

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 6, 2018

ATTENDEES

Dennis Bruce, Nicole Cleveland, Randy Davis, Kim Drew, Gary McDermott (phone), Monalisa McGee (phone), Mari Reynolds, Daryn Richardson, Kyle Roed, Lisa Schneider, Scott Turczynski, Brian Warner (non-voting). David Mitchell, (non-voting)

IVRS Support Staff: Steve Faulkner, Jeff Haight, Brandy McOmber (phone), Kathy Slater, Kelley Rice-afternoon, Lee Ann Russo.
Other: Other: Derrick Willis, UCEDD

ABSENT

Page Eastin, Alex Watters

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Scott Turczynski called the November 6, 2018, State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meeting to order at 10:42 a.m.

QUORUM

A quorum is established with 11 of 14 voting members present.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Nicole motioned to approve the agenda, Kim seconded. **Approved unanimously by voice vote.**

SEPTEMBER 11, 2018 MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

VR Service Delivery – Brian Warner– the committee viewed the annual report. Changes they suggest include updating the group photo for the legislative reception if one is available, adding the committee to which each member participates on the membership page, and re-ordering the pages so that the committee page is before the listing of the membership. This group continues discussion in these areas of focus: Section 511, the satisfaction survey results and reviewing activity/actions related to this, as well as reviewing outcomes for targeted populations, particularly minority populations.

David asked the committee to consider whether they would like the topic of Section 511 to be added to the general agenda to allow more time for all in this discussion. He provided additional background regarding what is happening in Iowa. IVRS maintains contracts with 75 CRPs across the state. Previously, all were 14C holders. When the WIOA legislation was implemented in 2015, it changed the makeup of the industry. As an example, Goodwill is 100% paying above minimum wage. People can work in the community with the right services and supports. David added that this isn't as easy as it sounds as it changes the business model. However, IVRS is committed to this and none of IVRS funds have supported subminimum wage since 2001.

SRC member Daryn Richardson added that not just WIOA but HCBS (home and community-based waiver services) are pushing for this. This is a concern for parents, who fear the loss of

safety and supports; it requires education to help them understand this shift in practices. There are now more people in community employment than sheltered workshops as people are embracing the philosophy of employment as the first option. SRC member Mari Reynolds noted that her employer, ASK, provides handouts regarding Employment First and WIOA for parents to help them understand.

The SRC has embraced the Employment First initiative early on; Monalisa asked if SRC members should be a bigger part of this conversation, such as the ICIE-led monthly phone calls or the monthly EFSLMP calls. There was no additional discussion regarding her proposal at today's meeting, but those activities are available and open to all members to participate if they are interested.

Mari also shared the role of the ASK Resource Center – which is a resource for families of children with disabilities and includes education and awareness to families. Mari attended a conference in Cedar Rapids last week about transition and addressing the concerns of parents, such as safety. Parents might not seek employment for their children due to these concerns. ASK's role is to help problem-solve these issues, as well as to help them to understand their rights, the law, IEPs, etc.

Lee Ann reminded the council that ICIE has a contract with the SRC in regards to the statewide needs assessment. One of the areas where feedback is gathered and work has occurred is in the Section 511 activities. Further discussion can occur regarding this with ICIE if the Council is interested.

Outreach – Kim Drew, Committee Chair – The January legislative reception was the topic of discussion. Kim confirmed that IVRS will put together a legislative flyer; David said VR will develop a one-page sheet of talking points. IVRS will also send out a draft to SRC members of what can be sent to legislators as the date gets closer.

Typically, the reception is used as an opportunity for education and awareness. Agency Assistive Technology Specialist Vienna Hoang will attend with a table to inform about AT devices. Former Marshalltown IVRS job candidate Julie and her counselor Rhonda Draisey, and hopefully her Kwik Star store manager will also be attending to share their collaborative success story. The committee discussed the possibility of getting a local TAP [student](#) that might attend the January event. David said Ankeny or DSM schools would be possibilities for a TAP contact. The committee was supportive of trying to make this happen. The group is in favor of having food at the reception. David offered to donate coffee. There was discussion with the entire council about whether to provide to-go bags or donuts and coffee. There wasn't a consensus at the meeting, so Kim will decide. IVRS will assume responsibility for all the logistics for the event.

