



2003-2004 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 (2003-2004): Jean Bradford, Billings; Mike Hermanson, Billings; Don Kelly, Billings; Bernice Korwald, Billings; Joni Michels, Billings; Rita Schilling, Billings

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Job Connection, Inc. has had a good year. In vocational services people with disabilities earned \$627,917.00 this year. The status of people with disabilities in our nation has not changed dramatically. People with disabilities continue to be amongst the poorest in the nation. The importance of the government, employers and vocational specialists efforts to combat this economic status remains very important. Work is important for many reasons other than economics but few people have the elements of what Americans consider a quality life without economic resources. We are pleased to be able to increase the standard of living for people by increasing their annual income.

Job Connection's community supports and living programs have grown a little each year since their inception. We are pleased with being able to provide a more varied and complete array of services. Our staff has done an exceptional job in developing services that assist people in achieving their goals in a wide variety of areas. As a result of input from people in services and professionals we have added some additional classes and clubs to our variety of services.

We are unsure what the next 2 years will bring to people in our program who have both Medicaid and Medicare as the pharmacy benefit will be totally under the Medicare system for people in both systems starting in 2006. We must work with our legislators and state staff to ensure medication coverage is not lessened or jeopardized during the course of this change.

Going forward, the Developmental Disabilities system is in the midst of a massive redesign. The proposed changes will have a great impact on our corporation and people with disabilities. We feel fortunate that our Board has created sound planning and fiscal management so that we have some stability in this time of change.

Sincerely,
Rita Schilling

Performance Analysis

Life Supports Measures

Report Period: **Annual**

Measures	Time of Measure	Applied to	Data Source	Obtained by	Goals	Actual
<i>Effectiveness*</i> 90% of clients will have an opportunity to try new things	Yearly	People in life supports (Not vocational)	Yearly survey	Surveyor Admin	90%	83 %
<i>Efficiency</i> 90% of clients will feel we give them the right amount of service -- not too much and not too little	Yearly	People in life supports	Yearly survey	Surveyor Admin	90%	84%
<i>Service Access **</i> JCI will have staff budgeted and resources organized so people can have services start without waiting for us to hire staff	Yearly	People in life supports plans with separate staffing	Yearly intake and start dates	Director Administrative Coordinator	90% of people will not have to wait.	100 % Our staff have been very stable and we have qualified people available to start services for people
<i>Satisfaction ***</i> 90% of people will report overall satisfaction with services	Yearly	People in life supports	Yearly survey	Administrative Coordinator	90%	83%
<i>Satisfaction****</i> 80% of people exiting will report satisfaction at time of exit.	Yearly	People in life supports	Exit Surveys	Director	80%	We had one client exit services at the end of last year.

We have changed some of our measures in this service to better reflect our mission. We were disappointed in the number of responses we received from people in living services. We used a mail survey this time rather than hiring someone to call and visit with each of the people in services. We will use telephone calls again next year as our results are more thorough and number of responses are higher.

Effectiveness*

We added some new opportunities for clubs, classes and different events this year in the hope that more people would find something of interest to them. We took a group to a play, added a crafts/friendship club and added a class on relationships. This measure is up from last year but it is not meeting our 90% goal. We will not alter this goal for next year until we have a greater percentage of responses.

Efficiency**

This is a new measure for us for efficiency. We did not meet it this year as we had one person who wanted fewer services. As her comments were not consistent with her response, we were unsure she understood the question. Staff does address this issue before planning meetings as well as in the yearly survey. We expect to meet our criterion next year.

Satisfaction***

Overall people were very happy with services. We receive many compliments regarding our living services. We did have one person unhappy with their staff person. When we explored this with them they expressed mixed feelings as they liked their staff but the person they lived with did not and that put them in the middle. We changed staff so the person did not have to deal with that kind of frustration. The words used most often to describe their relationships with staff were, “comfortable, trusting and happy” when working with staff.

