Ethnicity | Percent | Number |
| Asian | 3% | 4 |
| African American | .7% | 1 |
| Caucasian | 77% | 109 |
| Hispanic | 6% | 9 |
| Native American | 4% | 5 |
| Pacific Islander | .7% | 1 |
| Prefer not to answer | 6% | 9 |
| Did not answer | 2% | 3 |
| Total | 100% | 141 |

Appendix D Client Survey Counties

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ICBVI | | Survey Participants | |
| Percent of open and closed cases FFY 2016 | Number | Percent of Participants | Number |
| Ada | 24.9% | 134 | 18% | 26 |
| Adams | 0.19% | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Bannock | 5.02% | 27 | 5% | 7 |
| Bear Lake | 0.56% | 3 | .7% | 1 |
| Benewah | 0.37% | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Bingham | 1.49% | 8 | 2% | 3 |
| Blaine | 0.74% | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Boise | 0.19% | 1 | .7% | 1 |
| Bonner | 1.30% | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Bonneville | 10.41% | 56 | 11% | 15 |
| Boundary | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Butte | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Camas | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Canyon | 8.92% | 48 | 6% | 8 |
| Caribou | 0.37% | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Cassia | 1.12% | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Clark | 0.19% | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Clearwater | 0.74% | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Custer | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Elmore | 0.37% | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Franklin | 0.19% | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Fremont | 0.74% | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Gem | 0.93% | 5 | .7% | 1 |
| Gooding | 0.74% | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Idaho | 1.12% | 6 | .7% | 1 |
| Jefferson | 1.86% | 10 | .7% | 1 |
| Jerome | 0.56% | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Kootenai | 11.15% | 60 | 10% | 14 |
| Latah | 4.09% | 22 | 8% | 11 |
| Lemhi | 0.19% | 1 | .7% | 1 |
| Lewis | 0.37% | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Lincoln | 0.19% | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Madison | 1.30% | 7 | 2% | 3 |
| Minidoka | 1.30% | 7 | .7% | 1 |
| Nez Perce | 5.95% | 32 | 5% | 7 |
| Oneida | 0.37% | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Owyhee | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |
| Payette | 0.56% | 3 | 1% | 2 |
| Power | 1.12% | 6 | 1% | 2 |
| Shoshone | 0.93% | 5 | .7% | 1 |
| Teton | 0.19% | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Twin Falls | 4.65% | 25 | 2% | 3 |
| Valley | 0.37% | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Washington | 0.56% | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Out of State | 3.5% | 19 | 23% | 33 |

Appendix E Key Informant Survey

Introduction

1. Please indicate your job title and describe your role in your organization. How long have you worked in this capacity?
2. In your job, do you primarily serve individuals with disabilities? Do you serve individuals who are blind or low vision?

Barriers

1. We would like you to think about the barriers that prevent individuals who are blind or low vision from achieving successful outcomes. These may be personal barriers, family barriers, social barriers, or barriers in the physical environment. What are the top three barriers that prevent individuals who are blind or low vision from achieving successful outcomes in Idaho?

Service Needs

1. Regarding ICBVl's overall performance as an agency, how effectively is the organization fulfilling its mission of helping individuals who are blind or low vision obtain employment?
2. Please identify the top three services most needed by ICBVI clients to achieve their employment goals.
3. Do you have any recommendations to improve services to individuals who are blind or low vision?

Unserved or Underserved

*"Unserved" means people who are blind or low vision who are interested in working and are not receiving services from ICBVI. "Underserved" means people who are blind or low vision who are interested in working and are served by /CBVI at less than the percentage of the group in the general population.*

1. Are there any geographic areas you feel are unserved/underserved and why?
2. Are there any racial/ethnic minority groups unserved/underserved and why?
3. Are there any individuals who are blind or low vision with secondary disabilities that are underserved and why?
4. How effective is ICBVl's outreach to these groups/areas? Do you have any recommendations to improve outreach to them?

Transition

1. What are the greatest needs of transition-aged youth who are blind or low vision? How well are ICBVI and the schools meeting these needs?
2. Are you aware/accessed Pre-ETS for your clients/students?
3. In thinking of the 5 required activities, which one do you feel is most important?
4. Do you have any recommendations to improve transition services to youth who are blind or low vision?

Community Rehabilitation Programs

1. How effective are the CRPs in Idaho working with individuals who are blind or low vision?
2. Is there a need to develop CRPs to serve any specific group or geographic areas?

