

Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Public Meeting, Saturday, May 06, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
River's Edge Convention Center, North Bank Conference Room, 265 33rd Avenue,
Columbus, Nebraska

Minutes

Call to Order. Welcome and introductions. Announcement concerning public comment periods, meeting agendas, open meeting act, proof of publication, recordings and other logistics

Brent Heyen, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The meeting began with introductions.

Commissioners present: Brent Heyen, Chairperson, Lincoln; Cheryl Livingston, Vice Chairperson; Lincoln; Linda Mentink, Executive Secretary, Columbus; Miguel Rocha, Scottsbluff.

Commissioner absent: Mark Bulger, Designee of the American Council of the Blind of Nebraska, Omaha.

Staff present: Carlos Serván, Executive Director; Erin Brandyberry, Deputy Director of Services; Kat Carroll, Deputy Director of Finances; Kathy Stephens, Administrative Specialist.

Public present: Jim Jirak, ACB representative, Omaha.

A copy of the Nebraska Open Meeting Act was available in both print and Braille formats. The Notice of the Meeting was published in the Lincoln Journal Star, the State Government Calendar, NCBVI Website, NFB Newsline® and Radio Talking Book. The Notice was also sent to ACBN, NFBN, and the NCBVI listserv.

Approval of the February 4, 2023 public meeting minutes

Commissioner Livingston moved to approve the Minutes of the February 4, 2023 Commission Meeting. Commissioner Rocha seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston
Nays:
Motion Carried

Approval of the April 1, 2023 New Commissioner Orientation Meeting minutes

Commissioner Rocha moved to approve the Minutes of the April 1, 2023 Commission Meeting. Commissioner Mentink seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston
Nays:
Motion Carried

Report from the Commissioners

Cheryl Livingston – Cheryl noted that she attended the NFB of Nebraska State Convention in late March. Cheryl reported that she has been active with the NFBN as their State Treasurer. Cheryl noted that she also serves as Treasurer for the NFB Senior Division and she now serves as Secretary for the NFB Lincoln Chapter.

Linda Mentink – Linda reported that she also attended the NFB of Nebraska State Convention. Linda reported that she is the secretary of the NFBN Senior Division. She noted that she has been the secretary for the NFBN Senior Division since approximately 2016.

Linda reported that she met a blind person from Columbus and she is trying to make contact with her. Linda also reported that she is also a part-time music teacher at Bible Baptist Church in Columbus.

Linda stated that she attended a Zoom meeting with the Board of Wisconsin School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. They meet quarterly via Zoom for an Alumni Reunion and they discuss a topic at each meeting. They are hoping to meet in person in 2025.

Linda also mentioned that she serves as Vice President of the Friends Board. The Friends had a meeting on April 25, which Carlos Serván also attended. The Friends is working to build and maintain a website and they are also working to raise funds for NCBVI to pay for items that NCBVI is not allowed to pay for. The Friends has gathered funds to assist with Project Independence this year.

Brent Heyen – Brent reported that he works as a blind manager at a hotel in Lincoln and he demonstrates the abilities of a blind person every day in the work that he performs. Brent reported that he recently spent a week helping out at one of their sister hotels in Durango, Colorado. Brent also reported that he attended the NFB State Convention as his schedule allowed.

Miguel Rocha – Miguel reported that he is currently taking some courses at UNO. Miguel noted that he also attended the NFB of Nebraska State Convention in late March. Miguel stated that he enjoyed the convention.

Report from the Executive Director

I. Administration

During the last quarter, I attended the following meetings and activities:

In February, I testified in front of the Appropriations Committee for our 2023-2025 biennium budget request. NCBVI asked for additional state funding in the amount of \$610,230 to cover VR Basic Support funds that went to pay for Pre-ETS. The Governor's and Appropriations Committee initial budget did not include an increase other than the cost of living. I approached several members of the Appropriations Committee to explain NCBVI's need. As a result, the Appropriations Committee is recommending half of NCBVI's request (\$305,115). We still need to wait for the Floor to vote for the budget and later for the Governor's Office.

NCSAB Executive Committee monthly meetings: All the meetings were to prepare for the CSAVR and NCSAB National Fiscal Conference, which took place April 17-21.

During the first three days of the conference, there were many presentations on how to invest in consumers so agencies would not have to send funds back to the Federal Government. I am glad to report that, for most of the areas they recommended, NCBVI is already doing it, showing that we are ahead. On Thursday April 20, part of the morning focused on OIB services. The rest of the day focused on Randolph-Sheppard with the focus being on Federal reporting and interpretation of guidance on equipment versus supplies. On Friday April 21, we had a short Business meeting and the rest of the morning was on Pre Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Again, in this Pre-ETS area, NCBVI already has been doing most of the programs recommended.

Before the conference, in my role as President of NCSAB, I sent a letter to Colonel James Kent, who is heading the rewriting of the new military guidelines for Cafeteria contracts with the Department of Defense (DOD). As a result, the DOD is working more with NCSAB and blind vendors so the guidelines will reflect the intent of the Randolph-Sheppard Act.

At the monthly call with RSA, the focus was the Spring Fiscal Conference and the announcement that RSA sent funds for innovative programs of around 170 million dollars. This is good news, as not all the funds sent back from the States went to the Federal Reserve.

At the StarTran monthly meetings, some of the issues discussed were: Passengers per mile and hour statistics; services changes (increase in ride hours); overtime policy for drivers; how to market more the bus services and the number of drivers increasing to almost normal.

At the Olmstead Steering Committee and Advisory Committee meeting, some of the issues discussed were: Finalizing the State Plan, the draft was ready to be sent to the Steering Committee, so after that it would go to the CEO of DHHS, and after that to both the Unicameral and Governor's Office. However, some discrepancies took place at the last meeting, especially the fact that funding for Developmental Disability Community Services was cut by approximately 2/3. We also talked about the structure of both committees to be able to monitor and enforce the goals.

On April 11, Kathy Stephens and I attended a meeting with USSTRATCOM to talk about some proposed changes from the new Commander.

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) again contacted the Director of VR General and me to discuss the section from the Rehab Act that talks about innovation and expansion. According to SILC, they would not approve the State Plan if Innovation and Expansion funds are not used for SILC. RSA provided technical assistance and confirmed that the interpretation has not changed. Therefore, we do not have to provide Innovation and Expansion funds.