Looking ahead, the council mulled the idea of honoring a legislative champion for the 2020 legislative reception. This would be a legislator who is a supportive champion of VR services. David suggested members reach out to their local area offices to keep in touch about council efforts, develop relationships with their own legislators and coordinate with IVRS offices on their October 2019 NDEAM (National Disability Employment Awareness Month) activities. Another idea proposed is for each office to nominate someone. This would allow for several legislators to be recognized. Lisa Schneider mentioned that Senator Yokum has been a good champion of VR services and for those with disabilities. Kim said further discussion about this is anticipated.

Lee Ann added that they also reviewed the state plan and any revisions made to the plan since last the last meeting.

WORKFORCE UPDATE

Page Eastin was unable to attend due to a mandatory Workforce training. She provided a detailed handout in advance to council members with her updates. David added that there is an upcoming meeting on November 14 with Workforce and IVRS supervisors. This is an outgrowth of the Disability Access Committee. Every IVRS area office is involved with their local Workforce One Stop center to build their partnerships. They will work on six or seven service areas to move forward the model of integration of services. The effort is very locally-driven.

Lee Ann added that IVRS handoffs to Employment Networks (EN) such as Workforce Development for job candidates who are also Social Security beneficiaries is increasing. This ensures that when an SSA recipient is successfully employed and their case is closed with VR, they are directed to an EN to ensure employment services aren't dropped.

RSB POLICY UPDATE

No new policy was introduced due to a focus on internal controls, which is required by VR funding authority, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Internal controls address how the agency ensures processes are working effectively and reported correctly.

UPDATE ON R-406 FINANCIAL INVENTORY: Reference to the SSI and SSDI benefits information has been removed from the policy and the form. Family SSI and SSDI has also been removed so it is not considered a part of the calculation. An internal discussion occurred regarding the 133% participation rate. Because some rates are higher and some Medicaid rates are lower, it was determined the current rate ensures fairness to all job candidates, even though it is higher.

UPDATE ON POST-EMPLOYMENT: No changes from the last SRC meeting, so the policy is finalized as presented.

INTERNAL CONTROL PROCESS:

PowerDMS is a policy management system that is cloud-based, which allows all policy, Memorandums of Agreement, forms and documents to be accessed by anyone with internet access. Currently, policy can only be accessed via a VPN connection. IVRS made this change as a result of numerous challenges incurred with the current way of creating, updating, and maintaining policies, e.g. using Word in a shared drive didn't allow for the historical tracking of changes, oftentimes changes were lost. PowerDMS provides the most up-to-date version of all policies and forms and allows for a public, citizen-facing link. This ensures everyone has the most updated version and all (particularly VR staff) can readily access forms via the IVRS internet website. In addition, VR staff can send a link to others outside the agency for easy, go-to access. Policy can also be linked to staff training and testing within the PowerDMS system – they can also print reports to gain a better understanding of what is working, where more training is needed, etc. The policies will also meet Section 508 compliance for accessibility.

David attended the Fall CSAVR conference, where he learned more about our internal control policies. Eighty percent of our dollars are from the federal government and our regulatory agency, RSA, wants to know by what means we document how we are following policies – and how we take corrective action if we aren't following the policy. Brandy has a key role in the policy, expectations and monitoring. An example: A job candidate has a medical appointment; however, they do not attend. The agency is billed for the no-show. In the past, IVRS paid for the no-show, however, we have learned that we can't pay for cancellations using federal dollars.

Additional agency challenges related to internal controls and federal requirements includes data collection. An example of this would be the TAP program, in which IVRS has 16 partnerships with a 50-50 shared cost. The school's percentage of funding allows IVRS to draw down four

times that amount. IVRS must document and break down each service a student receives daily. That data is used to document the actual value of the services. Data collection and documenting is time-consuming. Not only is it necessary, but the requirements are becoming more stringent. Daryn added that council members should keep in mind there isn't more funding for these required activities, it affects VR staff, contract managers who must provide oversight, CRPs, teachers – all people involved in any VR contracts are impacted.

A PDT survey of staff reflects frustration with data collection and reporting. Specific feedback will be used to guide the agency in how to address this issue. Mari asked if staff seeing the information culled from the data collection would help them to feel motivated in the required collection process – especially if they can see a correlation between their actions and the results. David said the challenge is finding a good way to share a significantly large volume of information.

LUNCH PRESENTATION – MOVING THE EMPLOYMENT DIAL FORWARD
Mr. Derrick Willis, MPA, is the Associate Director of Iowa's University Centers for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).

