



2001-2002 Annual Report
Job Connection, Inc.
**CONNECTING PEOPLE TO WORK &
COMMUNITY**

Our **VISION**

Job Connection, Inc. will be well known for excellence in the execution of services provided to clients, employers, and our community. Job Connection, Inc. will expand and deliver flexible services, which command and exceed the expectations of valued stakeholders. We will use a holistic approach to offer growth for adults with barriers to employment and the community.

Our **MISSION**

Enhancing lives by connecting people to work and community, and helping people with disabilities to live meaningful and productive lives.

Board of Directors (2001-2002): Jean Bradford, Billings; Steve Harris, Billings; Mike Hermanson, Billings; Don Kelly, Billings; Bernice Korwald, Billings; Nelita Kolar-Schlosser, Billings; Rita Schilling, Billings

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

I recently read a quote from Abraham Lincoln, “The legitimate object of government is do for the people what needs to be done, but which they cannot, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves.”

This quote strikes a chord with our services as well as our political times. The objective of supported employment has always been to help people who “by individual effort” cannot compete to obtain and keep jobs. JCI helps to do what needs to be done on an individual level.

However, it is up to the government to accept their responsibility for funding these efforts. People with disabilities are among the poorest in the nation so they rely on government to provide help they need. For adults with disabilities, the resources to do “what needs to be done” must come from a conscientious political system and a taxpayer base. It will be interesting to see what choices our state makes in the upcoming year.

People in our program earned a total of \$581,850.00 in the past year. Some of the people we support are making enough to be self-supporting. However, most of the people we support are still partially reliant on the social security system. We know that the value of the job to many of the people we support is not found solely in their earnings but also in knowing they have a place in the workforce and a purpose to their daily routine.

From a historical perspective we appreciate the progress that has occurred in the last ten years. People with disabilities have a great variety of programs available in communities and those programs have the knowledge and desire to help them. There are things we take for granted such as ramps and handicapped parking. Most of the employers we approach now say that they have heard of supported employment and have had successes with supported employees. These are triumphs. In the face of difficult times for human services we appreciate the progress our society has made to make life more inclusive for people who have disabilities.

Services for people with developmental disabilities can be confusing to provide as there are so many experts telling us what is important. Unfortunately, they are not always saying the same things. Sometimes they are actually saying opposite things. Luckily, there seems to be a great deal of consistency in what people with disabilities tell us is important to them. We appreciate the opportunity to hear from people in our program. We gather data from families, professionals and the people we serve. This report contains key facts as well as the results of our quality assurance and satisfaction surveys.

Looking to the future,

Rita Schilling

OUTCOME MEASUREMENTS FOR 2001-2002

Life Supports Measures

Report Period: **Annual**

Measures	Time of Measure	Applied to	Data Source	Obtained by	Goals	Actual
Effectiveness* 75% of individualized objectives set will be completed in expected time frame	Yearly	People in life supports (Not vocational)	Meetings and Data	All Staff	75%	95 %
Efficiency** Staff hired and working within 2 months at least 80% of time for individualized plans	Yearly	People in life supports plans with separate staffing	Yearly intake and start dates	Director Administrative Coordinator	80% within 2 months	100 % We reorganized the staffing of this program and we have been able to start people in services immediately
Satisfaction*** 90% of people will report above 3.5 overall satisfaction with services and accomplishments during our customer satisfaction survey 1= lowest 5= highest	Yearly	People in life supports	Yearly survey	Administrative Coordinator	3.5	4.67
Satisfaction*** 80% of people exiting will report satisfaction at time of exit	Yearly	People in life supports	Exit Surveys	Director	80%	No one exited life supports this year.

We have had a fun year in our living program. Last year we hired a full time person to coordinate much of this activity and we have made progress in gathering knowledge and systems that will support people in their homes. The comments from the people we help and their families were very rewarding. As the system is opening up funding availability, JCI may be providing more of this type of service in the future.

Effectiveness*

As our staffing has been very consistent this year we have been able to complete this goal. We feel this may be a huge challenge in the future because of the potential staffing issues in human service professions.

Efficiency**

We have not had people who required us to hire individualized helpers this year. We have been able to support people with the full time permanent positions that we have and the few part time workers that we have. This will continue to be an issue for us however because of the way the service system is developing payment systems.

Satisfaction***

We have been able to provide the people in this program with some concrete help with critical elements of safe living as well as many opportunities to get out and about in the community. We had great comments from people and their families. We are finding that peoples needs vary greatly from person to person and from week to week. Clients reported having trusting, comfortable relationships with staff. None of our clients picked words like angry or disappointed in their relationships with staff.