I attended both the NFBN and ACBN State Conventions. The NCBVI leadership had a Zoom meeting with the NFB State President, Jamie Richie to talk about ways to partner with different programs. I also met with the new ACB State President, Kristal Platt to talk about the ongoing partnership with NCBVI.

Kat Carroll completed the quarterly federal report in March. She continues to improve the Internal Budget Projection for FFY 2023 that shows budgeted, year to date expenditures. She presents this information in detail to Leadership and Supervisors on a monthly basis. NCBVI is in a very strong

financial position. We carried over all the FFY 2022 VR grant plus \$1.5 million of Reallotment and have received \$159,382 in social security reimbursement so far this Federal Fiscal Year.

II. Human Resources

Staff up-date:

In the Lincoln District: Connie Daly started her new role as an orientation counselor (OC) at the end of February. Pam Rademacher was hired as the Lincoln District supervisor and she started her Center training on April 24. We still have a vacancy for the technology specialist position in Lincoln.

In the Omaha District: Nancy Flearl retired February 28 after 40 years working for the agency. Miki Saltzman finished Center training and he started to work as a technology specialist in Omaha on April 17. Tammi Thomas was hired as a vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor and she began Center training February 13. We still have the Omaha supervisor position vacant.

In the North Platt District: We have three positions open, the VR counselor position for the Scottsbluff area, as Angie took the OIB Coordinator duties; the VR counselor position that Crista Dimas vacated when she became the supervisor, and the technology specialist position vacated several months ago.

In the Training Center: Ted Haubrich finished Center training on May 2 and will be job shadowing his counterpart from the Louissiana Center for the Blind for a week. After that, he will shadow a blind woodworker/mechanic from Alliance. Then he will start providing shop training at the Center. With Jeff Altman retiring in 2025, we want to make sure there is adequate time to recruit and train his replacement. Thus, a second Cane Travel instructor will be added to the Center as part of our succession planning.

In NBE: Lizzie Heidenreich will finish her Center Training on May 8. We will have one position open, as next week Dave Robinson is leaving to work for the private sector.

In Administration, we hired Hugh Phan for the technology manager position. He started Center training on March 13.

Since 2020, we hired 21 new staff and still have six positions open. This has been very challenging, especially this last year, as it was difficult to fill several positions.

Training Opportunities:

Most staff toured Radio Talking Book in Omaha on March 2. Several staff members attended the NFBN and ACBN State Conventions. Several staff toured the NCECBVI on April 4.

Angie Hoff, Charli Saltzman and Kelly Coleman attended the OIB-TAC Conference in Savannah, Georgia. Angie continues to attend monthly OIB program manager meetings via zoom and is participating in the new OIB manager trainings. Charli also attended the COAHP, where she learned about the services that Adult Protective Services provide.

On April 5 and 6, we held our Spring Statewide Staff Meeting in Nebraska City. Some staff also attended the CSAVR Fiscal conference and the Spring NCSAB conference the week of April 17.

Kathy Navrkal attended the NE Peer Support Summit that was held by the Brain Injury Advisory Council. Alex France and Craig Kneifl attended the Peer Support Summit from the Brain Injury Alliance. Alex also attended the Spring Fling training at NCECBVI which was braille focused.

Erin Brandyberry, Kat Carroll, Tammie Dunn, Cristal Dimas, and I attended the CSAVR Regional Meeting May 1-2.

III. Field Services

Most of us had a chance to attend Nancy Flearl's retirement party on March 2. It was wonderful to honor Nancy after 40 years of service to blind Nebraskans. It was well attended and well organized. I want to thank Erin Brandyberry for organizing this event.

We are contracting with Sky's the Limit for the second Silver Summit which will take place May 24-26. We have 108 clients registered plus around 55 family members registered for this event. Angie Hoff is coordinating this effort.

We are working with Dynamic Buna to provide an Employment Conference to our clients in June and Connie Daly is coordinating this event.

We are working with Play Creative to develop some PSA's to educate the Public about our services. They will work on making a 30 second and 15 second version. In addition, we will start a radio campaign with in the next few weeks. We already have approved the audio for this campaign.

With the end of the school year approaching, counselors have been busy attending student IEP's.

To be able to build a trusting relationship with stake holders, our field staff participated in the following events:

Lincoln

The Lincoln District staff have held several GATE teaching programs where clients did several activities. These activities are designed to put into practice the blindness alternative techniques.

Presented at the Capital View Tour Apartments; had an agency booth at the Lincoln Civil Rights Conference.

Presented at the Nebraska Statewide Workforce Training group; networked with NCECBVI staff and TVI's from around the state and presented to parents of blind students at NCECBVI.

Provided a presentation at Heritage at Fountain Pointe in Norfolk for residents and demonstrated magnification devices.

Provided a presentation to the Area on Aging for their Ombudsman volunteers in Norfolk.

Attended the Columbus High School Job Fair.

Had a booth at the Resource Fair held at the Lincoln Square Apartments.

Networked with the Capital Humane Society and IHOP restaurant in Lincoln, where both employers agreed to be OJT worksites.

Attended the Norfolk Coalition Quarterly Meeting and the United Way Meeting in Columbus.

Attended Lincoln Public Schools parent open house at the district office for parents looking for additional services and programs for their children.

Met with the American Job Center partners and finalized plans for Jeff Sheer to utilize the shared workspace in their new offices in Lincoln.

Attended the VR Job Fair at Central Community College where college/high school students were able to explore different industries in the area and volunteered to assist with job interviews in a mock interview with students.

Networked with the YMCA Fremont Director and Freightliners.

Worked on the Project Independence retreat.

Took part as a plan team member for a Disability Pride event that will be held in Lincoln in July.

Spoke at the Blue Cross Blue Shield meeting regarding the insurance cards for blind and low vision individuals. We were able to include our female consumers with the assistance of sanitary napkins and diapers for mothers with young children.

Jeff Sheer is the point person with Project Search.

Omaha

Attended an ISP meeting in partnership with DD services.

Connected with Nebraska Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing to learn more about resources.

Networked with Children's Hospital, Physician's Mutual, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Mutual of Omaha.

Attended and participated in ESU 3 Job Expo. Staff were able to network with other teachers and general VR counselors.

Networked with Hannah Tamayo from Angel Guardians, a service provider.

Participated in the Aetna Medicare member Health Fair; networked with Angel Guardians to collaborate job development opportunities for one of our consumers.

Had an information booth at the Salvation Army for the Healthy Aging Expo. Staff met with Ollie Webb Center, Inc. to discuss a future partnership of developing a summer training program for Pre-ETS youth who are dual diagnosed blind and developmental disabilities.