Mr. Willis discussed the many partnership connections between IVRS, UCEDD and others, such as APSE and the ODEP EFSLMP. He said progress in the employment of individuals with disabilities cannot happen without partnerships to accomplish all that is needed. The UCEDD was established by the Developmental Disabilities Act. Each state has a UCEDD, DD Council and Advocacy agency – in our state, the advocacy entity is Disability Rights Iowa.

One thing they have learned in community conversations and agency partners is that areas of improvement are needed in disability self-advocacy and self-sufficiency. Employment is the means to achieve improvement in these areas. VR principles resonate and align with UCEDD. Their five-year plan looks at gaps in services as they apply to their core functions. They share the philosophy that everyone can work.

UCEDD core functions include preservice education and training, community services, research and evaluation, and information dissemination. Some examples provided include university trainees from various disciplines receive training on disability as well as community service opportunities; Career Connections with the Iowa City school district on pre-employment training as well as Title V healthcare clinics; information dissemination, which included two public awareness events this year – one during NDEAM; technical assistance, policy research and evaluation. They have partnered with DRI on careers within the food services industry and looking at what barriers need to be removed for employment in that field.

Key partnerships they have in common with IVRS: Sue Ann Morrow works for UCEDD, APSE and specifically in Money Follows the Person (which will sunset at year-end). She has assisted 650 individuals in moving them out into the community. Tammy Amsbaugh is a key player in the Kessler Foundation grant (technology in employment), the focus is on assistive technology in rural areas to keep individuals employed. Julie Christiansen is the UCEDD director and is also on the APSE national board, which allows her to bring emerging practices back to the state. She also serves on the State Employment First Leadership Team.

Mari inquired if the UCEDD community conversations have been published. She would like a copy of the results from Derrick.

RSB UPDATE

Steve discussed the importance of collaboration. He attended three events during NDEAM and had the chance to meet some of the people whose lives have been impacted through the

partnerships. He said that employers and managers also noted the value of their employees with disabilities. He said that although there are mandates regarding data and numbers, the most profound takeaway is the impact on people's lives and the affirmation that we are providing value to both employee and employer. The PRE-ETs summer programs involved tremendous collaboration and Steve appreciates comments from students about how the programs have helped them.

David asked Kyle, who works in a human resources capacity, what he would recommend could add value to the NDEAM events, based upon his participation in the Waterloo event. Kyle recognized the increase in employers that attended, but would like to get more advertising and connections established within the business community regarding the event. Year-round, IVRS should continue efforts to rally the business community about why the employment of people with disabilities is a good business strategy and not a "charity case." IVRS can also tout recognizing successful employer partnerships and offer encouragement to have employers testify to their business successes in the employment of those with disabilities. Kyle would like to see a narrative from employers. David will follow-up with the Waterloo area office on possibilities for next year's NDEAM activities.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

David drew attention in his report for the restructuring of the administrative team that reports directly to him, called PDT – Planning and Development Team. This change is designed to ensure that all staff get a consistent message, they have a designated go-to person, and that process and outcomes will be the same, even if the strategy at the local area is different.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Jeff distributed a handout with questions the agency Budget Team addresses in their meeting. Key takeaways:

- IVRS can match all the federal dollars with state appropriations and other non-federal dollars.
- IVRS is not requesting more dollars in their state appropriation.
- SSA federal dollars received from agency efforts in the Ticket to Work program doesn't count as match dollars.
 - In 2018, the agency earned approximately \$2.8 million in SSA payments for work to help SSA beneficiaries achieve SSA standards for employment substantial gainful activity. Once successfully employed, IVRS provides a hand-off to an Employment Network (e.g. Iowa Workforce Development or others). These ENs can also earn up to \$25,000 for client milestone and outcome achievements as a result of their post-employment services.
- IVRS fiscal strategy includes plans to expand two more TAPS. Although IVRS can't expand their staff, we can expand our capacity through the Other Cash Match programs such as AAA with the Department of Aging, TAP and Project Search contracts. Monitoring of contracts that expand VR capacity is labor intensive, the agency is reaching its capacity to do so. Once the agency reaches its capacity, VR will need a different approach with the legislature for discussions on increased state appropriations.
- Maintenance of Effort penalty – IVRS must spend the same amount of money on service as we did two years ago to show the program is growing. The current MOE for FFY19 is \$6,893,369.
- Top Expenses: Tuition and Rehab Technology. The tuition increase is related to the period of performance, which means the money is encumbered at the time the authorization is issued. Tuition expenses are not expected to drop as we continue to pay for fall expenses. Rehab technology costs are increasing, Bureau Chief Faulkner continues to push for this underutilized option.

