



# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
301 CENTENNIAL MALL SOUTH • PO BOX 94987 • LINCOLN, NE 68509

State Rehabilitation Council Meeting  
State Office Building  
February 10, 2015

## Meeting Minutes

*Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under "Master Calendar" at least 5 days prior to each meeting.*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Pam Baltzer, Robert Danner, Nancy Drevo, Jaime Galloway, Rita Hammitt, Seamus Kelly, John McNally, Brad Meurrens, Leslie Novacek, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, Mark Schultz, David Scott, JD Simmons, Joni Thomas, Susan Williams

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Sharon Bloechle, Gayle Hahn, April Isaacs, John Moeller, Vicki Newman

**VR STAFF PRESENT:** Sarah Chapin, Sandy Hamm, Lindy Foley, Angela Fujan, Ashley Hernandez

*The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:04 a.m. public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.*

### INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Council member introductions were made to welcome new council members. New members present were; Susan Williams, David Scott, John McNally, and Rita Hammitt.

### PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

No public comment was given.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

JD Simmons moved and Seamus Kelly seconded the motion to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 14, 2014 MINUTES

Seamus Kelly moved and JD Simmons seconded a motion to approve the October 14, 2014 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR

Kipp Ransom asked council members if any feedback was brought to council members. No member feedback was presented.

### **CAP REPORT**

A written CAP report was provided to members. Vicki Rasmussen shared that the client services committee works closely with client satisfaction and the client satisfaction survey. Vicki stated the survey needed some updating and some additional questions were added. Vicki stated the survey is very valuable. Vicki reported a question was posed about the possibility to purchase a service dog through Nebraska VR for client. Vicki shared there has been a committee formed to explore the purchase of a service dog. JD Simmons shared that the client in need of a service dog has difficulty controlling her blood sugar which is affecting her employment. The dog would be able to sense her blood sugar levels and could alert her before it causes a problem for her, but the service dogs are expensive and time of service is limited. Vicki shared she is also working with students who attend high school who can take courses for college credit and are currently working out policy on how to fund these courses.

### **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS**

Members were provided with written reports from ATP, NYLC and NSILC. Angela Fujan shared that in regards to the VR Statistics, they can now be viewed much more quickly and up to date via the VR Data Dashboard.

### **SRC ANNUAL REPORT & NATIONAL ORGANIZATION**

Sandy Hamm shared with council members the new SRC Annual Report. Sandy stated reports from the council chair person, council committees and information on council members are all included in the report. Sandy stated the time frame of the report is not the standard calendar year, it is ran from October to September. Members discussed the monetary and community benefits of those who become and remain employed through VR services and some of those highlights that are included in the annual report. Sandy shared they have been increasing the use of info graphics in the annual report as they have been found to be more memorable. Council members were able to ask questions and gain clarification regarding the annual report. Sandy shared at the conclusion of the reports three different clients' stories from different parts of the state were shared to offer faces to the many statistics given in the report.

### **DATA DASHBOARD**

The VR Data Dashboard was presented and explained to council members by Mark Schultz. Mark showed members through the Data Dashboard, VR numbers served as well as outcomes by office. The Data Dashboard also showed how Nebraska is above national compliance guidelines as well as other information including the average wage of consumers, as well as average costs per outcome. Also presented in the Data Dashboard are expenditures by category which can show budget use by office, team or state view. Consumers by age range are presented on the dashboard with a little over 40% of the caseload of the Nebraska VR being youth ages 14-21. Consumers by disability are also presented in the Data Dashboard, as well as placement by primary occupation. Mark showed how all of the information available can be shown statewide, or by specific VR office, or by specific counselor. Mark reported the Data Dashboard has been in place for about a year and has been a great resource and ensures transparency. Mark shared that they will be adding to the dashboard factors to include all team members who have touched on a case instead of solely counselors. Mark shared that the biggest measure for the VR is if consumers gain employment and also if they are able to remain employed.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mark Schultz reported. Mark gave an update on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. Mark shared they are currently waiting on measures and indicators as how to operate under this provision. Mark stated that the rules and regulations will now not be available until early spring from the federal government. Mark stated the act requires greater collaboration between the core partners, (Department of Labor & Adult Education). Mark stated they will be meeting to devise a plan to determine how they will operate, including confidentiality concerns. Mark stated that the role of the SRC may change with a unified state plan. Mark shared that new staff will be hired as business account managers to improve disability awareness with employers and build relationships with businesses who would be willing to partner with the VR. Mark stated some of this is modeled off of Vermont's Progressive Employment Plan, but Nebraska is looking at implementing a rapid engagement model. Mark shared they are going to be focusing on pre-employment transition services, serving students who can receive outreach when they are determining their goals for employment in the future. Mark shared currently they are waiting on guidance from the federal level. Mark shared that at the federal level, ATP and the Center for Independent Living will move under HHS but this doesn't necessarily have to happen at the state level. Mark stated that these changes are things that he will need council input on in the future. Mark shared while waiting for guidance he hopes he will have more to share at the council's next meeting.

Mark shared the VR's 2014 outcomes were higher then they have ever been and currently they are on track to increase services in 2015 as well.

Mark shared there are a couple bills in the legislature including the interpreting bill. The bill LB287 proposes that all interpreters need to be licensed. Tangent to this bill is to increase the rating for interpreters that interpret in schools from a 3.5 to a 4 to improve quality and the amount of information for students receiving those services. Mark stated LB516 will establish a traumatic brain injury trust fund and support the requirement for resource facilitation. Mark shared this trust fund in many ways mirrors the current grant for traumatic brain injury. Mark reported that The Department of Education and Nebraska VR support both of these bills.

## **CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE EVENT**

Mark Schultz shared he was invited to the event, *Champions of Change* in Washington D.C. where ten individuals were recognized. One of Nebraska VR's consumers from York, NE Dan Hromas who owns a chicken farming business was officially recognized as a Champion of Change. David Scott also shared his experience as an attendee. David shared that all the individual success stories were terrific and they clearly demonstrated the benefit of services and how they work. David shared he brought back with him from the event the desire to make the hospitality industry the number one employer of those with disabilities.

## **REVIEW OF VR INFORMATION**

The Project Search video was shared by David Scott and viewed by council members. A Nebraska VR fact sheet was distributed to council members for review. Members discussed speaking with state senators following the meeting. Sarah Chapin shared she could send messages to the senators via constant contact following SRC members visits today. Kipp Ransom stated he would like the constant contact messages to be distributed.

## **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 1:28pm.