We did have one of our community supports clients change programs and go to COR. We supported him while he was in high school but he needed the hours of a day program upon graduation. He did not indicate any real feelings regarding services. However, his case manager was complimentary and his mother was satisfied with some things and dissatisfied with others.

Parents rated their feelings about Job Connection as satisfied or very satisfied with a collated score of 4.66 out of a possible 5. This is very similar to last year and we hope to continue this level of satisfaction. This measure includes responses from parents who have family members in supported employment but who we help with areas beyond their job as well as people officially in “living services”.

Professionals rated their feelings about our living services as satisfied (31%) or very satisfied (56%) and uncertain (12%). Professionals would like us to be able to expand some of the services we provide to include more people and this has been a part of our planning for the future. With the systems changes that are occurring, the resources may be available to respond to more of these requests. We will be reviewing our strategic plan to see how we have to adapt our goals to fit these needs.

We were able to add an additional person to living services last year and that has added stability and variety to our services.

Work Related Measures

Report Period: **Annual**

Measures	Time of Measure	Applied to	Data Source	Obtained by	Goals	Actual
<i>Effectiveness*</i> 1a. Maintain 80% retention of long-term support people working over the year.	Yearly	People available for work	Database Client files	Administrative Coordinator	80%	95%
1b. 80% of professionals will be satisfied with the results of classes.	Yearly	People in classes	Survey	Administrative Coordinator	80%	81%
1c. 35% of replacements are an upgrade or more desirable position and a choice to change	Yearly	Currently Employed but requested better job	Database	Director Administrative Coordinator	35%	25%
1d. Find and train 45 or more jobs	Yearly	We trained 55 different job descriptions	Database	Administrative coordinator	45	55
<i>Efficiency**</i> 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	.77
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%	92%
<i>Satisfaction***</i> 3a. Aggregated individual service satisfaction is at least 95%	Yearly	All Clients	Individual Outcomes Satisfaction Survey	Surveyor	95%	97%
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%
3c. 90% of clients will feel their work is important.	Yearly	All clients in work	Survey	Surveyor	90%	100%

Effectiveness*

We have been able to maintain our retention at a very high level for the people we provide long term supports to. We continue to track this area as it represents a key area in our mission and our client's lives that we never want to take for granted. We examined our job duties to determine if it would be more efficient to break ongoing support off from other vocational specialist duties however we felt retention levels would be jeopardized by doing this and have maintained job descriptions as they were. We intend on keeping this goal in mind as we change as a result of the system changes that are occurring.

The overall rating of the effectiveness of our classes rose from 78% to 81%. This has met our goal for the first time. We have raised this rating from 67% two years ago to our goal of 80%. We will continue this measure into next year. We will add more questions in our satisfaction survey regarding our classes next year. We have had very successful results for persons in our driver's education instruction and reliable attendance to our

relationship classes. The information we have shared through our relationship class will be part of our ongoing efforts to help some of our clients become less vulnerable to bad influences.

25% of the people in our program had retrains as a result of job upgrades. This is lower than last year. As we look through placements last year, we realize we had a few people who were really struggling and we had to re-place them many times. That cut into our time to find upgrades. We did try a different staff configuration for one person and that helped but we will look into different staffing ratios for more of our people who are struggling in the coming year. We want to be proactive on behalf of people with disabilities so we will continue to monitor this area.

We found and trained 55 different job descriptions this year. That is higher than our goal of 45. We changed a job description to have a lower caseload and to concentrate on job development. We will continue this configuration, as it has been effective for us. We sent staff to a marketing workshop and have revised our brochure for employers. We are also creating some additional marketing materials. We are attending more community events through Job Linc that has helped inform businesses regarding our services.

Efficiency**

This measure of efficiency compares the cost of running services to the earnings of people with disabilities.

This year it cost .77 cents in order to help people with disabilities earn \$1.00. This is slightly more efficient than last year. As the system redesign may provide us with additional resources, we are not sure exactly how we will allocate them. This measure may be affected. The new resources may allow us to work with some people who need a much higher staff ratio and therefore a higher expense. We may need to adjust this measure as the system changes take place.

