

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 25, 2020

MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA PHONE AND ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ATTENDEES: Scott Turczynski, Kyle Roed, Amy Dutton, Daryn Richardson, Sarah Martinez, Pam Fitzsimmons(left at 12:00p), Lisa Schneider, Brian Warner, Demarcus Thomas, Kirsten Lane, Rich Phelan

IVRS Support Staff: Vienna Hoang, Victoria Carrington, Steve Faulkner, Lori

Buske, David Mitchell, Jeff Haight, Brandy McOmer, Kelley Rice

Other: Interpreters; Amber Tucker, Jeff Reese

ABSENT:

Mari Reynolds, Nicole Cleveland, James Luttrell, Johnna Davis

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Scott Turczynski called the August 25th, 2020 State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meeting to order at 10:27a, with welcome and introductions. David welcomed the new SRC Members present and shared information on a presentation that was shared with council members via email – presentation discussed tips on communicating with individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Demarcus introduced himself and shared that he is excited to be here, he is currently a student at Iowa Western Community College.

QUORUM

A quorum was established with 10 of 14 voting members present.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Pam Fitzsimmons motioned to approve the agenda, Sarah Martinez seconded. Approved unanimously by voice vote.

JUNE 2, 2020 MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

Amy Dutton motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Rich Phelan seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach – Steve Faulkner – The committee approved Mari Reynolds to serve as chair for their committee. The committee discussed the role of their group. Committee members discussed what they members were seeing in their areas. Kyle and Scott discussed how they were able to make connections with local businesses and connect VR. Kyle presented at the IVRS Statewide Conference, talking about his connections. Amy Dutton discussed our ISE Program and how we connect with our SBDC and looking to make our partnership stronger. Steve discussed Rich Phelan working to make a stronger connection with our Clinton Service Unit. Talked about the future and what businesses will be looking for and how can we prepare our clients better for the new normal.

VR Service Delivery – Sarah Martinez, Committee Chair – The committee did introductions, introducing new members and shared what they do – reviewing purpose of the VR Service Delivery Committee. Richard and Brandy discussed the CSNA and State Plan and where we

are in the process to support that. Brandy explained she will be gathering data quarterly through our meetings to support the needs assessment process. The committee also reviewed the ten policy changes up for review, an additional 10 will need to be reviewed before all have been reviewed. Dave also discussed the previous VR Service Delivery recommendations in the four targeted areas and indicated VR staff have made progress and would be making an end of the year summary report of those activities related to:

- Section 511 – Employment opportunities for individuals in sheltered workshops and making subminimum wage
- Outreach – Individuals on SSDI
- Better Engagement with VR Staff – Staff Retention
- Technology – How we as an agency use technology to support staff and JC's

CAP UPDATE – Kelley Rice provided an update on a recent meeting with David Mitchell, Lisa Schneider and Kelley Rice regarding Hearings and Hearing Officers contracts. We need to make some changes to bring us into compliance with all Federal Regulations that apply to hearings, mediations and hearing officers. Lisa Schneider added that the policy in question is related to Due Process for any clients who may come to CAP, they agreed to make changes to the language and will bring to the SRC at a future meeting. Regulations state we should have more than one Impartial Hearing Officer – we will need more to give the job candidate and VR to have the option to choose. The reason IVRS has only had one Impartial Hearing Officer because there has not been a need. It is difficult to keep Officers on a list because they are not being utilized. Lisa will be sending out the specific requirements for officers, and will be asking the SRC to assist in helping find people who will fit the requirements in order to build a list.

CAP REPORT

Lisa Schneider provided an update – 2 new clients have recently come to CAP. Lisa shared that she has not heard a single complaint about virtual service delivery from VR.

David provided an update on service delivery messaging to our field staff, we have not closed our area offices, we are still providing services. Services should still continue virtually, whether telework or in an area office, there are no restrictions on coming into the office. Majority of IVRS staff are working virtually in telework and services are being provided virtually but there are no restrictions on providing a service on site if needed.

