

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 22, 2019

ATTENDEES: Kim Drew, Nicole Cleveland, Brian Warner (non-voting), Pam Fitzsimmons, Alex Watters, Amy Dutton, Mari Reynolds, Rich Phelan

Other: NONE

IVRS Support Staff: Brandy McOmber (via phone), Lori Buske, Kelley Rice, Lee Ann Russo, David Mitchell, Jeff Haight, Steve Faulkner

ABSENT

Scott Turczynski, Kyle Roed, Daryn Richardson, Lisa Schneider, Mona Lisa McGee, Randy Davis, Gary McDermott

CALL TO ORDER

No call to order due to no quorum present. Chair Watters welcomed everyone to the meeting and members introduced themselves at this time.

QUORUM

Chair Watters declared the absence of a quorum noting that no motions or voting will occur. Only 8 of 14 voting members present.

AGENDA APPROVAL

No motion was made to approve the agenda due to lack of quorum.

AUGUST 27, 2019 MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

No motion was made to approve the minutes due to lack of quorum.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach – Kim Drew, Committee Chair –

Members used their time to discuss the legislative reception and planning for the event. The committee has requested a \$5 contribution from members of the SRC to purchase items for a 'brown bag takeaway' including; granola bar, clementine and water. The committee would also like to have coffee and asked David to provide that as a contribution. Kim Drew will do the shopping. Focus of the reception will be Employing people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing and sharing what Assistive Technology is available. We will want to identify success stories of individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and the positive return on investment.

Mari shared that IVRS will be requesting 3 FTE's to serve the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population as part of the legislative request for 2020. David emphasized the work that has been occurring across the state attempting to positively impact service delivery for this population. IVRS has developed a partnership with Iowa School for the Deaf – we have a VR Counselor who is working 50% of their time representing VR at the school. IVRS recently sent two VR Counselors to Oregon for a month long program that works to improve the employment and independent living status of deaf and hard-of-hearing people by increasing the number of rehabilitation professionals and their community partners nationwide who have the necessary knowledge and communication skills to serve this population. IVRS Des Moines Area Office recently

hired a Counselor who is Deaf and we hope to hire 3 additional counselors to cover other regions of the state with the approval for 3 FTE's. We have established a partnership with the University of Iowa developing a career pathway for the Bachelor Degree level interpreters to access their Master Degree program in Rehabilitation Counseling.

Steve talked about the various roundtables around the state focused on increasing awareness and feedback regarding service delivery preferences for this population.

David mentioned a success story out of Southern Iowa and the new Counselor hired in Des Moines.

Alex suggested identifying information regarding the investment and return to paint the bigger picture to show the importance of the FTE positions. David encouraged the committee members to attend and take part in the Legislative Reception noting it is not 'scary' to attend. Talking points will be prepared and invitations will be sent to legislators to attend. Mari asked when would be a good time to send out the invitation – David suggested 2-4 weeks before the reception. Alex shared he often sends 2 emails one a few weeks prior to Save the Date and another the week prior to remind.

David will send information on legislators and who to send information to as the event gets closer.

Rich Phelan has joined this committee.

VR Service Delivery – Alex Watters

The committee did not meet on this date, Page Eastin previous chair has resigned from and will no longer represent IWD on the SRC Committee. The committee will need to discuss who will chair the committee going forward.

David provided a follow up from the recommendations made by the committee at the August meeting.

Section 511

The link to the webinars has been provided to members of the committee, VR is meeting with ICIE to determine if a different webinar might be helpful to engage families and youth at an earlier time or if a different webinar would be helpful to supplement the current one. Data was provided; 1900 people remain in sheltered employment – 1 year ago there were 5000. There are 24 workshops compared to 1 year ago there were 60. The committee had recommended outreach to those workshops and Steve will be outreaching to these providers to talk about their awareness of VR – based on those discussions there will be an Area Office outreach if applicable. Mari suggested when the videos are updated to avoid technical language an aim for 5th grade reading level.

David answered the question 'What are these people doing?' with the following data; FY 19 there were 6442 individuals in Day Hab compared to 2 years ago when there were 4897 individuals in Day Hab. There has been a growth in employment outcomes by 200, but certainly the large area of growth was in Day Hab. David discussed the funding mechanism provided by our waiver and DHS system that supports these services. IVRS does not provide funding in this area.

Outreach and Information: How do people receiving SSDI obtain information on employment services? Anyone who is receiving SSI/ SSDI receives a letter about VR and ticket to work.

There is also a system in place for youth who are under the age of 18 and receiving benefits to identify whether they are already a VR job candidate and if not they receive a letter discussing services and program availability.

