

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

February 13, 2018

ATTENDEES

Sherri Clark, Nicole Cleveland (left at 1:15 pm), Randy Davis-by phone, Kim Drew, Gary McDermott-by phone, Lori Moore, Rosie Thierer, Brian Warner (non-voting), Scott Turczynski, Alex Watters

IVRS Supervisors:

IVRS Support Staff: Steve Faulkner, Richard Clark, Jeff Haight, Brandy McOmber, Kathy Slater, Kelley Rice, Lee Ann Russo **Other:** Amy Desenberg-Wines, Jessica Kreho, ICIE; All IVRS Supervisors

ABSENT

Jill Crosser, Page Eastin, Pam Fitzsimmons

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Alex Watters called the February 13, 2018, State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meeting to order at 10:37 a.m., with introductions.

QUORUM

A quorum was established with 9 voting members present.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Scott motioned to approve the agenda, Lori seconded. **Approved unanimously by voice vote.**

DECEMBER 5, 2017 MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

Randy motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Kim seconded the motion. **Minutes approved unanimously by voice vote.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment at this time.

There were the following updates from members:

- Rosie noted Iowa Department of Aging's [state plan](#) is on their website and ready for public feedback.
- David introduced Steve Faulkner, new RSB Bureau Chief to the group. Steve spoke briefly about his vision for rehabilitation bureau staff. His plan is to utilize local partnerships and make the local area office integration plans a reality. He also wants local offices to have more autonomy in decision-making and problem solving process to decide what works best for their office and circumstances.

Steve shared his thoughts on how we can serve our customers. As a consumer of vocational rehabilitation services, Steve related his story of how VR can be life changing for the job candidate (JC). He also related how scary it can be to go from a reliance on disability benefits to the independence of employment. He believes the public VR program will survive funding cutbacks by learning how to form partnerships to take advantage of the various partner skills to help JCs in a far reaching effort. It takes more than one person in an office to make a JC's employment efforts a reality. He emphasized the need for IVRS to look at things from the JCs point of view and then determine how to open up possibilities to get a JC to where they need and want to be. One way of being a good fiscal steward is to look to partnerships to stretch resources. With the involvement of more people, he believes IVRS can develop strategies that

bring hope to JCs to achieve their goals. Steve's mantra to staff is *don't be afraid to try new strategies that will take IA public employment services to the next level.*

Steve added that he is looking for a system victory when collaborating with our workforce partners. His idea of success is not to tell an employer or partner what we want, but rather, get to know them and learn what they do, who they are. Only then can IVRS work together to determine how to create win-win situations for all. IVRS should not look only for a VR success story – Steve would like to see success defined as a group accomplishment.

Alex shared that he wants IVRS to take note of these achievements and the partnership effort that resulted in successes. He would like to see more first-person quotes – his is looking for the marketability of IVRS successes. He believes this is important, for example, to utilize in the SRC annual report.

VOLUNTEERS FOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Volunteers to determine potential candidates for 2019 Chair and Vice-Chair are Scott Turczynski, Lori Moore and Kim Drew.

CSAVR VISION 2020

Steve Wooderson is the Executive Director of CSAVR and was the Administrator of IVRS prior to that. He commended the SRC for the information and feedback they will provide for use in the update of the IVRS State Plan. He noted the consistent themes from the SRC survey and the relevancy to the Vision 2020 initiative and vocational rehabilitation going forward. Examples he noted include being dual customer focused, innovative practice delivery, working towards collaborative partnerships, improving referral and application processes, and consistency across area offices.

Wooderson explained how Vision 2020 came about. Iowa Senator Tom Harkin developed a report in 2012 that was the catalyst for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA). The report placed the onus on the public VR system to make significant changes. Issues such as slow responses to requests and duplicative partner efforts drove some of the changes we see in VR today as a result of WIOA. The legislation compels efforts towards competitive integrated employment outcomes, Pre-ETS, and the concept that business and consumers are dual customers. At the national level, CSAVR decided to step up and develop an initiative; this was an acknowledgement that we can do better – so Vision 2020 was developed.

Nationally, VR's failure to demonstrate innovative solutions to competitive integrated outcomes will result in changes to the public VR structure – so it is important for VRs to justify their need to serve the employment endeavors of those with disabilities. In DC, legislators look for ways to downsize and consolidate workforce and VR. Changes to the public VR system aren't just because of federal mandates, but also as a result of state level policy and practices. This is where SRCs can advocate and communicate for VR.

