

# Nevada Workers' Compensation Law Blog

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## Conversation with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

I sat down recently with seasoned vocational rehabilitation counselor Jeff Shea to discuss how the depressed local job market was affecting Nevada's injured workers who are referred for vocational rehabilitation services. Jeff is no stranger to overcoming physical adversities himself, and an injured worker cannot complain that Jeff does not personally know how to deal with the extra challenges of a physical disability when reentering the workplace following a devastating injury. Jeff is from Philly, and that explains a lot about his no-nonsense, direct approach to advising injured workers. If you need your voc rehab counselor to sugar-coat the facts regarding today's local job market, Jeff is not the counselor for you. However, if you do need to quickly know what the best schools are in town, and what the realistic job prospects are in the Las Vegas labor market, Jeff can be a valuable ally.

Vocational rehab counselors like Jeff Shea are independent contractors who are hired by adjusters. There are voc rehab counselors who take pride in their work, who have integrity, and who are not scared off by insurers threatening to take their business elsewhere whenever an adjuster disagrees with the voc rehab counselor. I think Jeff is one of those counselors, and I am impressed when he goes the extra mile on behalf of an injured worker he believes is really trying to make their retraining program successful. However, if an injured worker fails to show up for class repeatedly and has no reasonable excuse for poor class performance, don't expect much sympathy from Jeff. While I have questioned Jeff's very tough approach to counseling in the past, I think his approach has merit in today's difficult economy.

When I expressed my concern for Hispanic clients who are unable to return to their former jobs and who are unable to participate in retraining classes taught only in English, his response was, "They should have learned English by now. This is the USA." I have a different view of the problem than that, but I also am at a loss as to how to provide retraining services to injured workers who cannot read and write English sufficiently to attend available retraining programs.

Jeff told me that those injured workers who are best at turning their life-changing injuries into successful new careers are those who quickly realize that the key to their success is a willingness to reinvent themselves. Jeff's words of wisdom, borrowed from Marine boot camp he thinks, are, "Adapt, Adjust, & Overcome". For more information on [how to make the most of retraining](#), click on the underlined words.

Virginia Hunt Law Office  
1945 E. Warm Springs Road, Las Vegas, NV 89119  
Phone: (702) 699-5336  
Fax: (702) 731-9097  
Email: [virginia@huntlawoffice.com](mailto:virginia@huntlawoffice.com)