Our average length from intake to placement for people in our VR program was 61 days except for one person who took us nearly a year. We met our goal of placing 80% of our VR referrals within 120 days. We believe this is a realistic goal as we often have at least one person who is very hard to place. Balancing client choice and the need for efficiency continues to be a struggle for us. We are considering starting a class for some people that focuses on employer expectations in order to help in this area.

Satisfaction***

Our satisfaction reports from our clients were consistent with previous years experience. Clients reported feeling happy, trusting, and comfortable with staff members. Clients also reported feeling happy (91%) and OK (9%) at their place of work. 53% were happy with their wages and 47% were OK with their wages. This is the highest rating in these two areas that we have received. *(While we are delighted with these results it is important to remember that we usually have 95% to 100% of our clients surveyed and this year we only had returns from about one third because we did not call everyone individually.)*

100 % of our clients felt the work they were doing was important. This is an increase from last year.

83% of the people were working the number of hours that they wanted to work and 17% wanted a change in hours. We will monitor this variable again next year and try to understand what is preventing people from more work. We do know what part of this statistic is due to the SGA level of Social Security. If people go over SGA they could earn more but would have less actual income so we have to watch this carefully.

All of our employers are satisfied (37%) or very satisfied (63%) with our services. This is a slight increase from last year. The words that employers used to describe our relationship with them were, “pleased, comfortable and positive”.

All of the employers said that they were receiving the services that they wanted from us this year. Last year about half of our employers wanted to see us more often and so we are very pleased with this change. Our staff makes a huge effort to individualize their time commitment to people in services as well as employers depending on each circumstance. As an agency this effort can affect our efficiency adversely. We are looking at ways we can achieve this satisfaction and still reduce mileage costs.

Last year employers had commented on the difficulty that working around transportation limitations caused. We did not receive any comments on that this year and we went through a bus strike. The entire network of living staff, our staff, family members and the taxi system coordinated quickly and thoroughly to ensure people made it to work through this crisis. We were very proud of our ability to keep so many people on schedule. We continue to advocate for transportation needs for people within the system and are pleased that the new system funding approach will include some funding for transportation for everyone in services. This is a huge success for people in vocational services only and by next year we should know if the amount is adequate.

Families rated their overall satisfaction with the job experience at 4.46 out of 5 possible. This is an increase since last year and we believe it relates to our changing of some job descriptions.

94% of family members felt that the contribution that JCI made to their family members life was very important or important. One family member was uncertain and one did not feel our contribution was significant.

Professionals most often used the words “comfortable, welcome and confident” to describe how they felt when they were working with us. One person noted that she had varied feelings depending on whom she was working with.

Professionals rated their overall satisfaction at a 4.55 out of 5 with 20 professionals responding. This is very similar to last year.

91 % rated the quality of our work with people as excellent or good and 9% felt it was average with no one rating it as poor.

Some professionals noted that it was important to keep communication between agencies flowing at all times. Sometimes that appeared to be between individual staff and sometimes it appeared to be systemic. As a result of this feedback, we asked for and had a meeting with the Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. We were able to clarify each agencies requirements and communication needs and establish some new processes that have helped. We have additionally made a few changes to internal paperwork that has helped with reporting to the DD system.

Fiscal Year - Clients Served

Throughout the 2003-2004 year JCI assisted 114 people. Our service population remains very much the same as last year.

Gender		Living Area		Disabilities	
Male	52	Billings	85	MR – Mental Retardation	72
Female	42	Laurel	4	LD – Learning Disability	7
		Shepherd	4	TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury	2
		Park City	1	MI – Mental Illness	6
		Huntley	0	Other	7
Age		Race		Living Status	
Under 18	0	Caucasian	114	Independent	40
18-30	42	Native American	6	With Family	38
31-50	44	Vietnamese	1	With Help	16
51+	7	Hispanic	1		
		Black	1		

Fiscal Year - Exited Clients

Throughout the 2003-2004 year 20 people left our program.

