

Success Stories: Vocational Rehabilitation



Randall Martin



OCCUPATION:
Residential Building Inspector

VR COUNSELORS:
DJ Bartschi and Jake Marino
(Southern District)



VR PROVIDED ASSISTANCE:

- Benefits Counseling
- Assistance with Building Inspector certificates (e.g., study guides, exam costs, seminars, travel assistance)
- Certification
- Clothing and Eyeglasses
- VR Counseling and Guidance
- Choose to Work

For Randall Martin, working in construction was his life. However, things changed when he was diagnosed with congestive heart failure, cardiomyopathy, heart valve disease, depression and chronic pain syndrome. His condition became so severe that he was unable to maintain any form of employment. He started to receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits and stayed home for a time to raise his daughter. By the time he applied for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, Randall had been out of the workforce for several years.

In 2015, Randall was found eligible for VR services, and worked closely with counselors Jake Marino and DJ Bartschi. He chose a vocational goal of Building Inspector, which would allow him employment in a construction-related field. Randall had to obtain four separate certifications, involving both intense study and a grueling examination for each. Testing at multiple locations involved travel arrangements being made by VR support staff. Initially, Randall had difficulty passing his certification tests;

but, with much effort and the encouragement of VR, he was ultimately successful.

To obtain gainful employment, Randall received support from many VR staff. His VR counselors helped him address his employment gap, and how to self-identify as a person with a disability. Choose to Work Specialist Brad Jones taught him resume skills, job-searching techniques, and how to connect with other department resources. Later, as a UWIPS benefits counselor, DJ provided information on the Trial Work Period and how work would affect Randall's SSDI benefits.

Randall is currently working as a residential building inspector for the city of Safford, Arizona. He works full time with benefits earning nearly \$25 per hour. "Construction is who I am," Randall said. "I couldn't have done it without you guys [in VR]!" Using the transferable skills he already had in a work setting that accommodates his physical limitations made all the difference. And that success is good for the heart!