Areas of focus for IVRS and SRCs as it relates to Vision 2020:

- Clarify the role of the VR counselor. VRs simply don't have the resources to expand FTEs. SRCs can look to solutions as it regards VR partnerships. What pathways can SRC develop to leverage resources?
- Business engagement is another focus. Mr. Wooderson confirmed that Iowa is mirroring what is happening at the national level.

CSAVR is looking at industry research to help put the concept into action. Wooderson encouraged SRC to stay true to their mission of working in partnership with IVRS. There is a need for VRs to change the paradigm of how business is conducted and there are a lot of

demands placed on VRs. There is constant disruptive technology, particularly in government; with an increased expectation of timely responsiveness by stakeholders. VRs are always looking for new talent. Wooderson encouraged state agencies to look away from being a machine and more of a living organism – and therein is the struggle: moving away from operating in silos and government bureaucracy to a “living organism” that is responsive and flexible. Wooderson noted that CSAVR also doesn’t operate in a silo, as they work with all state VR agencies as well as federal agencies such as the DOL’s Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Administrator Mitchell asked for Mr. Wooderson’s thoughts on an email received February 12 from Rita Martin regarding the 2019 President’s budget request for the Department of Education as it applies to VR and the impact of no funds requested the Supported Employment State Grants program. Wooderson noted that IVRS is a mandatory Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) program. He is not expecting any more COLAs, noting that not all social services programs are funded with a mandatory COLA. Wooderson stressed that it is difficult to lobby for more federal dollars if the national VR programs aren’t spending all of their federal dollars. The vocational rehabilitation program is in a better position when funding is utilized and spent. Rosie asked if cutting out supported employment will result in cuts to state federal funding, David responded that does not seem to be the case as of now.

Wooderson encouraged SRCs to pay attention to federal legislation involving HR 620, which affects civil rights for people with disabilities and their access to public accommodations/businesses, etc. This proposed amendment to the 27-year old Americans with Disabilities Act, opens opportunities to chip away at the Act and shifts facility accessibility from businesses compliance onto those with disabilities. SRC members were encouraged by Wooderson and SRC member Gary McDermott to contact their members of Congress as a vote was anticipated this week.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT/WORKFORCE UPDATE

David shared the news that SRC Chair Jill Crosser is unable to finish out the last two meetings of her term and read the message she sent to SRC. Attention was directed to the Administrator’s Report provided in meeting packets for any updates.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

IVRS Data Analyst Jeff Haight provided agency financial charts and tables in the meeting packets. Highlights of his summary:

- Federal funds remain steady
- State appropriations match for FFY18 decreased from \$122,651 from the prior year.
- Other revenue from third-party contracts such as Transition Alliance and Project Search decreased \$495,149.
- The sustainability model shows a negative cash flow in FFY19, with a difference of \$3,014,732.
- Case authorizations and expenditures are higher than a year ago. The increase is due to a change from when the fiscal year funding is determined, which is now by the authorization date, rather than when the service is received.

David added that without the ability to gain new full-time employees, IVRS relies on partnerships to expand capacity such as Transition Alliance Programs and the college Intermediary Networks. These services allows us to meet the 15% goal of serving Pre-ETS students, so cutting these services isn’t a good option. If IVRS doesn’t meet the goal Pre-ETS goal, the unspent funds must be returned. The challenge is that the federal regulations came out two

years after the law was enacted. It was difficult for VRs to know what needed to occur to meet this requirement – such as activities and tracking.

Also of note: Federal changes from RSA in how the agency records expenditures caused some programming changes in IVRS' case management system.

LUNCH PRESENTATION – PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

Burlington area office supervisor Cynthia Whalen presented on their summer Pre-ETS program in which they worked with 43 students in a four-county area from June – August 2017. These students had the opportunity to explore careers in the 16 career clusters (1. Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; 2. Architecture & Construction; 3. Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications; 4. Business, Management & Administration; 5. Education & Training; 6. Finance; 7. Government & Public Administration; 8. Health Science, 9. Hospitality & Tourism; 10. Human Services; 11. Information Technology; 12. Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security, 13. Manufacturing, 14. Marketing, Sales & Service; 15. Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics; 16. Transportation, Distribution & Logistics. Because students came from four different school districts, it took a considerable amount of coordination; planning efforts began in January 2017. The goal was to give students an experience in each of these areas. They organized 23 different job exploration tours and speakers came in to talk to students as well.