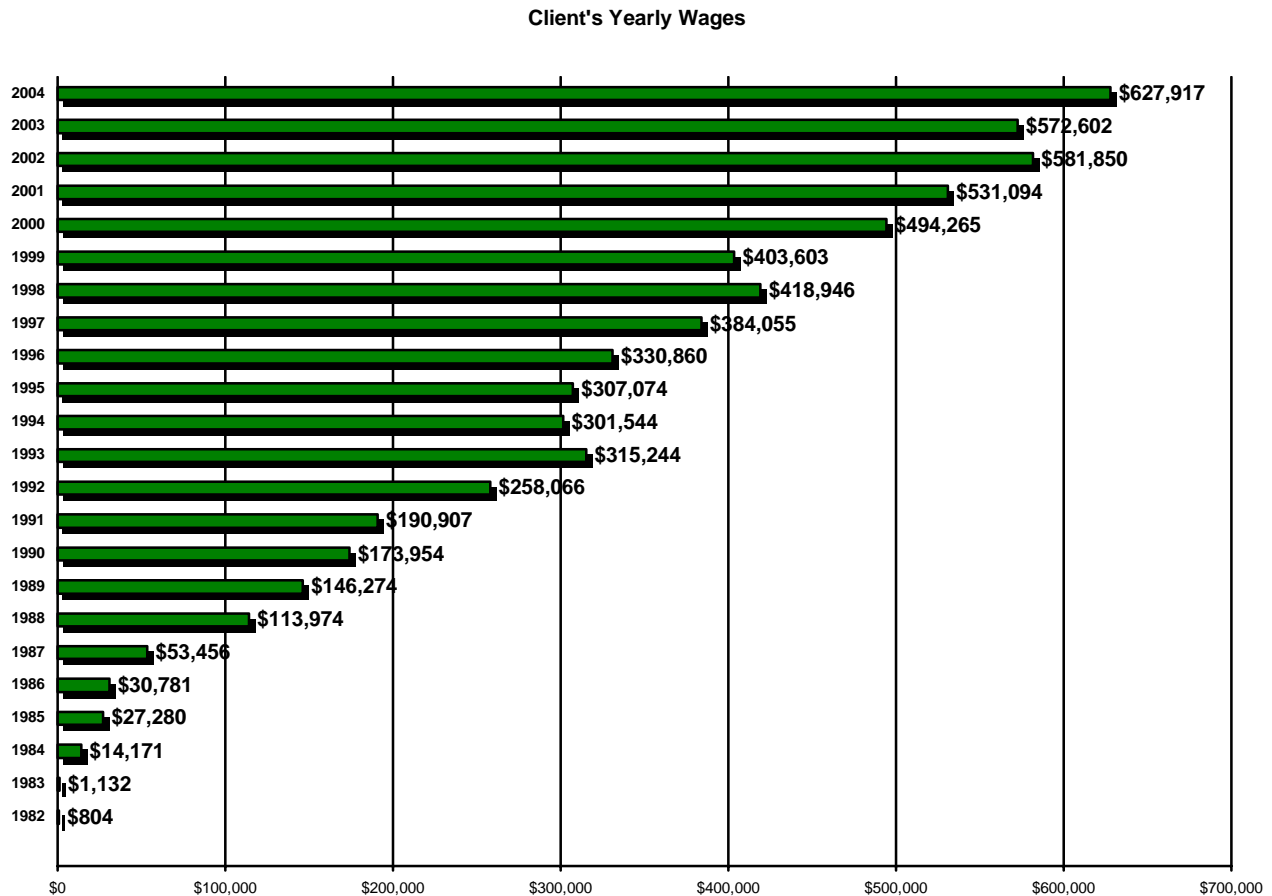
Gender		Living Area		Disabilities	
Male	10	Billings	20	MR – Mental Retardation	4
Female	10	Park City	0	LD – Learning Disability	5
		Laurel	0	MI – Mental Illness	7
		Shepherd	0	TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury	1
Age		Race		Living Status	
Under 18	0	Huntley		Other	3
18-30	14	Caucasian	20	Independent	10
31-50	5	Native American	0	With Family	9
51+	1	Vietnamese	0	With Help	1
		Hispanic	0		

Reasons these clients exited our program are as follows:

- 11 people were successful and did not need services any longer.
- 2 people moved out of the Billings area.
- 4 people changed their mind & decided they did not want to work.

