

# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 27, 2019

**ATTENDEES:** Nicole Cleveland, Randy Davis (Via phone), Kim Drew, Amy Dutton, Mari Reynolds, Daryn Richardson, Kyle Roed, Lisa Schneider, Scott Turczynski, Alex Watters, Brian Warner, Richard Phelan

**IVRS Support Staff:** Brandy McOmber, Lori Buske, Kelley Rice, Lee Ann Russo, David Mitchell.

**Other:** Dennis Bruce (Previous Board Member), Emmanuel Smith (Disability Rights Iowa)

## ABSENT

Page Eastin, Pam Fitzsimmons, Jeff Haight, Steve Faulkner, Monalisa McGee, Gary McDermott

## CALL TO ORDER

Chair Alex Watters called the August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019, State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meeting to order at 10:45am, with a welcome and introductions. New Member Richard Phelan was introduced at this time.

## QUORUM

A quorum is established with 11 of 15 voting members present.

## AGENDA APPROVAL

Alex motioned to approve the agenda, Mari seconded. **Approved unanimously by voice vote.**

## APRIL 29, 2019 MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

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

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Emmanuel Smith from Disability Rights Iowa joined the on this date to find out more about the SRC.

## RECOGNITION OF RETIRING MEMBERS

David Mitchell presented certificate to Business, Industry Representative Dennis Bruce, recognizing his time on the council.

## STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Outreach – Kim Drew, Committee Chair** –The committee would like to narrow down their focus and work on one thing at a time. They discussed the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) and how to prioritize discussions. Priorities include; Increasing Employment Outcomes; Improving Transition Services; Improving Business and Employer Relations; Promoting Employment First, and Need for Training.

**VR Service Delivery – Alex Watters** – The committee presented on recommendation to IVRS. Areas covered included; Section 511, Outreach & Information, Referral Process, and Review of Service Delivery.

Section 511 – Issue: Section 511 makes it harder for youth to enter subminimum wage employment and creates requirements for VR agencies to provide career counseling and information and referral services to adults working in subminimum wage settings to help them shift from subminimum wage employment to competitive integrated employment.

Recommendation: Increase efforts to provide career counseling, career exploration and employment supports to individuals working in sub-minimum wage settings. Data from 2016 and

2019 were shared showing a drastic decrease in size suggesting this is more manageable to be able to provide meaningful, in-person career counseling and information and referral service beyond the ICIE videos. Kelley questioned where these people are now, suggesting some of them are now at home not working or in day habilitation. Lisa commented on push back and resistance from parents who are 'nervous and uncomfortable' with the idea of their child working in the community. Kim discussed educating teachers and parents – giving them the opportunity to see their options early allowing for their mindset to switch also noting in her experience in education teachers would not have been familiar with IVRS therefore a recommendation would not have been made – sharing the importance of educating school staff and parents. Nicole shared that during IEP meetings information is shared with parents more often. A few members of the committee shared they had never seen the Career Counseling webinars and requested information on the videos – Lee Ann shared where the videos can be found on the IVRS Website and talked about the 26 sheltered workshops and how they are actively referring individuals to IVRS. David offered to the committee that we could watch the videos at the next SRC meeting or at minimum would send the links to all members. The Committee is also interested in finding out how many of the individuals who received career counseling and information and referral started services with IVRS and how many were closed both successfully and unsuccessfully.

*Outreach & Information – Issue:* There are 115,000 lowans receiving SSDI – they are automatically eligible to receive VR services, but many have not heard of IVRS or do not know what services are available to them. *Recommendation:* Increase the visibility of IVRS by creating opportunities for individuals to learn about VR services. This might include more; Panel discussions, Outreach videos, Focus groups, Reverse job fairs and Video resumes. Kim asked how should these people be hearing about what VR can do? It was discussed that it is a team approach through many entities including; schools, case management, IVRS, DHS, SSA (ticket to work). LeeAnn talked about the ticket being provide to all SSDI recipients. Emmanuel Smith commented on his experience with the 'ticket' sharing a misunderstanding of the importance of the physical ticket and having lost it thinking he would not be able to work. David said individuals on SSDI are found eligible because they 'cannot work' noting in the past they were given information about VR following eligibility determination. IVRS is currently working with DDS on getting access to their system in order to work together and begin reaching out to individuals 18 and under to refer them to IVRS. The VR service delivery team would like further feedback regarding strategies to identify and develop materials to provide outreach, education and career counseling.