VR has hired a Benefits Planning Resource Manager, which has allowed IVRS to develop a tiered approach to implementation across our field offices.

There are a number of visible activities across the state including; NDEAM Activities, Social Media, Iowa Job Honor Award, Video Development, Chamber of Commerce partnerships, DD Council, Aging, DHA and State Workforce Board.

IVRS Planning and Development staff are engaged in 60 committees and teams related to VR activities.

Referral Process:

IVRS has streamlined the process removing some paperwork and combining the application and referral form to be one.

Follow up from comment regarding Job Candidate's being told they were not work ready – this is not the view of IVRS – IVRS aligns with the intention of WIOA which is every individual with a disability can work when provided with the appropriate services and supports.

IVRS does not do Trial Work – eligibility is presumed for individuals for VR services.

The job candidate handbook was developed with the help of the SRC a few years back and is being redesigned now in effort to provide better information to families and job candidates. Steve provided information around this process noting ideas related to a video version of the handbook, easier functionality and incorporating the handbook into the eligibility process. Alex suggested making it more user friendly and assuring the candidates understand the implications of their options. Mari offered to assist with the handbook.

Job Candidate and Counselor Process:

CAP Brochure – we have to provide the brochure as a federal mandate.

IVRS does recognize that there are timeframes that can be frustrating, such as the length of time it takes to complete an eligibility. Regulations allow counselors 60 days to determine eligibility, on average this is being done in 39 days which is ahead of the national average. The majority of this time is waiting on necessary documentation.

IVRS does use a cloud-based software program, but has had a delay due to difficulty in obtaining staff to provide further development of the system. IVRS has researched several off-the-shelf programs – the cost of these programs are a minimum of two million dollars and will take over a decade for IVRS to receive a return on investment. It was decided to maintain the current system and continue to seek and train developers to continue with the process. The goal of IVRS is to eventually go paperless, unfortunately until the system can be built and developed we must continue the current process of electronic and hard copy at this time.

Current efforts are focused at RSA federal compliance for federal reporting procedures by July 1, 2020. After that date, efforts will focus on quality enhancements.

IVRS has a number of strategies being implemented to engage field staff including: emphasis on work culture, staff engagement, supervisor leadership, exit surveys, bureau chief and administrator office visits, and priority communication on two goal areas – employment outcomes and Pre-ETS hours.

Business Services integration – IWD State Workforce Board currently has 15 Regions and they are currently in appeal with DOL as this has been changed to 6 regions. Making this significant change in regions will greatly impact work of state workforce board. Each region has a disability access committee who are working on a continuum model for individuals with barriers to employment. The committee is continuing to move toward integration. Regular feedback is provided by business services engagement in these local regions.

David – Will continue to report on recommendations made in future meetings.

IWD plans to fill the SRC representative with the individual they hire to fill Page's position.

SILC UPDATE

Lee Ann Russo and David Mitchell shared that Gary McDermott is no longer an active member of the SILC and until this position is filled Dawn Francis (SILC Director) will fill in on the council.

CAP REPORT

Lisa Schneider was not present to provide a report.

LEGAL OVERVIEW

No Legislation to discuss. Bills previously discussed will still be alive this year.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (DD) COUNCIL

Kelley Rice shared an update from the recent Make your Mark Conference in Coralville in late September. The conference is for individuals with Developmental Disabilities. This was a great year and the feedback they received from the attendees was excellent.

David shared that the DD council has been assisting VR immensely by providing a Technical Assistance \$50,000 grant to work with 30+ community providers and four area offices on the following services; Discovery and Customized Employment.

The DD Council has also provided \$20,000 to VR to help develop and plan the IVRS 2020 State Conference.

RSB POLICY UPDATE

IVRS Policy Manager Brandy McOmber presented four policies today that the Coordinating Council recently revised. The revisions that were made to the policies changed nothing in procedures. The policies were separated by status to allow staff ease in finding the policies and to ensure a better understanding of each process. Eligibility Policy is significantly longer than the other policies as it requires us to do an entire assessment and this can take time, in this policy specific directions are provided on how to complete eligibility documents.

David asked Brandy to explain the difference between referral and applicant. When does a referral become an application?

Brandy – An individual's case status is a referral when an application is received by the IVRS office for an adult. If the person is a student their case status moves to referral when a Pre Employment Transition Services Agreement is received.