Working with Mercy High School's counselor regarding a student who will be attending school next fall.

Networked with Goodwill to discuss coordination for summer opportunities to students with severe secondary disabilities.

Teaching once a month at NCECBVI on areas related to Pre-ETS.

Attended the UNO YSEALI welcome lunch and provided orientation to UNO campus for the YSEALI Program.

A student is completing a work experience at the Treetop restaurant at the Omaha Zoo.

North Platte

Met with ESU 10-Transition Coordinator and TVI to discuss Discovery Kits and how it could be helpful to implement them with our Pre-ETS students.

Worked with the Children's Museum in Kearney and attended an employer tour with Kinship Pointe Independent and Assisted Living facility.

Attended and had a booth at the agency fair that was held in McCook by ESU 14. Also attended and presented at the transition fair that was held in Kearney by ESU 10. Staff presented about our agency services specifically for transition students.

Had a booth at the South-Central Town Hall Caregiver Coalition in Hastings. Staff participated in the local health care, provided in-service training to the Aging Office, and led a fall prevention workshop.

Presented at the Alliance care facility.

Staff participated in Employ Kearney and Grand Island.

Presented at the NE Transition conference on supporting students with multiple impairments.

Working with American Suzuki Capacitors and JJ Meddaugh on developing accessible solutions to the equipment at the consumer's workplace. Working with one of our consumers to ensure the new case management system that her employer will be using is accessible.

Attended the UNK for Disability Awareness week. Staff were part of a panel workshop where they discussed disparities for individuals who could be disproportionately affected during emergencies and disasters.

Number of Clients in All Statuses Served at the end of the Period:

OIB clients was 485.

IL clients under 55 was 90.

VR clients was 434.

This quarter we had clients from the three districts get jobs as:

Assembler/Fabricator, Food Prep and Serving Worker, Fitness Trainer/Aerobics, Healthcare Support Worker, Janitor/Cleaner, Maids/Housekeeping, Massage Therapist and Mental Health Counselor.

IV. Training Center

Currently the Center has nine people in training: five students (three VR clients and two OIB clients) and four staff trainees. One consumer stopped coming for training but he is eligible to return when he is able to fully participate. Also, an OIB consumer is eligible to begin training as soon as their health and/or family issues are resolved. Up to a couple of weeks ago, we had 11 people getting training at the Center. A new consumer is scheduled to begin training on May 15. There are three VR consumers and one OIB consumer who are eligible to begin training as soon as their health and/or family issues are resolved.

There have been six 3-day stays and six tours this quarter. In addition, the Platte Valley Christian School in Paxton and Golden Plains Christian School in Madrid each brought approximately 25 students, staff, and family members to tour the Center. We also provided tours to a teacher from Crete as well as a staff member from NCECBVI who accompanied a consumer on a tour.

Channel 8 KLKN TV in Lincoln did a story on the Center featuring one of our students. It aired on the 10:00 p.m. news on April 13. A link to the video is on the NCBVI Facebook page.

Mark Coleman visited the Colorado Center for the Blind during the first week of February to shadow the Student Services Coordinator and Apartment Counselor. Mark has written safety protocols for the apartments to instruct students in the event of a tornado or fire, and he reviews these protocols with three-day stays and new students. These safety protocols were reviewed by the fire inspector who visited the apartments to make recommendations.

Center staff have been certified in adult and pediatric CPR, First Aid, and AED. A replacement battery and adhesive pads for the AED machine have been ordered and all staff in the Lincoln office will be informed of its location. In addition, the evacuation procedures and shelter-in-place procedures have been practiced for fires, tornadoes, and active shooter situations. This information is reviewed with all new students.

Center staff and trainees also participated in some training specific to the Center. The topics included the NBPCB Code of Conduct, confidentiality, appropriate touch and use of hand-over-hand, Structured Discovery, and review of the emergency procedures and rendezvous spot.

We hope to review and update the instructional guidelines for the Center. This will be important to do prior to our next certification visit from the National Blindness Professional Certification Board in 2024.

There were two activities this quarter: The Center staff and clients went bowling and attended the state conventions of both the National Federation of the Blind and the American Council of the

Blind. They also ate out at a restaurant. There were also multiple commencement meals and mini meals this quarter.

Vocational seminar covered disclosing blindness during the job application and interview process, and a discussion of the pros and cons of disclosing at different times, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act and reasonable accommodations. TDL's covered deep cleaning the bathrooms.

V. Nebraska Business Enterprise

Federal Sites

We have started the negotiations for the renewal of the contract at USSTRATCOM. Negotiating prices is becoming the main issue.

GSA Site – Omaha

NBE is working with GSA on developing a small site for a federal agency scheduled to open a new office in the Omaha area in the fall of 2024. NBE is looking forward to exploring new service options geared toward smaller office sites that do not involve full-sized vending machines.

State Buildings:

The remodel of the dining area of the State Office Building in Lincoln is still underway. NCBVI has not been informed of when we will be able to reoccupy the space. Food service continues to operate from the fourth floor breakroom.

Remodeling work continues at the Chief Standing Bear Building (formerly Executive Building). Vending service for this building continues to operate from the lobby area.

Vending machines were installed on April 27 at the Douglas County Justice Center, which is an extension of our services at the Douglas County Civic Center. A Blind Vendor is operating this building. As of the writing of this report, the building was scheduled to be open for business on May 1.

Vending services at the DHHS Call Center in Fremont began on April 26 with a Blind Vendor operating the facility.

NBE, in conjunction with the Committee of Blind Vendors, is looking at holding a retreat style event for Vendors in late summer.

There are currently 13 licensed Vendors in the NBE program.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Newsline® Update

During March I attended the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska State Convention and was able to share information about Newsline as an exhibitor. I also attended the American Council of the Blind State convention during April where I also shared information about NFB Newsline. We had a few new subscribers added during the ACB State Convention; these numbers will be listed in our April "New subscriber" numbers.

Nebraska Newspapers continue to be highly accessed, and the number of magazines continues to be accessed more frequently than last year at this time. Online access, such as NFB Newsline Mobile, web sessions, email, and in your pocket deliveries, still remain the most common method of accessing Newsline.

No other updates at this time.

