

**Department of Public Health and Human Services
Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Extended Employment Program**

Statistical Information

- 271 individuals in Montana currently receive services under the Extended Employment (EE) program.
- 73 others are in VR funded supported employment services and once stable in their jobs, will be funded through the EE program.
- Statewide, there are 220 EE clients on a waiting list who are awaiting an opportunity to work, but cannot yet because of budgetary limits.
- Over 95% of the money in the EE budget is spent directly on helping clients remain employed; less than 5% is spent on administration.
- The EE program is entirely state-funded; there is no federal match.

Reasons to Support the EE Program

- The EE program was created over 25 years ago to serve individuals in Montana who have no other funding sources to rely upon
- The sole purpose of the EE program is to help the most severely disabled Montanans work and be productive citizens.
- EE program participants who are not given the opportunity to work may be forced to use other state-funded services, costing the taxpayers more money in the long run.
- Many EE clients work in positions that would be difficult for employers to fill with non-disabled workers.
- Since EE is the only program available to participants to help them maintain employment, funding cuts will inevitably lead to loss of support services and job losses.

Respectfully submitted,

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Donna started working in 1999 with the assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation and Extended Employment services. On the job, Donna assists in the office with copying, collating, filing shredding and bulk mailings.

Extended Employment services have helped Donna maintain this employment opportunity for the last 12 years. The services are available if Donna is having any difficulties on the job or if she needs to learn a new task. Her success in this job has made it possible for Donna to become a contributing member of the community and also the proud owner of her own home. Donna purchased her home in 2001 and maintains it to this day. This is a dream that never would have been fulfilled if not for Donna's ability to maintain employment. Extended Employment services are there to check in on Donna on a regular basis and intervene when necessary. Donna has always been thankful for the services provided to her and traveled to Helena and testified in front of the legislature back in 2003.

Ann is an individual who has a seizure disorder. She has never been able to keep her seizures under control, making it impossible for her to maintain employment in a competitive setting. Ann attends a sheltered vocational program with funds through the Extended Employment program. This gives Ann an opportunity to work everyday, earn a paycheck, and be in a safe environment. It also provides her an opportunity to make friends and socialize. The Extended Employment program helps maintain a quality life for Ann that would not be available otherwise.