IVRS staff will contact the referral source to determine if the potential applicant has a legal guardian and if so, will obtain the contact information for them if it is not previously provided. IVRS staff will also encourage the referral source to notify the legal guardian of the importance of their participation in the IVRS appointment to discuss services and competitive integrated employment. If the potential applicant has a court-appointed guardian, then the court-appointed guardian's participation is required to move forward with an application for services. IVRS staff must advise any court-appointed guardian that IVRS will require a copy of the letter of guardianship at application to ensure that the individual's right to sign forms is upheld. IVRS staff will contact the referred individual and guardian, as appropriate, and extend an invitation to meet to discuss IVRS services and competitive integrated employment. Within ten working days of receipt of the referral, IVRS will provide a group or individual orientation of IVRS services. If the individual decides that IVRS services are necessary after receiving this information, the appointment may move directly into an intake; an intake appointment may also be scheduled on a later date.

An applicant is an individual and/or their representative who has completed the IVRS Application for Services, and has provided to IVRS information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility and priority for services and is available to complete the assessment process, and has reviewed and signed the Rights and Responsibilities. Brandy emphasized there are requirements related to data collection and measures that must be met.

David noted we are working on training staff to handle this process more efficiently. Discussing the importance of continuing to build a relationship and trust with the applicant and meeting with them while we are waiting on necessary medical documentation. Steve added that he has emphasized to area offices the importance of working with referrals who might walk-in to an area office requesting an intake and seeing this individual as soon as possible.

Alex suggested that we ensure an understanding with the applicant where things stand, who is responsible for the next steps, and what the time lines are expected. The committee discussed technology advances such as apps showing progress to allow a candidate to check the status of their application. Other ideas with technology included; notifications for counselors when accessing the database to be alerted of an upcoming eligibility due date. David shared the counselor's do have a report that allows them to track these dates.

Brandy has requested the committee members get back to her within 2 weeks with feedback or changes. (Nov 5th)

RSB UPDATE

Steve discussed his efforts in the area of staff retention noting in his time as Bureau Chief IVRS has seen significant turnover. The agency is aware the amount of data collection has increased and this has put a burden on staff and we are looking into ways we can improve these processes to ensure we are retaining employees. Steve shared information from exit interviews noting employees would like to see improvements in technology and more collaboration among the area offices. Recently Steve attended the CSAVR Regional Meeting in Kansas City with VR

staff from Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas all who state they are all experiencing high turnover. Steve noted the importance of valuing staff and the increasing efforts to allow for training opportunities.

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING MEMBERS

Page Eastin visited the Council over lunch and David Mitchell presented a certificate to Page recognizing her time on the council from both CAP and IWD from 2014-2019.

NOON PRESENTATION

The SRC Committee listened to David Mitchell, Michelle Krefft, Aleena Garr, Jason Rubel and Stefani Meyer present on Successful Business Engagement successes and strategies. This was a live webinar that was being recorded. Respectability Webinar link:

<https://www.respectability.org/2019/10/webinar-iowa-voc-rehabs-stories-of-successful-business-engagement-and-disability-hiring/>

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

IVRS Data Analyst Jeff Haight reviewed the agency financial charts and tables included in the agenda.

Cumulative Successful Closures – FFY19 had a total of 2110 successful closures, which reflects 16 more than the previous year.

Waiting List – remaining steady with 148 job candidates, currently not releasing OE.

Pre-Employment Transition Services – The 2019 Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) expenses are \$1,220,172.74 at the end of September. The 2019 target is \$4,071,015.30. One year ago at this time, September 30, 2018 our expenditures were \$256,239.78. This is \$963,932.96 difference. Jeff noted that the FFY 2018 goal was \$3,993,100.05, which is \$77,915.25 less than the FFY 2019 goal. Jeff highlighted we are ahead net of \$886,017.71 over last year at this time.

A comparison of 2018 and 2019 expenditures were reviewed and discussed, and cumulative closures from the last 3 years were shared.

The Area Office lapsed dates were shared on screen as a member requested additional information in the previous meeting. David walked the committee through the chart.

COMMITTEE BREAKOUT

David shared a Press Release for Rich Phelan and said this will be done going forward for all new members of the SRC. Rich was noted to already be active in outreach efforts with the Clinton VR office and the community.

Video highlighting a partnership between IVRS and Templeton Rye was shared – this video was presented at the Iowa Job Honor Awards.

VR Service Delivery Committee and Outreach Committee met for about 15 minutes providing additional time for dialog regarding the day activities.

ADJOURNMENT

Alex emphasized to the committee to share what VR is doing, posting the Templeton Rye video or other videos to your social media, build connections and continue to use your position and voice to talk about VR. The meeting ended at 3:00pm.

The next SRC meeting is Tuesday, March 3, 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. The Legislative Reception will be Wednesday, March 4, 2019.

Meeting minutes approved by the Council on this date: _____

SRC Chair – Alex Watters _____