Some of the activities included a Work-Based Learning experience at the century organic farm Homestead 1839 and Counseling on Opportunities, in which VR partners assisted – for example, Iowa Workforce did a Colors personality assessment. Sample workplace readiness activities included team building with ISU extension services and resume building with a Southeastern Community College career coach. Self-Advocacy included learning how to ride a city bus, financial literacy, and a DOT driver's license presentation.

Transportation was an issue for the students. IVRS rented vehicles to assist with this barrier to student attendance. Supervisor Whalen shared that initially students weren't excited about being in the summer program. It was a transformation as they began to bond with other students, come out of their shell, and gain confidence in their abilities as the summer went on.

Liability issues addressed through IVRS staff attorney Kelley Rice, who is working with the Iowa Department of Education on a Memorandum of Understanding. If the activity is within the scope of the IPE, the school will assume responsibility and if it is within the scope of VR services, IVRS will assume that responsibility.

The program was so successful that the school districts involved are changing their curriculum to include this type of experiential learning, which cannot be replicated in the classroom. The hope is to extend this opportunity to all students.

Alex Watters asked about the barriers and challenges in developing this program. Cynthia shared that the scheduling and mapping out of so many varied activities was a big challenge. Another challenge for VR staff was the continued focus for 8 weeks on the summer program, which made it difficult to balance with office activities, caseload management, etc. Starting early in the process included preliminary work with schools to get them to buy into the process, the schools were not in close proximity to each other so there was a lot of travel as well. Lori Moore noted that the early planning also helps with student IPE planning.

David stressed factors that came together to make the summer program successful: good leadership to drive the effort forward; a staff who were fully engaged in the process and advocated for thinking out-of-the-box to make it happen; good communication and early

planning to get the summer program schedules in schools by April so there was plenty of marketing opportunities. In fact, the summer program was so successful, they had to limit participation. Cynthia said the PowerPoint presentation used at today's meeting, which included interactive videos of student and parent feedback will be used in next year's planning and marketing efforts to schools.

Alex questioned how many offices have a summer program – Brandy noted all offices have something, but not all are of the scope that occurred in the Burlington office. SRC member Brian Warner, who is a counselor in the Mason City office, shared plans to bring in a construction simulator a healthcare simulator and a North Iowa Area Community College drone instructor to demonstrate how drones are used in meteorology. An addition plan is with Subway Sandwich, where students learn how make a sandwich in the time allowed by Subway. The Mason City office is trying to attract students through these types of interesting and varied activities.

RSB REPORT

IVRS Policy Manager Brandy McOmber provided a Coordinating Council (CC) Update. The Scope of VR Services policy was discussed at the last CC meeting. The CC felt IVRS' belief in the Employment First initiative as well as agency support of customized employment services is important enough to add to the policy. Additional changes including removing instances in which opinion was inserted into the policy.

SECTION A – DESCRIPTION: Items noted under section A., items 1 – 9 are primarily principles for which the agency should strive. Several items were removed because the CC felt the verbiage did not add value to the policy. Items noted in red in the handout provided are additions or revisions for clarification.

In response to a question about explaining Employment First, Brandy noted it is explained in the definitions section of the policy manual as well as other sections. She said she can add a link to the definition to explain this, as well as customized employment.

SECTION B – SCOPE OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES – for items 1 – 22 in this section, IVRS has removed any redundancies as well as any confusing verbiage.

- Item 6.(d) regarding Transitional Employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness had previously been excluded from the policy. This omission was brought to IVRS' attention by SRC member Page Eastin, who is the CAP representative. This has been corrected and is added back into the policy.

SECTION C – AGENCY EXPECTATIONS – this entire section is removed. It isn't appropriate in this particular policy as it speaks about authorizations and billings. IVRS has a billings and authorization policy that covers this info and would be the most logical place that staff would go to look for this information.

Rosie Thierer asked if they could still send comments to Brandy after SRC members have a chance for a more thorough review and Brandy indicated yes, to send comments to her.

BREAKOUT FOR AREA OFFICE LOCAL PLAN DISCUSSIONS

David noted that small group breakouts would take place for the next hour to give SRC members a chance to learn more about what the local IVRS offices are doing to address issues that came up in the survey assessment and how the data will affect the needs assessment. Members were paired with SRC support staff and area office supervisors for a chance to get into the details and discuss any issues they would like.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach – Lori Moore, Committee Chair

Lorie shared that the small group recap was intended to support the activities of the Outreach committee. Her group was excited to hear the changes and positive stories that are coming out of concerns noted in the survey. She expressed appreciation for the shared information and noted that it was refreshing to learn of the agency strategies.