American Job Center Network

1. How well is the American Job Center Network (Department of Labor) in Idaho meeting the needs of individuals who are blind or low vision?
2. Do you have any recommendations to improve services to ICBVI clients?

Business Partnerships

1. Do you have any recommendations for ICBVI on how to improve business partnerships and to engage employers in recruiting and hiring individuals who are blind or low vision?
2. Do you have any suggestions for other people we should talk with?

Appendix F Staff Survey Instrument

Introduction

1. What is your job title?
   1. Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant
   2. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
   3. Supervisor or management
   4. Program Support Staff (Transition Coordinator, Financial Technical, Low Vision Store and Clinic)
   5. Instructor of the Blind
2. What ICBVI primary service area or location do you serve?
   1. North
   2. South
   3. East
3. How many years have you been in your current position?
   1. Less than 1 year
   2. 1-5 years
   3. 6-10 years
   4. 11-15 years
   5. More than 15 years

Barriers

1. Please think about the barriers that prevent people who are blind or low vision from achieving successful employment outcomes. These may be personal barriers, family barriers, social barriers, or barriers in the physical environment. What are the top three barriers that prevent people who are blind or low vision from achieving successful employment outcomes in Idaho?
   1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Client Service Needs

1. Please identify the top three services most needed by ICBVI clients to achieve their employment goals.
   1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. In your opinion, what are the three main reasons that clients might find it difficult to access ICBVI services?
   1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Unserved or Underserved**

*"Unserved" means people who are blind or low vision who are interested in working and are not receiving services from ICBVI. "Underserved" means people who are blind or low vision who are interested in working and are served by /CBVI at less than the percentage of the group in the general population.*

1. Are there any geographic areas you feel are unserved/underserved?
   1. Yes (If yes, please specify)
   2. No
2. Are there any racial/ethnic minority groups unserved/underserved?
   1. Yes (if yes, please specify)
   2. No
3. Are there any persons who are blind or low vision with secondary disabilities that are underserved?
   1. Yes (if yes, please specify)
   2. No

Transition Services

1. Please rate the quality of transition services as compared to 3 years ago.
   1. Excellent
   2. Good
   3. Okay
   4. Needs Improvement

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. In thinking of the 5 required activities, which one do you feel is most important

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Considering only ICBVI clients who are transition-age youth (ages 15-21), do the services needed to achieve their employment goals differ from other ICBVI clients?
   1. Yes (If yes, please specify)
   2. No
   3. Don’t know
2. Do you have any recommendations to improve transition services to youth who are blind or low vision in Idaho?
   1. Yes (if yes, please specify
   2. No

Partner Programs

1. Do you think the CRPs in Idaho are effective in working with individuals who are blind or low vision?
   1. Yes (If yes, please specify)
   2. No
2. Is there a need to develop CRPs to serve any specific group or geographic area?
   1. Yes (If yes, please specify)
   2. No
3. In your own words, please briefly describe the effectiveness of the partnership with IDVR.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. How would you rate the effectiveness of service/delivery/outcomes on cases shared with IDVR?

a. Excellent

b. Good

c. Okay

d. Needs Improvement

e. Comments\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Please briefly describe how well the American Job Center Network in Idaho is meeting the needs of people who are blind or low vision.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you have any additional comments?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix G Staff Survey-Client Service Needs

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Client Service Needs | Percent | Number |
| Blindness Skills Training | 68% | 17 |
| Transportation services | 32% | 8 |
| Accurate & appropriate AT assessments/training | 28% | 7 |
| Employer Engagement | 24% | 6 |
| Education and training | 16% | 4 |
| Access to AT | 16% | 4 |
| Employment preparation | 16% | 4 |
| Counseling | 16% | 4 |
| Aids and Appliances | 12% | 3 |
| Job Coaching | .8% | 2 |
| Support from family & friends | .04% | 1 |
| Support in work until clients well established | .04% | 1 |
| K-12 preparation | .04% | 1 |
| Access to ATC | .04% | 1 |

Appendix H Employer Telephone Survey

1. Have you hired individuals who are blind or low vision in the past?
2. Have you been satisfied with the services you have received from ICBVI in the process of hiring individuals who are blind or low vision?
3. Are you aware of services available to employers provided by ICBVI to support employers hiring individuals who are blind or low vision?
4. What would help employers increase hiring of individuals who are blind or low vision?