

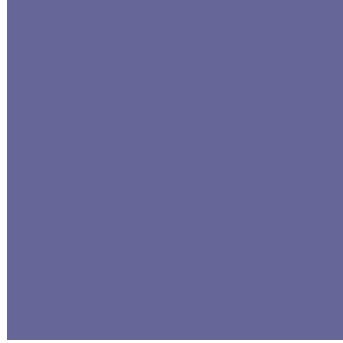
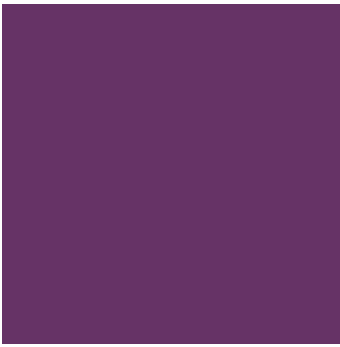


# VR-Business Partnership Profile



## STARBUCKS INCLUSION ACADEMY NEVADA ROASTING PLANT

**View the Starbucks Edition of the Vocational Rehabilitation-Business Partnership Profile to learn more about how the National Employment team developed a national strategic partnership, successfully placing jobseekers with disabilities into employment.**



# Starbucks Corporation

## Background and Commitment to Partnership

**The national unemployment rate for people with disabilities is 11.2 percent – double the jobless rate for the general population, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Recognizing that disparity, Starbucks is launching an on-the-job training program for people with cognitive and physical disabilities at its Carson Valley Roasting Plant and Distribution Center.**

**The plant in Minden, Nevada employs 210 people who distribute products to Starbucks® stores worldwide. Several of the partners (employees) have completed the Starbucks Inclusion Academy program which helps them gain skills and work experience in manufacturing and distribution.**

**The Inclusion Academy is the result of a year-long collaboration between Starbucks and the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR). Starbucks provides training space at the Carson Valley plant and instructors for on-the-job and soft-skills practice. The State of Nevada refers candidates to the program, funds the instructor’s salary and pays for the time candidates spend training on the floor. Participants receive three hours of classroom instruction and three hours of work each day for the first four weeks. In the final two**

**weeks, candidates complete an internship in the Starbucks facility.**

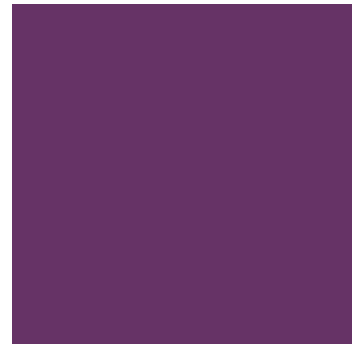
**“The program has opened a lot of eyes,” said Todd McCullough, senior operations manager at the Starbucks facility. “Supervisors and partners look past disabilities and realize we all have different abilities in the workplace.”**

**McCullough said 13 partners with disabilities who work in the plant have had the “highest attendance and best performance” in the building and enhance the work culture.**

**“Sometimes in a break room you’ll see that groups separate themselves, but I’ve seen that change over the past year,” he said. “It’s very powerful to see how the whole team engages with people with disabilities.”**



## The NET establishes a national approach to serving large businesses



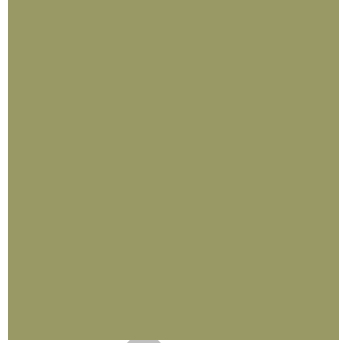
The Nevada VR team worked with the Starbucks's Roasting Plant in Carson Valley to develop a business based training model called the Starbucks Inclusion Academy. Participants of the Academy are individuals with disabilities with career objectives in food manufacturing and distribution. In the last year, Nevada VR supported 5 classes with a total of 28 students, 23 graduates and 21 hires. Starbucks has hired a total of 14 Academy participants and other businesses have hired 7 participants.

In June 2015, the Inclusion Academy Model was shared with the Pennsylvania – VR team and replicated at the York Starbucks Roasting Plant. The 6-week Academy includes:

- Customized classroom instruction for the first four weeks
- A final two-week internship in the Starbucks facility
- Disability etiquette training for Starbucks team members, trainers and partners.

The York Inclusion Academy successfully graduated the first class in September 2015. Of the 6 original participants, 4 successfully graduated from the York Inclusion Academy and all 4 were offered jobs at Starbucks. These new Starbucks Partners earn competitive hourly pay and great benefits like health care, stock in the form of equity and more. The NET and Starbucks are now focusing on developing a strategic plan for expanding this model to other select locations nation-wide, in partnership with VR training centers and community partners.