Amy Desenberg-Wines, with whom IVRS has contracted to spearhead the data gathering, outreach and feedback efforts for the committee encouraged the group to feel comfortable in letting them know what they can do to facilitate efforts to address issues. She stressed that clarity is important among SRC and IVRS – supervisors can learn about what SRC is doing and vice versa, there should be opportunities for members to learn what happens in area offices around the state. She suggested that future topics for an SRC meeting could include having supervisors present to the larger SRC group on these items. Another suggestion included Interactions between the Employment First CoP and SRC members.

Lori updated the group on the new SRC brochure that can be used as a Their plan is to incorporate feedback from today's committee meeting and have a final draft to share at the next SRC meeting in May.

VR Service Delivery – Rosie Thierer on behalf of Committee Chair Page Eastin

The IVRS rehabilitation rates for the period 2013 – 2017 were the lowest in these four populations: Intellectual Disabilities, Psychiatric Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Deaf/Hard of Hearing. They recommend a primary focus on Intellectual Disabilities and the Deaf/Hard of Hearing groups.

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES – more individuals who elect to work in sheltered workshops may be closed in Status 28. In addition these numbers include individuals with failed attempts at competitive integrated employments as well as people referred from sheltered workshops who don't really want to work in the community.

- **Recommendation:** better utilize contract services to assist counselors with caseloads, for example move older workers into OWEP, freeing up capacity to work with this population.

DEAF/HARD OF HEARING – a survey sent to the field offices found three staff members fluent in ASL and seven who have some ASL. No staff were serving the Deaf community who are fluent in ASL and there is a shortage of ASL interpreters in Iowa.

Recommendations:

- bring the seven staff members up to proficiency, with a goal of up to 12 staff proficient in ASL.
- Connect with Iowa School for the Deaf for training and/or offer continuing education training for select staff to learn ASL, with a recommendation of one staff person per region.
- Train staff on cultural competency, bringing the Deaf/Hard of Hearing community to counselor meetings to present to IVRS staff.
- Add ASL selective to job posting in those area offices with higher Deaf Iowans.

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER – Staff aren't comfortable serving individuals with ASD due to behaviors, and OJT and Apprenticeships are underutilized as staff report that OJ paperwork is too cumbersome.

Recommendations:

- Poll staff to measure comfort level and knowledge of potential accommodations

- Review process on how OJTs are authorized
- Training for staff and CRPs
- Share job analyses between all staff and partner agency staff in an easy-to-access location such as Google Drive.

PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES – Staff aren't adequately trained to work with this population, cannot provide services as quickly as needed. There are a lack of CRPs specializing in providing supported employment to this demographic.

Recommendations:

- Discuss how Drake University and the University of Iowa can be influenced in this type of training through their programs.
- Use the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) to train staff on job accommodations for those with psychiatric disabilities.
- Train IVRS and CRP staff (train the trainer)
- Explore Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model

Steve Faulkner commented that the U of I Rehabilitation and Counselor Education program had been diluted over time with the addition of rehabilitation and mental health counseling program. He had the chance to talk to them recently and found them open to going back to the original program. They asked him what specific coursework could strengthen the rehabilitation counselor program.

David noted the Resource Team will be meeting soon to discuss strategies for the recommendations from the VR Service Delivery committee.

LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION PLANNING

Lori noted they have decided to keep the reception low maintenance this year. She wrote personalized invitations to the House Appropriations Committee. SRC will hand out chocolate and focus on greeting and talking with legislators. In previous years, food was provided but they found it wasn't received by those for whom they had intended.

David shared these key points for SRC:

- The brochure includes all appropriations – which we don't usually do. He clarified that IVRS is a pass-through entity for Independent Living.
- IVRS/SRC supports the governor's proposal. Senate File 2117 would have a huge impact on VR funding and so we are not supportive of this.
- The House study bill is supportive of the governor's budget and House File 648 is now consistent with the governor's budget.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion for adjournment was made by Scott and seconded by Lori; all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

The next SRC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 8, 2018, in Des Moines at the Jessie Parker Building, Knudsen Room, from 10:30 a.m. until 3 p.m., with committee meetings beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Meeting minutes approved by the Council on this date: _____

SRC Vice-Chair – Alex Watters _____