SILC REPORT

Sarah Martinez reported that the 6 Centers for Independent Living received funding in the 3rd Federal Relief package (Cares Act) to respond to immediate needs in the disability community brought on by Covid-19 in specific areas; food security, technology, advocacy (equal access of medical treatment). Access to Independence in Iowa City/Cedar Rapids area has partnered with their local community action program to provide food boxes for people who cannot access community food banks or who lack resources in rural areas. Other centers are assisting with technology access ex. CICIL in Des Moines is partnering with Easter Seals to create lending library of devices to help people stay connected. Access2Independence has purchased 30 iPads for equipment loan for people to access Telehealth and remote services.

CIL's are now responding to the Derecho storm on August 10th, 2020. Access2Independence completed 40 intakes last week which is a record high, received cash donations, items to help

respond to the need of consumers. Realized there are a lot of gaps in our city and emergency responses that lack support for persons with disabilities - this is a reminder for everyone to review disaster planning to be sure it includes plans for persons with disabilities.

David provided information for the council to understand IVRS' role with independent living as we typically talk about vocational rehabilitation in relation to employment and working with businesses (outcomes are employment). Funding comes from State and Federal Funds (federal funds from Rehabilitation Services Administration – US Dept of Education). IL Program is separate program – received State and Federal funding through the Association of Community Living (ACL). Some of the money goes directly to the centers as part of the federal grant, the other dollars comes through VR and we provide it to the centers as a go between. IVRS has obligation then to do oversight, most of this is done through the Statewide Independent Living Council – Sarah is part of this. The centers have additional capacity to help provide necessary services (Food, Shelter, Transportation, Advocacy) that allow IVRS to focus on employment.

Kirsten Lane asked about the IL Centers in Iowa and whether they serve the entire state – why do some people have access to them and others do not? Sarah stated the 6 centers cover 33 of the 99 counties and it has to do with the amount of money that has been dedicated to Independent Living – State Plan provision states if we received more funding overall as a network we would expand to cover all 99 counties – the network would have to increase by \$2 million dollars – until that point they cannot serve all counties. They rely on other partners such as the Aging and Disability Resource Centers, AAA's (Area Agencies on Aging) and other supports to ensure people have what they need.

David stated VR also receives dollars for Independent Living, approximately \$75,000 being used for direct services through our IL Specialist – this individual tries to cover the whole state especially the area that the centers do not cover. Those dollars are primarily used to help people stay in their homes and avoid institutionalization. We provided services to 21 individuals, primarily in the area of bathroom mods, ramps, home mods that allow those individuals to remain in their home independently and avoid having to go to a nursing home.

Scott asked where does funding come from whether it is state or federal dollars. Sarah stated both, they are also all 501 c3 nonprofits so they also rely on fundraising and resource development to create sustainable services.

STATEWIDE VIRTUAL PRE-ETS

Brian Warner shared with the council some of the services IVRS provided to students this summer. Summer Programming was set to be in person for the 3rd year this year but due to Covid-19 we had to switch to providing this virtually. VR transition counselors worked together across the state to provide a Statewide Program focusing on sectors and area offices also worked together in some areas to provide additional options for students. Brian shared with the council an example of one of the interactive sessions on appropriate voicemail greetings. Programming was offered M-Th @ 10a-1p, mid June to the end of July.

RSB POLICY UPDATE

Brandy McOmber discussed the 10 policies that have been provided to the members of the council for review, and asked for feedback from council members. Send feedback to Brandy, David or Lori by September 8, 2020

RSB UPDATE

Steve discussed the CSNA and the areas we are focusing on to improve our outreach and quality of services to certain populations (Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Mental Illness, Employment 1st). IVRS has developed support groups within the agency to focus on these areas. Steve discussed Deaf and Hard of Hearing and IVRS' changes to service delivery in these areas including; hiring a Deaf Counselor in Des Moines, 2 Counselors in Ottumwa participated in an immersion program in Oregon, Counselor in Creston who is Hard of Hearing, Counselor in Council Bluffs who works with the Iowa School for the Deaf. Deaf Services Team has improved their outreach to the community using V-logs, increased our participation with the National Association for the Deaf and with local Deaf support groups/associations, increased our accessibility to the population with VRI. IVRS also has an Autism Advisory Committee to expand our outreach to this population, find resources in best practices and available resources around the state.