Eighty percent of the clients felt they were learning new things and all of the clients felt they were using the things they were learning in their day-to-day life. 90% of our clients felt their life was better since services started. Only 10% felt we had not made much difference.

Over 90% of families reported being satisfied or very satisfied with living services. There were a few suggestions in our report regarding specific issues of clients but no trends.

Having an adequate amount of intermittent help available for unexpected problems will be a critical element relating to our customer's satisfaction and this will be a key area for us to work out. As this program grows we will need to build in the back up systems necessary to sustain quality service. We see this as a potential problem with the funding levels available for this service.

Work Related Measures

Report Period: **Annual**

Measures	Time of Measure	Applied to	Data Source	Obtained by	Goals	Actual
Effectiveness* 1a. Maintain 80% retention of people working over the year	Yearly	People available for work	Database Client files	Administrative Coordinator	80%	92%
1b. 80% of people in classes profit from attendance in classes	Yearly	People in classes	Class Satisfaction Reports	Vocational Specialist	80%	67%
1c. 35% of replacements are in upgrade or more desirable position	Yearly	Currently Employed but requested better job	Database	Director Administrative Coordinator	35%	34%
Efficiency** 2a. Ratio of client earnings per dollars spent in SE program will be under \$1.00	Yearly	Work history of all clients in work	Bookkeeping Database	Bookkeeper Administrative Coordinator	<\$1.00	.65
2b. 80% of VR referrals will be placed within 120 days of starting services	Yearly	VR Referrals prepared to accept employment	Database	Administrative Coordinator	80%	81%
Satisfaction*** 3a. Aggregated individual service satisfaction 1=lowest 5= highest	Yearly	All Clients	Individual Outcomes Satisfaction Survey	Vocational Specialists Administrative Coordinator	>3.5	4.65
3b. 90% of employers would rehire through our program or recommend us to another business	Yearly	All Employers	New Placement Surveys	Administrative Coordinator	90%	100%

33 people received raises this year. 13 people have new job descriptions that would be considered an upgrade.

Effectiveness*

We are above our retention goals for this year. This goal has been consistently being met for us. As we have based our criterion on national benchmarks we have hesitated to raise our percentage but we may do so next year.

Classes continue to be an important addition to the services we provide. Our classes were not as effective for a few participants as we would like them to be. These classes have a lot to do with emotional control and accepting responsibility for decisions. We may start using a slightly different curriculum for clients that are not able to benefit from the curriculum we have been using for anger management.

We have plans to develop a class on building self-esteem with the help of a counselor. We hope this class will build on the skills of the other classes or be an alternative in some cases.

We were a little under our goal of 35% of our clients being in upgraded positions this year. We will continue to work on this issue in the next year. This continues to be an important piece of the employment struggle for people with disabilities.

Efficiency**

This measure of efficiency compares the cost of running services to the earnings of people with disabilities. Our corporate expenses increased as a result of our direct care salary increases last year. Therefore, our clients had to have a substantial increase in wages for JCI to meet this efficiency target. We wondered if client wages would increase enough for us to meet this target when we gave the raise to staff. We had heard that a national study correlated increased earnings for people in supported employment with increased earnings of staff. Our clients earned more in comparison to the cost of providing the service than ever. So, our experience is consistent with the report we had heard about. We would like to see that trend continue. It would be wonderful if client earnings always rose with our staff salaries.

Our average length from intake to placement for people in our VR program was 66 days. We just met our goal for number of people placed within 120 days. This continues to be a struggle for us. We have re-organized our staffing at this time to have a person dedicated to job finding with only a small caseload. We expect this staffing pattern to increase our efficiency in this area.

Satisfaction***

Our satisfaction reports from our clients were consistent with previous years experience. Clients reported feeling confident, trusting, comfortable and satisfied with their relationships with staff. Two people reported feeling frustrated with their staff and one person was angry with their staff. After asking these relationship questions we separate our survey question into 2 categories. We want to know how happy our clients are with their jobs as well as how happy they are with our services.

Two-thirds of our clients think our staff have been very helpful when they needed them and one third believe that they have been somewhat helpful. None of our clients felt we were not helpful at all. That is good news. Last year we had one person give us a zero in this category and we have changed that.

As far as satisfaction with work, 95% of our clients felt they were earning fair wages and benefits for the work they were doing and 5% felt they were not earning enough for their responsibilities. 5% of our clients felt their job was a poor fit for their interests, 25% felt “so-so” about their job and 70% felt their job was a good fit. I believe these numbers reflect our constant need to help people find new and different jobs. This area is related to our goal of helping people have upgraded positions. Our new staff job description should help in this area also.