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## Employees Excel!

Distribution partner Shawn Stainbrook, a Special Olympics athlete, has been at the Carson Valley facility for more than a year. Prior to joining Starbucks he worked for a grocery store for 20 years and said he didn't feel fulfilled.

"Going to work at Starbucks is enjoyable," said Stainbrook. "Now I have goals and would say to anyone who doesn't feel good about where they're at in life, never give up. You never know what's around the corner."

One of the first partners hired at the Carson Valley plant would agree with that advice. McCullough said a partner named Ray, who has difficulty communicating, lived with his parents for most of his life. Since getting a job with Starbucks, Ray has been able to move out and live independently.

In addition to improving the lives of several partners, the Starbucks Inclusion Academy is beneficial for business, said Ken Pierson, DETR Business Development Manager.

"Companies, like Starbucks, that give individuals with disabilities an opportunity to work often end up with some of their most loyal employees," Pierson said. "The investment in training often results in a high retention rate."

Eleven Starbucks Inclusion Academy students will receive graduation certificates from Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval at the Carson Valley plant.



# Starbucks- VR Partnership At-A-Glance

The Inclusion Academy is the result of a year-long collaboration between Starbucks and Nevada VR. The training takes place at Starbucks largest distribution center in Carson Valley, NV. Starbucks provides the training space at the plant and instructors. Nevada VR refers candidates to the program, funds the instructor's salary and pays candidates during their training. Participants receive three hours of classroom instruction and three hours of work each day for the first four weeks. In the final two weeks, candidates complete an internship in the Starbucks facility. "The program has opened a lot of eyes," said Todd McCullough, senior operations manager at the Starbucks facility. "Supervisors and partners look past disabilities and realize we all have different abilities in the workplace." Eli was one of seven Nevada VR trainees that graduated in the first Starbucks Inclusion Academy in October 2014. After the graduation Eli applied for a job at the distribution facility and became a full time partner at Starbucks. The success of the Inclusion Academy in Nevada has inspired the development of similar program in the York, Pennsylvania plant. PA-VR and Starbucks have identified 20 potential trainees for the 2015 program. Two hires have already occurred. This partnership expanded to other areas of the business as well. At least four of PA-VR's candidates have been employed in Starbucks retail locations in Pennsylvania. In Washington State both VR agencies (general and blind) are working with Starbucks to increase the





# How VR Agency Staff Can Play a Role

## Teamwork makes the dream work!



### Leadership

- ✓ Appreciate the value of partnerships and understand how they can add value to the overall mission of VR agencies.
- ✓ Encourage leaders not to be afraid and embrace the possibilities.
- ✓ Be willing to commit resources to strategic partnership efforts.
- ✓ Embrace an integrated team approach. Emphasize that everyone plays a role in developing strategic partnerships with businesses.



### Middle Management

- ✓ Foster alignment between strategic partnership visions and direct service staff values. Communicate the value of strategic partnerships to direct service staff, and helping them understand and embrace it.
- ✓ Harness the basic operational systems to produce candidates for the jobs. Develop systems that will produce a viable talent pipeline.
- ✓ Encourage staff at all levels to seek potential strategic partners.
- ✓ Develop a structure for rapid and consistent communication to take place.



### Direct-Service Staff

- ✓ Create systems at the frontline, direct service level to ensure that quality candidates are referred to businesses. This is most critical for nationwide efforts.
- ✓ Work with middle management and business partners at the local level to ensure the process for recruitment is effective in quickly identifying candidates for positions.

# Key Elements to Developing a Strategic Plan with a National Corporation

Vocational Rehabilitation agencies appear from the literature to have strategic plans in operation for partnering with national corporations. However, the VR itself does not appear to have a policy across agencies for developing strategic plans or make plans publically available. Instead, there are individual state agency plans with corporations. Below are three key steps to developing a strategic plan with a national corporation.



Step 1: Assess the readiness of your team for partnering, and listening business needs.



Step 2: Consider and account for differences in your local area and how it relates to your local needs. Build relationships with local field offices and emphasize importance of strong local community relationships.



Step 3: Develop a plan for the goals and vision of the partnership. Network at the management level to foster new relationships and strengthen existing partnerships. Use past successes to build future successes.

# Explore VR



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Job-Driven VR Technical Assistance Center

Business Engagement Toolkit: VR-Business Partnership Profile

[www.explorevr.org](http://www.explorevr.org)