David discussed the 3 FTE positions for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and SRC Annual Legislative Reception. We had requested 3 FTE positions which was not tied to asking for additional dollars. IVRS has developed a partnership with the U of I, who developed a career pathway for individuals coming out of their ASL interpreting program to move into the Graduate Rehab Counselor Program. Those positions were not eventually included in the final budget, therefore, we will ask again at the next reception meeting.

CSNA BREAKOUT ROOMS

Brandy discussed the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and taking a look at a variety of focus areas. In the breakout sessions we will discuss those areas and how they are impacted by the SRC Members.

Areas include:

- Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, Including Their Need for Supported Employment Services
- Individuals with Disabilities who are Minorities and Individuals with Disabilities who Have Been Unserved or Underserved by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- Individuals with Disabilities Served Through Other Components of the Statewide Workforce System as Identified by Those Individuals and Personnel Assisting Those Individuals Through the Components of the System,
- Youth with Disabilities, and Students with Disabilities, Including Their Need for Pre-ETS or Other Transition Services, and an Assessment of the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities for Transition Services and Pre-ETS, and the Extent to Which Such Services Provided are Coordinated With Transition Services Provided Under the IDEA in Order to Meet the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities
- Assessment of the Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs Within the State.
- Business, Business Recruitment, Retention and how to bring businesses to the table

CSNA process we will take a look at a lot a data and information on a 3-year basis to get a feel for how we will move forward with VR in regards to our state plan and policies. We want to be sure the SRC is part of this process.

The full group was split into 3 separate groups to discuss these areas.

Brandy shared her group talked about how the entities are impacted especially due to Covid – changes how we do things such as business and labor market. Daryn talked about educating individuals on Benefits Planning – this is a focus of IVRS (Brandy lost connection). David shared they also talked about networking with businesses through the Chamber and strategies VR staff can take to better utilize those partnership, importance of aligning with our schools especially during Covid-19.

Steve shared they talked about similar items as the previous group, talked a lot about business services alignment with the one stop centers – talked about getting representation on the sector boards. Business need to have more education on what VR can do for them.

Richard shared their group talked about better education on this population to schools and businesses. Discussed the access to resources this population struggles with including; transportation, limited CRP's, internet access.

IVRS Staff will be meeting to discuss all the talking points in notes.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Jeff provided an update from the last SRC Meeting on 6/2/2020 – an IMPACT statement had been previously requested. Average monthly referrals for the 3 previous fiscal years was 434 per month, average referrals from April 2020 – July 2020 was 234. Successful outcomes have also decreased, average monthly closures for previous 3 fiscal years per month was 173, April 2020 – July 2020 average was 114. The number of 2020 cases with an authorization is 5,306 and is 16% less than FFY2019 a year ago, July 31, 2019. The total dollar amount authorized for all case services in 2020 is \$8,298,750 and is 25% less than year FFY2019 or \$2,709,844 less than, July 31, 2019. The amount expended for all case services in 2020 less than 13% less than last year FFY2019 at this time or \$1,083,018 less than. Operating costs, In State travel decreased by approximately 63%, State Vehicle decreased by approximately 57% and Out of State Travel decreased by approximately 105%. IT costs increases have included; ICN – bandwidth increase, RingCentral – Faxing Solution, NCP- VPN license increase, March – July 2020 increase in IT dollars \$6,120.

Waiting list currently is at 181 – this is all Others Eligible which we are not serving currently. Current caseload size is 11,500 down from over 12,000 one year ago, we have an additional 8,000 students who are potentially eligible that are not on our caseload.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 1:00p.

The next SRC meeting is Tuesday, October 27, 2020, the meeting will be held virtually via ZOOM from 10:30 a.m. until 1 p.m., with committee meetings beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Meeting minutes approved by the Council on this date: _____

SRC Chair – Scott Turczynski _____