All employers would hire through our program again or recommend us to another employer. JCI has been doing this work for 20 years and it is great to be at this point with employer's satisfaction.

96% of our employers felt we were successful or very successful in helping a person with a disability become an accepted part of their work environment. Employers wish we could do more about transportation and the availability of people for different shifts. We do not have an answer for the transportation issue but we will make use of every opportunity to make this need known in the county and statewide system.

None of the parents responding were dissatisfied with the relationships their family member had at the job site. 12% of the parents hoped that someday their family member would be able to be completely self sufficient and 88% felt their family member would be better off if they maintained some eligibility for benefits from the Social Security system. JCI asked this question as a new federal program is starting called "ticket to work." This program is predicated on the notion that people want to be totally out of the Social Security system. The program does have some safeguards for Medicare and Medicaid. As a provider for 20 years we see major difficulties with this program. We appreciated the opportunity to check with families regarding this goal.

96% of the families returning the survey would recommend our services to other parents.

Professionals appreciated our flexibility, enthusiasm and follow-through in supported employment. They are satisfied or very satisfied with those services.

Professionals have diverse opinions regarding the results of classes. 67% of professionals are satisfied or very satisfied, 29% are uncertain and 4% are dissatisfied with classes. This is interesting as it correlates exactly with our staff and client's opinion regarding the effectiveness of classes.

Professionals responded as satisfied, very satisfied or uncertain regarding our living services. We have a very small living program and we only have funding for people with Developmental Disabilities. It was clear that many professionals who work with us in supported employment were confused by this question and we will try to clarify it next year.

Employment is an important part of people's lives. We continue to have cooperative relationships with our local businesses. The economy in Billings appears strong. The unemployment rate is still low and there are some openings in entry-level positions. However, we noticed a subtle difference in the job market since September 11. JCI did not make quite as many placements this year as last year. Employers seem more cautious and uncertain. The businesses we worked with in the past have been very willing to hire again and that is always rewarding for us.

MSU-B Survey

Job Connection was fortunate to have MSU-B students conduct a survey for us. They contacted 300 businesses in a random sample. They found that 38% of the businesses they contacted remembered being contacted directly by an agency representing people with disabilities. We intend our marketing efforts to increase the number of businesses that are aware of these services.

Some interesting results from the survey include: a major fear of litigation on the part of some businesses, a tax break did not influence many businesses regarding their decision to hire, a belief that people with cognitive disabilities are not capable of high level positions, restaurants are the business category most apt to hire, and corporations who had hired through supported employment were satisfied and were likely to hire through a supported employment agency again.

The group recommended that JCI do more work creating and maintaining relationships with businesses where we do not have clients. They also suggested that we market our non-profit status more aggressively including the concept of free service to employers. They suggested we look into the use of TV advertising. Of course the challenge is to find the time and resources to follow through on these ideas.

JCI was encouraged by the feedback from the MSU survey team. It was clear that employers who had worked with us recognized us and was complimentary about the quality of our services. We appreciated the ideas on marketing and hope we can incorporate them into our future plans.

Referrals, Changes In Caseload and Demographics

Our system of ongoing support for people funded in our extended employment program has changed. This has also changed the referral system. We know how many people are waiting but we do not know anything about them.

Our caseload remained quite stable for total numbers compared to last year. There are always a few people that leave and few people that fill those openings. However, without additional revenue from the state systems we cannot serve many more people. We have had some turnover in caseload. Some of that turnover is in supported employment and some of it is in short-term placements.

Our population changed from 3 people to 8 people over 51. Age of our population is important, as we need to plan more for retirement options for people. We again have more men than woman in our program. Last year we were evenly divided and that is very unusual. The number of people living with family members has also changed. We have changed our definitions of which counts for family members and that may account for some of the change.

Fiscal Year - Clients Served

Throughout the 2001-2002 year JCI assisted 106 clients. Our service population remains very much the same as last year. Of these clients served:

Gender		Living Area		Disabilities	
Male	47	Billings	98	MR – Mental Retardation	69
Female	59	Laurel	3	LD – Learning Disability	14
		Shepherd	3	TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury	4
		Park City	1	MI – Mental Illness	10
		Huntley	1	Other	9
Age		Race		Living Status	
Under 18	1	Caucasian	99	Independent	49
18-30	44	Native American	5	With Family	34
31-50	53	Vietnamese	1	With Help	23
51+	8	Hispanic	1		

Fiscal Year - Exited Clients

Throughout the 2001-2002 year 15 people left our program.

