



STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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**State Rehabilitation Council Meeting
Nebraska VR Office
3901 N 27th St. Lincoln, NE
August 8, 2017**

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: Shari Bahensky, Michael Chittenden, Jon Moeller, Tobias Orr, Kipp Ransom, Mark Schultz, David Scott, JD Simmons, Carly Weyers

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gina Geiger, John McNally, Vicki Newman, Sandy Peterson, Joni Thomas

VR STAFF PRESENT: Lindy Foley, Brigid Griffin, Ashley Hernandez, Mary Matusiak, Paige Rose

VISITORS: Kelly Brakenhoff, Margie Propp, Julie Shively

The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:09 a.m. public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

No public comment was given.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MAY 9, 2017 MINUTES

JD Simmons moved and Tobias Orr seconded a motion to approve the May 9, 2017 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

SRC NEW MEMBERS

Kipp Ransom introduced Mary Matusiak the new Program Director of Employment Services who will serve as a technical advisor to the council.

FOLLOW UP OF LAST MEETINGS ACTION ITEMS

Senator Outreach

David Scott reviewed the senator outreach that took place in March targeting the senators' aides. David shared he felt it was a positive experience and effective. Paige Rose stated it would have been beneficial to have more SRC member representation in the future. David stated he believes this method is a better approach than what has been done in past years. David stated holding a similar event again in February/March would be good for the council. Mark Schultz shared it would be best to watch and discuss with senators the revenue and potential changes to funding. Kipp stated the SRC needs to work on having better member representation at the outreach event.

NCSRC Fall Conference

Kipp Ransom reported the NCSRC Fall Conference will be held in Greenville, SC November 11-12. Kipp stated a member volunteer is needed to attend. JD Simmons stated he would be interested in attending. Mark Schultz shared that an agenda for the conference has not been released yet but discussed potential guidance and interpretations that might be gained at the conference. David Scott proposed that our SRC reach out and request information regarding the agenda. Kipp stated he can reach out via email.

Client Satisfaction Survey Question Updates

Shari Bahensky shared that the approved updates to question 10 have been made and the survey is now up to date and available on the SRC website.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Julie Shively, the Self-Employment Program Specialist for VR shared an overview of the definition of VR self-employment. Julie shared a VR Pathways to success video of Tanna Skarniak last year's Entrepreneur of Distinction Award winner, sharing her story of self-employment with VR. Julie shared a part two of Tanna's story, reporting following winning the award she hit some business difficulties due to a changing market. Julie reported that VR was able to work with her to create an updated feasibility and business plan as well as get her started with new skills training. Julie outlined VR's self-employment services including: pre-feasibility review, feasibility study, business planning, start-up costs, profession technical assistance, ATP funding, technical assistance and VR business monitoring and follow-up. Julie stated they currently have approximately 60 cases state wide in different stages. Partnership and additional working capital funds were reviewed. Partners include: REAP, SBA, FSA, SCORE, NE Business Development Centers, USDA, VA, and more. Julie shared some of the different self-employed client career examples such as, a horse farrier, goat farmer, accountant, quilt maker, taxidermist, semi-driver and many more. Julie discussed the grit of clients who pursue self-employment. David Scott asked if VR is connected with local chamber of commerce's, Julie answered that yes they are members of several throughout the state and they do refer self-employment clients to connect with their local chambers of commerce. Julie shared they contract with a business consultant out of Omaha who assists with the self-employment business feasibility plans to include: market analysis, strengths, weaknesses and a break even analysis. Stating he is present at all business plan meetings.

ENTREPRENEUR OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

Kipp Ransom stated per last council meeting the Entrepreneur of Distinction Awards will be held at the State Capitol prior to the SRC meeting which will follow at the State Office Building.

MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR

Kipp Ransom asked council members if any feedback was brought to council members. Kipp shared he was looking at the SRC website and membership photos need to be updated and added to

reflect current council membership. David Scott discussed if additional information can be acquired from the national conference on how to improve websites and social media outreach for SRCs. Members discussed how SRC could create an increased presence on social media by creating a Facebook page and guiding its content.

CAP REPORT

A written CAP report was provided to members. Shari Bahensky summarized some of the key topics of the report from the past quarter. Shari reported there were six new cases and briefly discussed each case and their outcomes. Members discussed how the majority of cases are mainly issues of communication. Mary Matusiak shared her experience working in Washington's VR and their contrast regarding CAP issues. David Scott discussed setting guidelines or a threshold of CAP issues to use as a monitoring system. Jonathan Moeller shared his personal experience working with VR and the benefits of the team approach. Mark Schultz stated he believes there will be changes in CAP reporting in the future when priority selection occurs it will likely increase CAP cases.

MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS

Members were provided with written reports from ATP, NYLC and NSILC. Members did not share any additional feedback. David Scott suggested adding comments and support of organizations like ATP, etc. through media as well as utilizing the written reports. Council members determined that the written reports should be added to the SRC webpage. Mark Schultz stated he was concerned about not having received a NSILC report and having representative present at council meetings. Kipp Ransom stated a new NSILC member is scheduled to join the council at the October council meeting.

Michael Chittenden shared he will no longer be with ARC and will be working with a consulting company dealing with managed care companies stating he is willing to stay on his new role still serving the DD population pending the executive board's approval.