The reasons for people exiting services were varied as usual. We had more people leave successfully employed this year than last year. As the DD system is changing to a system with more portability we may see more movement in the future. One of the clients that entered services this year under portability returned to his home community. It was great that he had the chance to move, as he wanted to try it. He found out that he would rather be close to his girlfriend than be in a bigger town. We do hope to find ways to help people have these experiences without quite as much administrative burden.

Wage Report



Wages this year were \$627,917.00.

The total wages clients have earned since JCI's inception is well over 6 million dollars.

Fiscal Year – Good News

- We had a great year for employment. Our retention of people in jobs was high and the number of people feeling good about their wages and benefits were higher than last year. We worked with some interesting new businesses and maintained solid relationships with our many current community businesses.
- We were able to help some people pass the written portion of their drivers test. The Board allocated resources so that we could purchase a car and the additional insurance so we could teach the driving part of driver's training. We received a very nice compliment from the insurance agent who helped us attain insurance for student drivers about our creativity and dedication in finding a way to provide this. In turn, we want to acknowledge Western States Insurance for their hard work in finding an insurance carrier for us.
- People in our services were able to contribute back to their communities by walking in the Martin Luther King parade, providing Easter, Valentine and Christmas decorations and goodies to schools and nursing homes, and preparing and delivering food baskets to individuals in need.
- People in services toured a variety of community organizations and participated in events at the Metra Park and Alberta Bair Theater.
- Staff was stable. We had no one leave JCI during this time frame.
- We have been able to change some staff's job descriptions to better meet the needs of clients and our agency. Heidi Cole completed training in many aspects of management and leadership and is now taking on some new duties in staff supervision.
- The Developmental Disabilities Division, which provides the majority of our funding, is undergoing a process of discovery and system change. They intend to equalize rates so that providers providing the same services are receiving the same rates from them. This can only help Job Connection, Inc. as we have been funded at a lower rate than others in the state for providing supported employment.
- In this same process they will be giving people more choices and so all agencies will have a chance to develop services that people say would be helpful.
- We continue our excellent safety record.

Summary of Incident Reports and Trends

- 6 medical
- 4 safety
- 1 mental health
- 5 trouble in the community
- 1 missing person
- 2 other

The causes of most of the medical incidents were small accidents that required medical attention or unusual symptoms that we wanted checked out for people in our program. We see no trends here and do not anticipate a need to change any program elements

because of these situations. We want staff being alert to these types of problems and reporting and dealing with them. We did have more incidents this year as a result of client-to-client interactions or interactions that involved some threatening people in the community. We had one client who was involved with people in the community that caused threats to her safety. We worked with APS and her team to extricate her from these relationships. Alcohol was also involved in this situation and we have worked with the chemical dependency treatment people to get help for her. As her treatment plan is still in progress we cannot comment on the results but we are very encouraged. The other people involved are out of the picture for now.

We did see a trend in incidents for safety and community trouble that was a result of unhealthy relationships and often involved the same people. We bought materials for a staff person to develop some expertise in this area and then developed and conducted a class for people experiencing these difficulties. Also one person has changed her living environment to provide more guidance for her spare time. Right now we are not seeing any incidents with this group of people. We will continue to offer classes in this area as people in our program have needs in developing and maintaining relationships..