Gender		Living Area		Disabilities	
Male	7	Billings	14	MR – Mental Retardation	5
Female	8	Park City	0	LD – Learning Disability	4
		Laurel	0	MI – Mental Illness	2
		Shepherd	0	TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury	2
		Huntley	1	Other	2
Age		Race		Living Status	
Under 18	0	Caucasian	14	Independent	12
18-30	5	Native American	1	With Family	0
31-50	9	Vietnamese	0	With Help	3
51+	1	Hispanic	0		

Reasons these clients exited our program are as follows:

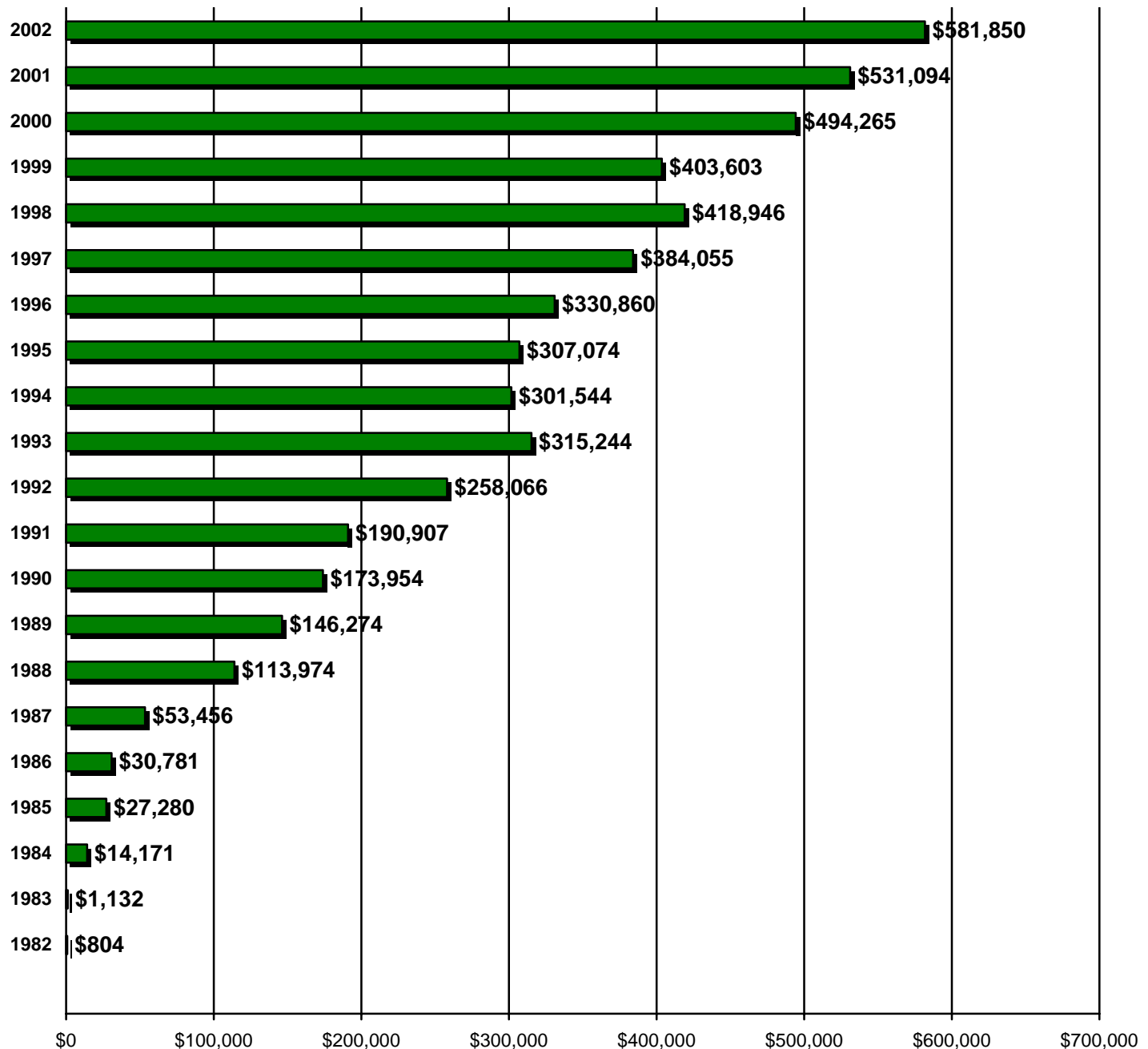
- 2 people did not follow thru with commitment to program.
- 2 people changed to different programs.
- 2 people moved out of the Billings area.
- 4 people left services, as they did not need assistance anymore.
- 4 people changed their mind & decided they did not want services.
- 1 person passed away.