NFB Newsline Stats through March 2023

	January	February	March	April
Number of Subscribers:	2170	2171	2172	
New Subscriptions:	0	2	1	

Telephone Usage:

Total calls:	795	716	783
Average call length: (Minutes)	15.27	15.27	16.76
Percent local calls:	54.3	57.43	62.99
Total call minutes:	12138	10929	13126

Online Usage:

Web Sessions:	6700	5775	7072
NFB-NEWSLINE Mobile Sessions:	549	416	459
In Your Pocket Deliveries:	4086	4020	4067
Email Deliveries:	461	455	491
Total Online Accesses:	11796	10666	12089

<u>Total Content Accesses:</u>	6966	6501	6716
Content Access Frequency(Minutes)	6.41	6.2	6.65

Nebraska Newspapers:	3250	2811	3110
Nebraska Local Channels: Local Weather and Emergency Alerts:	20	15	28
National Newspapers	169	150	163
	1448	1337	1640

International Newspapers:	2	0	0
My Newspaper:	131	100	137
Breaking News Online	366	359	324
Nmagazines:	206	189	109
TV Listings	447	314	302

Client Assistance Program (CAP) Complaints or Issues

There were no new cases to the Client Assistance Program relating to the NE Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI) during this quarter.

Jodi Bodnar, Director of CAP, has started attending NCBVI monthly supervisor meetings.

Jodi presented to NCBVI new hires in April.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Break

A break was taken at 10:05 a.m.
The meeting resumed at 10:20 a.m.

New Business

Discuss and act on the approval of the Executive Director’s time certification

Commissioner Livingston moved to continue with the current method being used for the Director to submit his Personnel Activity Report to the Board of Commissioners. The Director submits his Personnel Activity Report via email to the entire Board for their review. It is an automatic approval unless a question or concern is raised by a Commission Board member.

Commissioner Rocha seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston
Nays:
Motion Carried

Discuss and act on the approval of employee in-state and out-of-state travel

State law requires all travel of staff of state agencies to be pre-approved. This includes travel in-state and out-of-state. Currently for out-of-state travel all staff must complete a form that says where they are going, why they are going there, the cost, how it will be funded, etc. and this must

be pre-approved by their immediate supervisor and by the executive director. This is done by all staff for out-of-state travel.

Supervisors manage in-state travel by getting itineraries from staff and reviewing them on an on-going basis. However, staff is not required to check with their supervisor every morning to get an okay for in-state travel as this would not be manageable. Discussion was held with Administrative Services to determine how the agency could comply with the law regarding in-state travel. Administrative Services recommended that each year the Board of Commissioners would have a motion to pre-approve travel that is related to the purpose of the staff person's position.

Commissioner Livingston moved that the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired Board of Commissioners approve all employee in-state business travel and/or out-of-state business travel within 60 miles of the border of Nebraska in any adjoining state, which relates directly to the provision of services to a client, i.e. employer visit, medical appointment, service referral, employment interview, etc. All other out-of-state business travel is approved if granted approval by the Executive Director of the agency. This motion is in effect until the next meeting of the Board of Commissioners after April 1, 2024.

Commissioner Rocha seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston

Nayes:

Motion Carried

Vote to enter Executive Session

Commissioner Rocha moved to go into Executive Session at 10:27 a.m. to conduct the annual evaluation of the Executive Director.

Commissioner Livingston seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston

Nayes:

Motion Carried

(Ref. Open Meeting Act; 84-1410. Closed session; (d) Evaluation of the job performance of a person when necessary to prevent needless injury to the reputation of a person and if such person has not requested a public meeting.)

Executive Session to conduct the Executive Director Annual Evaluation

An Executive Session was held.

Vote to leave Executive Session

Commissioner Livingston moved to come out of Executive Session at 11:28 a.m.

Commissioner Rocha seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston

Nayes:

Motion Carried

Act on the retention of the Executive Director and his Salary

Commissioner Livingston moved to retain Carlos Serván as the Executive Director of NCBVI.
Commissioner Rocha seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston
Nayes:
Motion Carried

Commissioner Rocha moved to give the Executive Director a 7% raise effective May 8, 2023.
Commissioner Livingston seconded the motion.

Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston
Nayes:
Motion Carried

Final Announcements

Commissioner Rocha requested to attend the ACB National Convention in July 2023. He noted that he has never attended an ACB National Convention and he feels it would be beneficial for him as a commissioner to know more about the philosophy of ACB.

Commissioner Livingston moved to approve Commissioner Rocha's request to attend the ACB National Convention.

Commissioner Mentink seconded the motion.
Roll call: Ayes: Rocha, Mentink, Heyen, Livingston
Nayes:
Motion Carried

The next meeting of the NCBVI Board of Commissioners will be Friday, July 21, 2023 in Lincoln, Nebraska. The Focus Topic will be The NCBVI Center.

Director Serván thanked the Commission Board for their confidence in him to serve as Executive Director for NCBVI. Director Serván confirmed that he and the NCBVI staff will continue to strive to run one of the best agencies for the blind in the country.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

If you have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda of the July 21, 2023 Commission Board meeting, please email it to the NCBVI Commission Board at ncbvi.commission-board@nebraska.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Stephens, Administrative Specialist

NCBVI

Brent Heyen, Chairperson
NCBVI Board of Commissioners

Staff Quarterly Reports for May 6, 2023 Commission Board Meeting

Lincoln District Activity Report – Cristal Dimas

The Lincoln District had interviews for the supervisor position. Pam Rademacher was offered and accepted the Lincoln District Supervisor position. Pam's first day was April 24. The Lincoln District still has a vacant technology specialist position.

Networking:

Charlie provided a presentation on agency services at the Capital View Tour Apartments. From this presentation, she gained a new referral. Connie had an agency booth at the Lincoln Civil Rights Conference, and she presented at the Nebraska Statewide Workforce Training group. Amy networked with NCECBVI staff and TVI's from around the state and presented to parents of blind students at NCECBVI Cane Quest. Kathy was able to present at Heritage at Fountain Pointe in Norfolk for residents and demonstrated magnification devices from low to high technology. Kathy also gave a presentation to the Area on Aging for their Ombudsman volunteers, Norfolk, to share information about NCBVI and to demonstrate a variety of magnification devices and low vision cocoons. Gracie and Kathy are attending the Columbus High School Job Fair for Students in high school. Charlie held a booth at the Resource Fair held at the Lincoln Square Apartments. Jeff networked with the Capital Humane Society and IHOP restaurant in Lincoln. Both employers agreed to be OJT worksites. Gracie attended the Norfolk Coalition Quarterly Meeting and met a couple of private and state agencies who assist families and individuals in the community (mental health, financially, food and employment). Gracie attended the United Way Meeting in Columbus. Jeff is the agency's Project Search representative and attends the monthly partner meetings. Jeff participated in the interview and skill assessment event for the perspective Project Search candidates and the selection committee meetings. Jeff attended Lincoln Public Schools parent open house at the district office for parents looking for additional services and programs for their children. Jeff met with the American Job Center partners and finalized plans for him to utilize the shared workspace in their new offices to begin April 24. Gracie attended the VR Job Fair at Central Community College where college/high school students were able to explore different industries in the area and volunteered to assist with job interviews in a mock interview and role played with students. Gracie attended the Blue Cross Blue Shield Insurance State Meeting where the focus was more on the Medicaid families and how to offer better member services and be more inclusive. Gracie networked with the YMCA Fremont Director and Freightliners.