- Operating expenses are consistent with a goal in FFY19 of being fully staffed with 244 FTEs – with no significant increase in expense.
- Big news is that IVRS is chipping away at the Waiting List, where those on the Others Eligible category are receiving services. The list was started in 2009. The number of those on the waiting list has been reduced from 710 to 600.

Mari asked as to why assessments have gone down. There are a number of possible explanations including that Supported Employment providers are doing this onsite; improved information is obtained through transition services and pre-employment transition services; and information is gathered from other Menu of Services, which helps determine steps to occur in the employment journey.

SUCCESS STORIES

IVRS Business Director Michelle Krefft shared two success stories with videos from the IVRS YouTube site about job candidates [Julie](#) and [Gidien](#). Julie went to Washington, DC, with her counselor and Michelle to provide testimony in a federal briefing on Capitol Hill. Julie shared her very moving story of what it meant to her to obtain competitive integrated employment after working in a sheltered workshop environment her whole career. Increased income and friendships she has formed in her employment with Kwik Trip were highlighted. The Kwik Trip employment process with IVRS involves the employer posting a job, IVRS staff doing an analysis of the job needs and what candidate would be a good fit in terms of skills and culture.

Gidien is a job candidate who required 25 re-directions daily to stay on a task when he was in high school. He wanted to work at Brothers Market, so IVRS used a community rehabilitation provider (CRP) to perform his assessment onsite. Gidien was hired before his assessment was finished. Michelle noted that this is an entry to employment for our job candidates and several of our candidates obtain additional training and education, creating career pathways with these employer partnerships.

Michelle and Steve are working on plans and processes for each area office on how IVRS will provide qualified candidates to our business partners.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Michelle Krefft also shared Iowa's efforts to empower VR job candidates with the tools to assist with financial decisions that are a part of employment opportunity. This was a request of Council member, Randy Davis, from the last meeting.

She partnered with Iowa ABLE and the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau for a training in Waterloo, Iowa. Banks are now partnering with school districts to empower students with financial literacy training. Michelle provides a toolkit for trainers; employers also can use it as well for retaining the right candidates. Employees with this type of training may not leave quickly for the next higher paying job when they have the right financial tools to budget. This allows them to stay at a job they enjoy, with potential opportunity for career advancement with the same employer. SRC members who are interested should contact Kathy Slater to obtain a toolkit.

Lee Ann shared that another component of financial literacy is benefits planning for those on SSA benefits. IVRS is in the process of posting a Benefits Planner position. Of the 12,500 people the agency serves, about 3,000 are receiving SSA benefits. This person will oversee the planners that are currently in each AO (benefit planners' cadre), as well as providing technical assistance. Financial literacy is also being coordinated with our Centers for Independent Living.

INDEPENDENT LIVING/PARTNER CONTRACTS UPDATE

Lee Ann and David attend quarterly SILC meetings. Lee attends board meetings as a part of the monitoring process. Jeff compiles data and Lee Ann the narrative for reports that are submitted to the Administration for Community Living. Five meetings occur annually with partners in which everyone is in the same room. SRC members are welcome to attend these meetings.

LEGAL OVERVIEW

The Developmental Disabilities Council had their annual conference with 155 people in attendance. On January 14, 2019, the Iowa legislature convenes, January 15 is the Condition of the State address. The 2019 legislative session will adjourn May 3. At the next SRC meeting, staff attorney Kelley Rice will update members regarding legislation she is tracking. SRC members expressed interest in this, so she will share this info via email to the SRC. David added that the Developmental Disabilities council's [IDAction](#) (Iowans with Disabilities in Action) website also provides excellent non-partisan information for those who are interested.

OTHER

Member Dennis Bruce wanted to make the council was aware that State of Iowa bond program [260E](#) provides job training in which the state will pay 50% of the on-the-job training. It is managed by community colleges.

David shared that VR used dollars to provide 100% support for iJAG (Iowa Jobs for America Graduates) in Boone community school district. All of last year's six students are employed or going on to college.

ADJOURNMENT

Nicole made a motion for adjournment, Kyle seconded; all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

The next SRC meeting is Tuesday, January 29, 2019, 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. **A legislative reception is scheduled at the Capitol Wednesday, January 30, 2019 at 7:30 a.m.**

Meeting minutes approved by the Council on this date: _____

SRC Vice-Chair – Scott Turczynski _____