About the same number of people exited this year as last year. The reasons for people exiting services were varied as usual. We did have a few more people deciding that they did not want to work than last year. At times people are referred who have not been in the work force in a long time and they have forgotten how demanding work and schedules

can be. We had 1 person with a Mental Illness and 1 person with a Developmental Disability leave our services, as they were not happy with our services. We notice no new trends this year. As the DD system is changing to a system with more portability we may see more movement in the future.

Wage Report

Client's Yearly Wages



Wages for Job Connection clients in this fiscal year topped the ½ million-dollar mark for the second year in a row. \$581,850 is 9% increase from last year. The total wages clients have earned since JCI's inception is over 5 million dollars.

Fiscal Year – Good News

- 3 people received their driver's licenses
- 1 person received their learner permit
- 1 person moved into an apartment on their own
- 1 person received a GED
- 2 people got engaged

We also celebrated our 20-Year Anniversary with an Open House in February.

Summary of Incident Reports and Trends

Incident reports on medical concerns hit an all time high for JCI this year. One of the people who moved out of his family home to his own apartment was not reliable in taking his medications. His family believed that he would be reliable in taking his medications when he decided to move from the family home, however, he was not. His team tried various approaches in helping him take his medications independently, but he needed a greater level of supervision. We were able to obtain additional support for him through the PCA program and with their daily assistance he is taking his medication.

We have not had any incidents resulting from client anger this year. This is great news as this has been the primary cause of incident reports for us. We have been providing classes on dealing with anger for a number of years. We believe these classes have helped many of our clients to deal with anger.

- 11 Medical incidents
- 2 Community trouble
- 2 Behavioral
- 1 Safety
- 1 Accident

There are no major trends.

Health and Safety

After September 11, 2001, our safety coordinator created a new Emergency Preparedness Plan and conducted in-services for our staff. We also attended a workshop on the Montana Safety Culture Act and re-wrote our evacuation plan.

The Board has implemented a new strategy for Hepatitis B vaccinations and staff has completed their shots. JCI staff has not had any accidents or workman's compensation claims this year.

Health and safety for clients was a major concern for the federal reviewers. As always the field debates the right of clients to make choices if safety or health is jeopardized by their decisions. Teams discuss these issues and come up with the best plan possible.

Staffing Turnover

We have had a great year for staff retention. Our full time staff was stable. We have one outreach, part time worker who has been a great and reliable employee. However, this is the exception rather than the rule and we intend to minimize this type of employment arrangement as much as possible. The direct care salary enhancement that the legislature authorized has been a wonderful boost for our employees and we are grateful for the opportunity we have had to increase pay. Unfortunately the pay scales for direct care workers in our state are still inadequate on a statewide basis and the state needs to address this critical need. People with disabilities are the least able to advocate and care for themselves and therefore must be a priority for direct care and government.

Complaints

We have had one client let us know that the computer we have available for our clients is inadequate and outdated. We are working on upgrading this equipment.

We have had one client ask for different support staff and a different approach to support.

Technology

We are creating a room with an up-to-date computer for clients to use. This computer should be very useful for a variety of needs. Some of our clients can use it to create resumes or look up job related issues. Some of our clients will use it for self-paced improvement on academics or introduction to computers.

We are working on producing a new yearbook.

Accessibility

The 2 major barriers for people to live full and productive lives are transportation and adequate funding for services.

Job Connection has always been active in efforts to educate public officials and the public about the issues facing people with disabilities and we will continue to do so. Hopefully someday we will have enough resources in this great and wealthy country to care for people who have not been given the capacity to be totally independent and self sufficient.

As previously mentioned our DDPAC is trying to address the barriers people face in transportation through a statewide effort. We will do anything we can to support this effort.

NOTE OF THANKS

As always, we want to end this report with recognition of the many wonderful people we have had a chance to interact with. Our staff has been a constant source of inspiration and strength on behalf of clients. One of the best things about the disability field is the great people it seems to attract.

We appreciate the community of professionals we coordinate with. We think we have the “best of the best” in the Billings community.

The employers we get to know become friends. We are truly privileged to have contact with so many great businesses.

Our legislature has been very conscientious in these difficult times and we are grateful for their knowledge and support. While we still have a long way to go to meet the needs of people with disabilities, our legislature is clearly very concerned about the needs of Montanans with disabilities. We will be glad to help them in any way we can to find help to make services both available for people and efficient for taxpayers.