Projects:

The Lincoln District staff have held several GATE teaching programs where clients have prepared a potato bar, grilled hamburgers/hotdogs and planted pots with flowers. Connie is working on coordinating the Employment Conference that will take place June 5-7. Jeff provides Pre-ETS teachings with NCECBVI students focusing on problem solving, conflict resolution, and conducts interviewing, and career exploration. Jeff worked the Project Independence Retreat. Amy is a plan team member for Disability Pride event that will be held in Lincoln in July. Gracie spoke at the Blue Cross Blue Shield Meeting regarding the insurance cards for blind and low vision, suggested Braille Cards, or large print. Even offered to cut a corner of the card to be easily identified for the consumer. With the Blue Cross Blue Shield meeting, Gracie was able to include our female consumers with the assistance of sanitary napkins and diapers for our mothers with young children. Three-month supplies were given to our female consumers. This is offered every Tuesday

and last Thursday of the month for the diapers. The Project was to help female community members with the rising cost of the items.

Training:

All Lincoln District staff attended State Staff that was held in Nebraska City. Connie, Gracie, Kathy, and Amy attended the State NFB Convention that was held in Lincoln. Connie completed a two-day refresher in the Center that was mainly focused on using iPhone and Android. Charli attended the OIB-TAC Conference in Savannah, Georgia. Charli attended the COAHP, where she learned about the services that Adult Protective Services provide. Jeff and Gracie attended the CSAVR/NCSAB conference in Bethesda, Maryland. Kathy and Gracie attended the State ACB Convention held in Omaha. Kathy attended the NE Peer Support Summit that was held by the Brain Injury Advisory Council.

Client Outcomes:

Charli had six clients attend the GATE program. Charli has several clients registered for the OIB Silver Summit that will be held in May. Connie had several clients attend the NFB State Convention and GATE program. Jeff assisted a client with admission into Creighton University Community Health Worker Program and provided training with Zoom and PowerPoint use. Jeff set up two new OJT opportunities for his clients. Jeff assisted client admission into the Helen Keller National Center for the Deaf-Blind six-week summer program. Amy has two graduating high school seniors. Both are college bound, one to KC Art Institute and the other to UNL. Both students are currently working part-time, while in high school and involved in extracurricular activities. Gracie had four clients attend the NFB State Conference and one client attend the state ACB Conference. Grace has one client signed up for the OIB Silver Summit. Gracie had one client start Center training and another client who toured the Center. Gracie has a college student who will begin his student teaching in the fall. Gracie has one student graduating from high school and will start college in the fall. Gracie has one client who started the GED program online with Metro College. Gracie has one student who competed in the Braille competition at NCECBVI and placed first in her category.

Omaha District Activity Report – Cristal Dimas

The Omaha District still has a vacant supervisor position. Mickie Saltzman completed his Center training on April 19 and has started in the field as the technology specialist.

Networking:

With the end of the school year approaching, Omaha staff have been busy attending student IEP's, these schools included: Millard Central, Elkhorn North, Cornerstone, Bellevue School District, Omaha Public Schools, Westside, Elkhorn, Papillion/La Vista. Adrienne attended an ISP meeting in partnership with DD services. Kelly connected with Nebraska Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing to learn more about resources and demonstration for amplified telephones. Craig networked with Children's Hospital and had the opportunity to meet with their recruiter and discussed potential job opportunities for his client. Adrienne networked with the following employers: Physician's Mutual, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Mutual of Omaha. Craig and Adrienne attended and participated in ESU 3 Job Expo. Craig was able to network with other teachers and general VR counselors. Craig networked with Hannah Tamayo from Angel Guardians, a service provider. Adrienne and Craig participated in the Aetna Medicare member Health Fair. Kelly networked with Angel Guardians to collaborate job development opportunities for one of her clients. Adrienne is active in EmplyOMA. Kelly provided O&M skills training for staff and

clients at Vodec and in the community. Adrienne had an information booth at the Salvation Army for the Healthy Aging Expo. Craig and Adrienne met with Ollie Webb Center, Inc. to discuss a future partnership of developing a summer training program for Pre-ETS youth who are dual diagnose blind and developmental disabilities. Craig has been working with Mercy High School's school counselor regarding a student who will be attending next fall. Adrienne networked with Goodwill to discuss coordination for summer opportunities to students with severe secondary disabilities.

Projects:

Craig presented at Trinity Courtyard to discuss blindness awareness for staff and residents to learn about how to be better advocates for someone who is blind. Adrienne and Alex assisted in providing Pre-ETS relevant information to students at NCECBVI. Craig has been co-teaching once a month with Jeff Scheer at NCECBVI and has lesson planned the activities. The lessons included: seminar on attitude in the workplace, designing a Jeopardy game based on work skills and workplace terminology, and student role-playing potential work scenarios. Alex took a tour of NCECBVI facility. Kelly worked on coordinating the Project Independence Retreat in Aurora. Alex assisted with the Project Independence Retreat. Adrienne attended the UNO YSEALI welcome lunch and provided orientation to UNO campus for the YSEALI Program. Adrienne had a consumer who attends UNO to join and lead the tour. She provided instruction on using the long, white cane. Craig has a student completing a work experience at the Treetop restaurant in the Omaha Zoo. Craig has spent some time job coaching and working with the student's teacher showing non-visual skills training in the areas of cleaning. Craig attended a job interview with one of his clients at 4 Points by Sheridan Hotel. Craig helped lead the April GATE group teaching experience for six clients including grocery shopping, transportation planning, and seminar presentation.