*Referral Process – Issue:* IVRS changed the way in which individuals access services and the Committee has received some feedback that warrants some additional attention. Lisa shared that there have been issues in which referrals have been rejected by IVRS with staff stating that, 'the person is not employment ready.' She shared information on the trial work evaluation program and felt it might not be used appropriately based upon counselor feedback. Feedback received regarding these cases included persons with mental health diagnoses or psychiatric disorders. *Recommendation:* Form a work group to review and revise the referral process.

*Job Candidate and Counselor Process: Issue:* First meeting with current pamphlets and questions can give a mixed messages, Counselor turnover is costly and causes a negative experience with the candidate, timelines of interviewing to eligibility needs to be reduced, caseloads monitored and measured and hiring companies should meet your candidates. Dennis Bruce shared his personal experience after recently reopening his VR Casefile in July, noting the eligibility process takes too long and expressed concern that as a business owner he has not received a VR job candidate referral. *Recommendation:* Describe what is the purpose VR and the history of the organization with handouts, Consider adding an employment retention

program. Have counselors submit work improvement plans, Reduce eligibility steps and timetables by empowering counselors to streamline the process. Eliminate hardcopy paperwork by going to cloud base software as quickly as possible and Involve hiring companies as team approach with counselors and candidates for onboarding successful employing practices.

David discussed database systems and their cost to be able to meet federal reporting guidelines and shared that these software programs would be a 12 year return on investment. Dennis suggested working with other agencies and their software, David stated there are many differences in programs and reporting guidelines. David added in the past couple of years we have increased our efforts with technology for field staff; 75% have cell phones, 60% have a tablet, and approximately 30% have gone electronic. David suggested our IT staff attend the next SRC to provide an update on our efforts to move our database forward. David also added that Steven Faulkner is working on retention although we have limited flexibility with state guidelines adding that environment and attitude can be improved and Steve has a specific focus on the work culture, has visited every area office, is conducting staff exit interviews, and has developed a leadership/mentoring program for supervisors.

The Committee would like IVRS to respond with how they will or will not proceed with the recommendations. The Committee would like quarterly updates on progress. At the August 2020 meeting, it is suggested a follow up report be made outlining the impact of the recommended changes.

#### SILC UPDATE

Meeting will be held next Thursday, currently working on an amendment for the state and federal plan. An update will be provided at the next meeting in October.

#### CAP REPORT

Lisa is currently visiting the IVRS Area Offices. Caseload is currently 11. – 2 are Department of the Blind.

#### NOON PRESENTATION

**STEFANI MEYER - ISE** – Presented on the 2 options for ISE; Microenterprise and Full Self-Employment. Updates were provided on policy including; candidates define their idea of success, income offset flexibility (we no longer require the person to pay down their debt – but work with the job candidate as necessary) and job candidate investment/match flexibility (all business, business related loans in their entirety are being considered for candidate's match – this also included money spent on education). Program Updates were provided including; changes to the business plan, true development of natural supports and sharing self-employment with the high schools. Success Stories were also shared; IVRS Job Candidate successes and Pre-ETS Summer activities were shared. Stefani also will be transitioning into a counselor position in the Waterloo Area Office, so concerns were expressed by council members on transitioning of cases.

**SUZIE PAULSON – BENEFITS PLANNING** – Presented on her new role with IVRS and the benefits and goals of her position in helping individuals increase their knowledge and understanding of SSA work incentives. This begins with staff knowledge including basic knowledge for all staff and establishing a trained cadre of office staff to assist in their area offices. Suzie shared information on the Statewide Work Incentive informational zoom event for job candidates that she hosts on Fridays, and 15 minute micro trainings for staff that she also offers on Tuesdays.

## RSB POLICY DISCUSSION

Brandy McOmber presented 3 draft policies today; Transportation, Maintenance and Miscellaneous. Links were added to the transportation policy and it was decided to go with the same rates listed on DAS for staff and apply them to our job candidates. Recommendations also removed a requirement for staff to seek an exception whenever providing reimbursement to the JC. In the maintenance policy language was changed, also removed requirement to seek exception for every time we reimburse a job candidate – indicating we do typically reimburse to the vendor, meals are matched again with state rates and links are included in the policy, asking to increase the clothing amount from \$200 to \$500, removing requirement to seek an exception for paying a deposit for rent/utilities when someone is relocating – RSA regs indicated this is a form of maintenance. Miscellaneous removed note taker services language – not that this is no longer available but there are a number of AT items available to assist with this and it is not as common.

## RSB UPDATE

Steve was absent. April presented on the recent Transition Conference that took place earlier in the month – the conference was a success and staff are asking for more conferences to take place. The conference was an outgrowth of a recommendation the Council made two years ago for increased staff networking opportunities.

## SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT – PRE-ETS AND BUSINESS SERVICES

Kyra Hawley – Rehabilitation Counselor in the DMAO presented on the Pre-ETs Summer camps that took place in Dallas County and Polk/Warren County. Kyra shared that through their summer camps they provided 800 student experiences, 117 students attended, 26 schools were represented, 25 employers provided business services and 21 community partners were involved.

Brian Warner – shared information on MCAO Summer Program and the Mason City Summer Fest Video was shared highlighting the summer program they offered students in there area.

Michelle Krefft – Recently traveled to Chicago for the Disability INclusion Conference. Biggest takeaway was hearing from so many employers who are seeking persons with disabilities to employ and the impact of the following statement made by Microsoft: ‘If we don’t have people of all abilities working for us how do we know how to meet the needs of everyone?’ Statistics for Sephora were shared regarding their 15% turnover/absenteeism rate – only 1% are VR clients.

## ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT – RETHINK PERFORMANCE

Sandy Ostendorf presented on the recent conference she attended: ReTHINK Performance. The work groups focus is to rethink the way we look at the performance of the VR program, improving results, and maintaining high expectations of both the VR program and individuals with disabilities. It was identified at the conference that many state VR programs have priorities that OSERS wasn’t even aware of – and they turned the focus to these priorities; performance data, flexibility and reduction of burden, knowledge gap, technical assistance, turnover of VR staff, messaging the VR program and monitoring.

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Jeff Haight was absent. David shared the financial update.

IVRS is serving 6500 students who are not on a caseload through pre-employment transition services, this is through the help of our 3<sup>rd</sup> party contracts. IVRS 3<sup>rd</sup> party contracts are moving to cash match programs which allow for more flexible guidelines – allowing us to maximize the allowable dollars that can count not only for match, but also applied to Pre-Employment Transition monies. We will be asking for 3 more positions for next year at the same budget – these positions will be for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population and will allow us to have a

counselor covering regions of the state who are fluent in ASL. IVRS has partnered with U of I in an effort to create a career pathway for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing to pursue a Master's in Rehab Counseling – we are also working with Gallaudet.

### INDEPENDENT LIVING/PARTNER CONTRACTS UPDATE

LeeAnn shared that the Core Partner Statewide meeting is next week.

There are 6 independent living centers that IVRS supports and where VR is involved. We also have a Skilled OWE contract and have 6 employment specialists across the state – all Area Offices have an employment specialist assigned to them. Rates have been approved and standard rates are aligned w/ Medicaid rates. We are tracking quality of services provided by CRP's – they are all provided report cards annually with their; rate of pay, hours provided service, length of time to services, and rehab rate. There are 14 different IN contracts – this year we are looking at 12-13 due to staff changes. David discussed the IN's and how we have 22,000 students in the state of Iowa who are on an IEP/504 and we are currently working with 9,500 of these students, discussing our continued efforts to reach out through local school plans. LeeAnn emphasized we are working on the GAPS and transition is important.

### DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (DD) COUNCIL

Kelley shared that the DD Council is preparing for it's annual Make your Mark Self-Advocacy Conference to be held in Coralville on September 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>. The conference is for persons with developmental disabilities, family members and caregivers of persons with disabilities, community providers, and professional staff who work with persons with developmental disabilities. Among other things, the purpose of the conference is to empower persons with developmental disabilities and teach them how to be good self-advocates. Alex asked whether there are other conferences similar to this for individuals other than those with developmental disabilities as there is a need for this. Mari shared information about ASK Resources annual event in May but the focus of this is primarily parents and caregivers. Advocacy on the Hill – DD Council also takes place annually.

### LEGAL OVERVIEW

IVRS has long struggled with liability questions regarding students (i.e. job candidates under age 18) who take part in work-based learning experiences and other activities. Who is liable if a student is injured during the experience? Kelley has been working with 2 DE attorneys and assistant attorney general to develop guidance for staff. The team came up with a Joint Guidance statement; the statement provides information and direction to staff on liability issues surrounding student injuries on work sites. In a nutshell, it is not possible for a parent to waive liability for her/his child if an injury occurs. Depending on the facts of the injury, either the work site or IVRS or the school district would be liable for the injuries.

### ADJOURNMENT

Alex made a motion for adjournment, Kyle seconded; all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 2:55p.

The next SRC meeting is Tuesday, October 22, 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.

Meeting minutes approved by the Council on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

SRC Vice-Chair – Scott Turczynski \_\_\_\_\_