The Developmental Disabilities Division is changing their approach to incident reporting to include a statewide database that charts incidents and trends. We will end up with three levels of incidents - internal, reportable and critical. The reportable and critical incidents will require reports to the state. At this point it looks like most of the incidents in our agency will fall in the level of internal. We have created a committee on Incident Management and they will be looking at all three types of incidents for trends and action plans.

Health and Safety

JCI sponsored training on yoga for stress reduction and a review of yoga at your desk. Staff requested this, as they were pleased with the session last year. We hope it encourages staff to relax as well as stretch to prevent ergonomic issues. We did have one workman's compensation report go in this year when a staff person strained a back muscle when lifting a box. That staff knows to ask for help in the future.

We did not see any trends this year for issues of safety with clients. We did have a few more client-to-client issues and one person is now in a living setting with more supervision. We did have one person with some safety issues that related to alcohol which was of major concern to us. We have been working with her to accept help and she is in treatment now.

Staffing Turnover and Human Resource Issues

We did not have any turnover last year. We have worked to achieve an adequate pay and benefit structure as well as a work/life balance for our staff. We feel fortunate to have longevity in our staff.

Our corporation uses a staff survey that was developed by the Gallup Poll. The surveys let us know how we are doing in selecting the right staff for the right position, if we are setting clear expectations for staff, if we are providing ongoing motivation for staff and if we are developing staff skills and abilities. This study determined these areas have a direct correspondence to productivity, profitability, and retention of staff as well as customer satisfaction. Our results have been high in all areas, however, the results are slightly weaker in the area of profitability and highest in retention. This makes sense as we are non-profit and we have been dedicated to staff retention. In the new world order all of these variables will be important and we will need to be developing systems that encourage staff to think more about profitability in services. In fact, we have had more staff meetings talking about these issues and we will continue to develop this area of our corporate culture.

We are hoping that the new DD system will not threaten any of the structures we have going for us. There are many components to the system that are changing and that may affect income and stability in the future. Of one thing we are sure. Income will be less reliable and predictable. Of course, like any business, if income is erratic it can affect staffing. The Board has established some fund reserves so that our corporation can have a well thought out response to the changes and it will be our goal to affect staffing and benefits as minimally as possible.

Complaints

We have not had any formal grievances this year. We do keep a log of concerns or complaints. Many times complaints are simply items that need more communication. We have made some changes in paper processes as a result of comments from professionals and we have made some caseload adjustments for our clients. We did have one employer call with a concern and that issue was clarified with the staff person involved.

Accessibility

Transportation and adequate funding for services continue to be the major barriers our clients face. We have had opportunities to give input to the system change efforts underway and we believe the rate structure for services we provide will be better than it was in the past. We continue to support citywide, statewide and national organizations that work with legislative bodies for access to appropriate resources. We invite legislators to our celebration as an opportunity to build community awareness and we participate in local forums. We continue to provide public education regarding the needs of people with disabilities by being present at local job fairs and business forums. We continue to provide staff development to our staff so they can help clients live the life of their choosing.

We are also heartened by the systems new approach to funding transportation for people in the developmental disabilities system and believe it will result in positive opportunities for people in our services. We hope our input regarding transportation has had some

influence on transportation needs. We have added to our program so we can help people become drivers whenever possible.

Our landlords have agreed to make some changes in the parking lot for handicapped parking signs. We have also requested a lever type handle on one bathroom door on the second floor of our office building..

Strategic Plan

Our 5-year plan was reviewed and updated. The mission and values will remain the same. We have 8 strategies and action plans associated with these strategies. The strategies still remain relevant. We have completed or made adequate progress on 45 out of 54 of our action plans. We have provided staff training, changed some job descriptions and added some financial resources in different areas in order to accomplish these plans.

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.

We look forward to a new legislative session as the state is in the black. While they are facing many challenges in funding for education as well as other services, we believe that the trying times behind us have led to some good dialogue in our state and that our legislators will find some solutions. We have been very heartened by our legislators support in the past and we thank the people who do this tremendously difficult job.

Thanks to all,

*Rita Schilling
Director*