Training:

Alex and Craig attended the Peer Support Summit from the Brain Injury Alliance to learn about their peer support program. Alex attended the Spring Fling training that was braille focused at NCECBVI. Alex attended the state NFB Convention that was held in Lincoln. Kelly attended the OIB-TAC Program Managers Conference in Savannah, Georgia. All staff attended State Staff that was held in Nebraska City.

Client Outcomes:

Craig had two clients attend the PI retreat along with their parents. Kelly had four clients attend the State NFB Convention in Lincoln. Craig has a student who is graduating from UNL in May with her bachelor's in criminal justice. This student will be attending graduate school at Oklahoma State University and was accepted into their PsyD. Program. She hopes to work as a clinical psychologist within a correctional facility. Adrienne had a client gain employment at David's Bridal. Kelly had two clients gain employment: orientation counselor and retail salesperson.

North Platte District Activity Report – Cristal Dimas

The North Platte District still has vacant positions for VR Counselor (Cristal's vacant position) and Technology Specialist. The VR Counselor position for the Western/West Central part of the state was approved by state personnel and is in the works for the job posting/recruitment.

Networking:

Kimberly and Cristal met with ESU 10-Transition Coordinator and TVI to discuss Discovery Kits and how it can be helpful to implement with our Pre-ETS students. Cristal networked with the Children's Museum in Kearney and attended an employer tour with Kinship Pointe Independent and Assisted Living facility. With the end of the school year approaching, both Angie and Kimberly have been busy attending student IEP's, these schools included: Grand Island Senior High School, Lexington, Hemingford, Valentine, and Scottsbluff. Angie has been working closely with the SPED teacher in Ogallala in developing opportunities for one of her student's. Angie is working with TVI, Megan Macy on a transition networking event for the Western part of the state. Kimberly attended and had a booth at the agency fair that was held in McCook by ESU 14. She also was present at the transition fair that was held in Kearney by ESU 10. Kimberly provided a presentation about our agency services specifically for transition students. This was a great networking opportunity meeting other agency professionals and getting connected with families and students. Fritz attended and had a booth at the South-Central Town Hall Caregiver Coalition in Hastings. Angie participated in the local health care, provided in-service training to the Aging Office, and led a fall prevention workshop. Angie met with the activity's director and D.O.N at the Alliance care facility to discuss services available. Kimberly is part of Employ Kearney and Grand Island. This is a great networking event with employers.

Projects:

Angie has been busy organizing, doing outreach, and registration for the OIB Silver Summit that will be held in Kearney. We have over 100 clients registered for this conference. Fritz has been doing outreach with his OIB clients for the upcoming OIB Silver Summit and has over 20 clients registered. Erin and Cristal presented at the NE Transition conference on supporting students with multiple impairments. Angie provided a training session at our spring state staff meeting on best practices. Cristal had a client complete an informational interview and tour with Dusty's Trail in North Platte. Angie is working with American Suzuki Capacitors and JJ Meddaugh on developing accessible solutions to the equipment at the client's workplace. Angie is working with one of her clients to ensure the new case management system that her employer will be using is accessible. Kimberly and Cristal participated in a panel at UNK for Disability Awareness week. Cristal and Kimberly were part of a panel workshop where we discussed disparities for individuals who would be disproportionately affected during emergencies and disasters.

Training:

Angie attended the OIB-TAC conference in Savannah, Georgia. Angie learned more about the expectations and goals of the OIB program and how to implement them. Cristal attended the NE Transition Conference that was held in Kearney. All district staff attended the state staff meeting that was held in Nebraska City. The district staff took a tour of NCECBVI. Cristal attended and was appointed to the Greater NE Workforce Board. Kimberly, Angie and Cristal attended CSAVR in Bethesda, Maryland learning about fiscal processes. Angie, Kimberly and Cristal attended NCSAB also in Bethesda, where the focus was on BEP and Pre-ETS. Cristal attended the CSAVR Transition and Youth Committee Planning via zoom. Fritz, Angie, Cristal and Kimberly attended the state NFB Convention that was held in Lincoln. Kimberly and Cristal attended the state ACB Convention that was held in Omaha. Angie continues to attend monthly OIB program manager meetings via zoom and is participating in the new OIB manager trainings.

Client Outcomes:

Angie had a client take a virtual tour of the Center. Angie had a client complete a three-day stay and start Center training in February. Angie currently has two clients attending the Center. Kimberly has a client graduating in May from Hastings-CCC who also has been offered full time

employment as a mechanic. Kimberly had a client take a Center tour and one client start Center training. Angie had six clients attend the state NFB Convention in Lincoln. Kimberly had two clients attend the state NFB Convention in Lincoln. Kimberly has a student completing a work-based learning experience with a construction company in Grand Island. Kimberly has a student completing a volunteer experience at the Children's Museum in Kearney. Cristal has one college student who is completing her student teaching this spring and will graduate in May with her bachelor's degree in teaching. Cristal had a client gain employment in business operations, other specialists and another client gain employment in heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration mechanics and installers.

Center Activity Report – Jessica Bartenbach

The Nebraska Center for the Blind currently has nine people attending: five consumers and four staff trainees. Three consumers are VR and two are OIB. We had six consumers attending, but one decided to withdraw from training on April 18 due to not being able to commit to regular and predictable attendance and expectations regarding staying at the apartments. The consumer is eligible to return when able to fully participate. Two staff members completed training this quarter, so from March 13-April 18, we had 11 people in training.

A new consumer is scheduled to begin training on May 15. There are three VR consumers and one OIB consumer who are eligible to begin training as soon as their health and/or family issues are resolved.

There have been six three-day stays and eight tours this quarter. Out of the 3-day stays, two have already started Center training, one discontinued the 3-day stay due to deciding that Center training was not an appropriate fit at this time, one has scheduled a start date in May after some medical appointments, and one is waiting to schedule a start date due to family health issues but is hoping to begin in the fall. The other 3-day stay took place after this report was submitted, but prior to the board meeting.

Out of the eight tours, one has already completed a 3-day stay and started training, one has a 3-day stay scheduled at the end of May, one is not yet eligible to attend the Center due to attending high school, one is the primary caregiver for a young child and is not sure about attending the Center, and the others are weighing other options such as attending NCECBVI, Job Corp, or receiving services in the field.

In addition, the Platte Valley Christian School in Paxton and Golden Plains Christian School in Madrid each brought approximately 25 students, staff, and family members to tour the Center and learn about NCBVI services. We also provided tours to a teacher from Crete as well as a staff member from NCECBVI who accompanied a consumer on a tour. Tours were also provided for two applicants completing a second interview for the Lincoln District Supervisor position.

A reporter from Channel 8 KLKN TV in Lincoln did a story on the Center featuring one of our students. It aired on the 10:00 p.m. news on April 13. A link to the video is on the NCBVI Facebook page.

The staff trainees currently attending the Center are: Lizzie Heidenreich (NBE Orientation Counselor, estimated completion May 8), Tammy Thomas (VR Counselor in Omaha hired

February 13, estimated completion June 5), Hugh Phan (Technology Manager hired March 13, estimated completion end of June or early July), and Pam Rademacher (Lincoln District Supervisor hired April 24, estimated completion in early to mid-August).

Mickie Saltzman was hired on February 27 and completed 300 hours of sleepshade training on April 19. He is the new Technology Specialist in Omaha. Ted Haubrich (Shop Instructor) completed staff training on May 2 and will be participating in some training specific to Shop class in May. He will visit the Louisiana Center for the Blind to shadow their Shop Instructor and will also be shadowing a blind woodworker in Alliance. In addition, some woodworkers/instructors will be mentoring him in Lincoln. Shop class will resume this summer. The Center is fully staffed for the first time since February 2022!

A second Cane Travel instructor will be added to the Center as part of our succession planning. Cane Travel is the heart of a Structured Discovery Training Center, and with Jeff Altman planning to retire in the next couple of years, we want to make sure that there is adequate time to recruit and train his replacement to hopefully avoid the position being vacant. A PDQ has been submitted to Shared Services to request the creation of the position.

Nancy Coffman is almost finished with her apprenticeship and will graduate from Louisiana Tech University on May 20 with a Graduate Certificate in Rehabilitation Teaching for the Blind. Her coursework was funded in full with grants from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Nancy will now be eligible to sit for the National Certification in Rehabilitation Teaching for the Blind exam, which is a renewable five-year certification through the National Blindness Professional Certification Board.

Mark Coleman visited the Colorado Center for the Blind during the first week of February to shadow the Student Services Coordinator and Apartment Counselor. He has written safety protocols for the apartments to instruct students in the event of a tornado or fire, and reviews these protocols with three-day stays and new students. These safety protocols were reviewed by the fire inspector who visited the apartments to make recommendations.

Center staff have been certified in adult and pediatric CPR, First Aid, and AED. A replacement battery and adhesive pads for the AED machine have been ordered and all staff in the Lincoln office will be informed of its location. In addition, the evacuation procedures and shelter-in-place procedures have been practiced for fires, tornadoes, and active shooter situations. This information is reviewed with all new students.

NCBVI held a statewide staff meeting in Nebraska City on April 5 and 6. Prior to this, Center staff and trainees also participated in some training specific to the Center. The topics included the NBPCB Code of Conduct, confidentiality, appropriate touch and use of hand-over-hand, Structured Discovery, and review of the emergency procedures and rendezvous spot. We also attended training on AWARE service categories.

In the future, we hope to review and update the instructional guidelines for the Center as these were last updated in 2014 or 2017 depending on the class. This will be important to do prior to our next certification visit from the National Blindness Professional Certification Board in 2024, which also happens to be the 50th anniversary of the Nebraska Center for the Blind.

Center staff have switched to iPhones and were able to retain their landline telephone numbers. Staff also received training on Android and Blind Shell phones and now have access to these devices to train students.

We have continued to participate in Lincoln and Omaha group teachings to help the districts and provide the staff trainees with some supervised teaching experience, though we were not able to help in April due to having 12 people in classes with a 3-day stay attending that day and no substitute instructors available.

The Center schedule has been adjusted to end 20 minutes early to allow students the opportunity to take an earlier bus back to the apartments now that Star Tran has resumed twice per hour service during peak weekday hours. The students appreciate this change so that they have more time to prepare dinner, complete homework, and clean their apartments, as well as have some time to relax before going to bed. Making this change only shortened class time by 5 minutes because the lunch break for students was 1 hour and 15 minutes, but students now return to the apartments at least 30 minutes earlier.

Once Ted starts teaching Shop, Center staff will return to having an office day to build in a substitute and also allow time for planning lessons, writing reports, and completing other projects that are not easily accomplished while teaching, such as working with students on longer travel routes and baking bread.

For activities this quarter, we went bowling and attended the state conventions of both the National Federation of the Blind and the American Council of the Blind. We also participated in a tour of Radio Talking Books, attended a retirement party for Nancy Flearl, and ate out at a restaurant. There were also multiple commencement meals and mini meals this quarter. For future activities, we will be attending the Silver Summit in Kearney in May and the Employment workshop in Lincoln in June.

Vocational seminar covered disclosing blindness during the job application and interview process, and a discussion of the pros and cons of disclosing at different times, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act and reasonable accommodations. TDL's covered deep cleaning the bathrooms.

Drops were held for students and staff members completing training and were also held for everyone on April 17 now that the weather is improving. We have also continued philosophical seminars, and staff trainees are reading Freedom for the Blind by James Omvig. Staff trainees also received an overview of the Client Assistance Program and CAP Disability Hotline on April 27.

Nebraska Business Enterprise Activity Report – Eric Buckwalter

VENDING SITE UPDATE

State Office Building – Lincoln

The remodel of the dining area of the State Office Building in Lincoln is still underway. As of the writing of this report, NCBVI has not been informed of when we will be able to reoccupy the space. Food service continues to operate from the fourth floor breakroom, and Vending continues on other floors not affected by the remodel.

Chief Standing Bear Building (formerly Executive Building)

Remodeling work continues on this building as well. Vending service for this building continues to operate from the lobby area.

Douglas County Justice Center

Vending machines were installed on April 27 at this new facility, which is an extension of our services at the Douglas County Civic Center. A Blind Vendor is operating this building. As of the writing of this report, the building was scheduled to be open for business on May 1.

DHHS – Fremont

Vending services at the DHHS Call Center in Fremont began on April 26 with a Blind Vendor operating the facility.

NBE is working on developing a relationship with DHHS so that, hopefully, we can provide them with service to more sites in the future.

GSA Site – Omaha

NBE is working with GSA on developing a small site for a federal agency scheduled to open a new office in the Omaha area in the fall of 2024. NBE is looking forward to exploring new service options geared toward smaller office sites that do not involve full-sized vending machines.

NBE LICENSEE UPDATE

There are currently 13 licensed Vendors in the NBE program.

VENDING SITE COMPLAINTS

There were no major complaints from sites during the first quarter of 2023.

OTHER UPDATES

New Hire

Lizzie Heidenreich is exiting training on May 8. NBE is excited to have her in the field and working with Vendors.

VMS

After a trial of the VMS program, one Vendor has chosen to continue using it daily in their business. While other Vendors found it useful, the gains for them and their business did not justify the extra cost. NBE will be exploring and offering this tool to other Vendors as they develop their business.

LOOKING AHEAD

NBE, in conjunction with the Committee of Blind Vendors, is looking at holding a retreat style event for Vendors in late summer.

A number of podcasts focused on the vending industry have become available in the past one to two years. Those interested can email Eric for a list, along with links. One of the podcasts is focused on the Randolph-Sheppard Act and issues relevant to Blind Vendors. The other two are focused on the vending/convenience service industry in general.

Kat Carroll – Business Office Highlights

This past quarter, I have worked on the following projects:

- Completed the Federal Quarterly RSA-17 reports due for March 2023.
- Completed the Final Federal Fiscal Year reports due for September 2022 by January 31, 2023.
- Continued training Tammie Dunn on completion of Federal Reports.
- Continue to improve the Internal Budget Projection for FFY 2023 that shows budgeted, year to date expenditures, projected fixed expenditures for the remainder of the year, and remaining funds to spend on client services and extras such as vending machines and technology. Present this information to Leadership and Supervisors monthly to ensure we are planning for the best use of our available funds.
- Continue testing new resources for tracking and projecting expenditures for grant funds which were provided to us by VRTAC at the monthly Fiscal Forums.
- Continue improving client supply inventory tracking and the items kept in client supply.
- Continue work on improving communication between the Business Office team as well as communication between the Business Office and the Field. Business Office Staff attend the monthly Supervisor's meetings for the first hour to continue this work.
- NCBVI is in a very strong financial position. We carried over all the FFY 2022 VR grant plus \$1.5 million of Reallotment and have received \$159,382 in social security reimbursement so far this Federal Fiscal Year. In addition, the FFY 2023 grants show a 6% increase in grant funds for the new fiscal year. For OIB we spent remaining FFY 2022 grant and some Social Security funds that were transferred from VR, and are now using FFY 2023 grant funds and state funds.
- Completed evaluations and SMART Goals for all Business Office staff. Continue working on classifications for Business Office staff to position them so they can better help the Field Staff.
- Attended the Appropriations Committee Hearing for SFY 2023-2025 Budget request. The budget will be advanced to the floor of the legislature by May 2.
- Attended the National Federation of the Blind Nebraska convention along with all Business Office Staff.
- Attending the CSAVR/NCSAB conventions in Bethesda, MD the week of April 16.
- Attending the CSAVR Regional Meeting in Kansas City on May 1-2.
- Preparing for the State Fiscal Year End 6/30/2023.
- Preparing for Benefits Open Enrollment the first two weeks of May.

Kathy Stephens – Highlights

Completed registrations and hotel reservations for staff and clients to attend the NFBN and ACBN State conventions. Also, completed registrations, flight arrangements and hotel arrangements for staff attending the NCSAB Spring Conference and the CSAVR Spring Conference. Made hotel and flight reservations for staff attending the OIB conference.

Worked on updating staff vetting information for USSTRATCOM. Attended a meeting regarding updates to the cafeteria at USSTRATCOM.

Attended the New Commissioner Orientation Training meeting on April 1 in Kearney.

Attended the Appropriations Agency Hearing on February 22.

Attended the NCBVI State Staff meeting in Nebraska City on April 5 and 6.

Attended the Appropriations Committee Hearing for SFY 2023-2025 Budget request. .

Attended a tour of Radio Talking Book and Nancy Flearl's retirement reception on March 2.

Attended an Independent Agency meeting on February 7 regarding Legislation Affecting Agencies.

Working with staff on keeping up maintenance for NCBVI state leased vehicles. Also working with staff and the Transportation Service Bureau (TSB) on GPS Synchronization.

Julie Buren - RSA Dashboard Highlights

Program Year 2022

Quarter 2: October – December

In the quarter reported, NCBVI served 384 consumers. In Program Year 2021 Quarter 2, NCBVI served 388 consumers. Ninety percent of our eligibility determinations were within 60 days and 94.4% of our Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE) were within 90 days. Comparatively, in the previous program year same quarter, we had 92.9% Eligibility timeliness and 100% IPE timeliness. Our rate of employment in this quarter was 50% versus 33% in the same quarter last program year.

NCBVI purchased 108 services for consumers as well as provided 510 services by our staff. The previous year saw 136 purchased and 621 provided services within the same quarter. In addition, 33 students were provided Pre-ETS during this quarter versus 39 last year at the same timeframe. These students received 51 purchased services and 31 provided services by our staff. In comparison from the same quarter last year, we purchased 12 services and provided 60 services via our staff time.

NCBVI closed seven cases in this quarter versus 29 in Program Year 2021, Quarter 2. We had two successful closures in this quarter versus 8 last year in this same timeframe. However, our average earnings per hour was \$36.75 this quarter compared to \$19.75 last year during this same timeframe.

The following sections are a part of our performance measures combined with General VR. NCBVI and General VR worked with RSA to agree on goals for our agencies to achieve. The numbers below are NCBVI data only:

Measurable Skill Gains

We had 102 students eligible for a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) as they are currently listed on their case as being involved in a school/apprenticeship/On-The-Job Training setting. Of those students, we received documentation on 21 students within this quarter as they achieved a skill gain. In the previous year, same quarter, we had 129 students eligible for an MSG and received documentation on 25 students. This equates to a rate of 20.6% this quarter versus 19.4% last year. Our RSA goal is 61.5%.

Employment in 2nd and 4th Quarter after Exit

We had 35% of our closures employed in the 2nd quarter after their case closed and 34% of our closures employed in the 4th quarter after their case closed. In Program Year 2021 Quarter 2, we had 19% of our closures employed 2 quarters after their case closed and 21% of our case closures employed 4 quarters later. Our RSA goal is 60.5% for 2nd quarter after closure and 60% for 4th quarter after closure.

Credential Attainments

In Quarter 2 of this current program year, we had 48% of students enrolled in postsecondary education/occupational licensure receive a degree/certificate. The same quarter last year had 29% receive degrees/certificates. Our RSA goal is 31.8%

Median Earnings

Out of the wages reported to RSA during this quarter, NCBVI had a median earnings rate of \$8,218.19. The same time last year had a median earning of \$6,137.90. Our RSA goal is \$5,058.00.