CAREER PATHWAYS GRANT UPDATE

Mark Schultz reported Nebraska is one of four states receiving the Career Pathways Grant. Mark reported at this point there are 60 individuals who are working within the program and 5 successfully closed success stories. Mark shared that one individual working in IT was working full-time and was still needing to work an additional part-time job to support his family. Mark shared he did not have a college degree and with VR support receiving additional education he was able to move into a new job making an increase of \$40,000 a year and no longer needing to work an additional part-time job. Mark shared they were able to get the grant expanded to include health care. This program is a joint initiative with the Department of Labor. Mark shared this program has not been costing as much as they initially anticipated and businesses have been very supportive of funding additional training for employees. Mark shared VR counselors supporting individuals through the process is a huge benefit to individuals reaching their goals. Mark shared that the concept paper is being reviewed and could be a national model for other states.

TEAM TOUR

Mark Schultz reported twice a year he goes out and visits with all the VR teams throughout the state. Mark shared he thought there was less concern and confusion than he has seen in the past year despite all the changes that have been occurring. Mark shared that the update on the satisfaction survey came out of a team meeting. Mark discussed some of the questions asked in the meetings, reporting they showed that clarification of some regulations needs to be better shared with teams. Brigid Griffin discussed she is working with Madonna in Omaha serving pediatric clients and offering Pre-Employment Transition services to individuals residing there from out of state. Mark

shared during the team tours, staff stated they would like more training on medical aspects. Teams also shared what they have been doing with directors. Mark discussed the worked based learning focus, sharing the team tour was reassuring and exciting.

REGULATORY REFORM

When President Trump took office, VR Directors were requested to set forth rules, regulations and recommendations from VR through the Department of Education and are due August 31st. Mark Schultz shared recommendations VR will be making and asked for council feedback and/or additions. Mark discussed pre-employment transition and the amount of funding that is federally set and how this should be looked at differently will be included in the recommendations. There is also a recommendation of a 60-90 day grace period for individuals after high school graduation, so they are not abruptly left without services. Currently, anytime something is purchased over \$5,000 it is to go to federal oversight, which would greatly slow the process and at this point there is not a procedure put in place. Mark reported it will be recommended to remove this regulation. Another recommendation discussed was currently supportive employment funds cannot be utilized until an individual is actually working, which is not practical as individuals need support gaining employment. Additional recommendations will be made in regards to subminimum wage and competitive integrative employment. Mark discussed an employer of individuals with disabilities working together earning over minimum wage and receiving benefits, but working in an enclave that could be determined not to be competitive intergrated employment. These types of opportunities are being reviewed individually to make improvements. Additional guidance is being requested to assess enclaves. Members discussed there is not a set percentage of what is considered integrated. Mark shared that the comments can come from VR but he would like to include any SRC comments with RSA. Members stated they support the current comments outlined above to the RSA. Maximization of funds was discussed by council members.

REVIEW AND INPUT ON RULE 71 & RULE 72 CHANGES

Mark Schultz reported there are changes being made to both Rule 71 & Rule 72 caused by WIOA. Mark summarized the changes for council members. Rule 71 changes were regarding set days to file from 30 to 60 days for hearing and additional technical references to law. In Rule 72 the fee schedule that caps services provided by VR, most fee caps were raised to bring them up to date. Some other areas fee for services were no longer needed and were eliminated. Vehicle modifications included a depreciation schedule which was eliminated and now only one estimate is required. Mark shared he thinks the changes are made to the positive factor of the client and no objections were made at the hearing. The changes have been approved by the State Board of Education and are now awaiting approval by the Governor's office to hopefully go into effect at the beginning of the new year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Members broke into subcommittees for a working lunch.

Employer Services

Julie Shively shared there were two Entrepreneur of Distinction nominees brought to the committee. Both nominees had not been in business for a year ago and both individuals are still struggling. The committee determined they would need to give those individuals another year. Due to the circumstances, the committee members determined that the focus needed to be changed for the award ceremony this year. Instead of an Entrepreneur winner this year, they will have an employer award for a business who supports VR and individuals with disabilities. David Scott proposed the SRC in the future honor both an individual entrepreneur and an employer annually. Council members determined this year only an employer would be honored at the Capitol. Committee

members will be working with business account managers to determine an employer award recipient. Members discussed if they would like to move the location of the awards.

Transition Services

JD Simmons reported the committee discussed two new Project Search sites that will be opening. JD stated pre-employment transition service MOUs have been prepared and partnership planning forms are ready to go out to schools. JD shared there are 750 pre-employment students in Lincoln alone. JD discussed in June, the NYLC conference was held with a great speaker. There was positive feedback from well attended youth conference. JD reviewed the pilot program at the YRTC in Geneva and Kearney are up and running well. A youth round table is coming up that will include seven or eight states with representatives from DOL, VR, HHS and probation for collaboration of services. Paige Rose shared the assessment tool, Compass has been replaced by Accu for assessments. After the first of the year community colleges may start making the change, but they are not required to do so until 2019. Paige shared they are also looking into a new assessment that will assess the importance of work values of young people. Brigid Griffin shared 23 summer transition programs occurred serving at least 300 individuals this year.

Client Services

Shari Bahensky shared the committee discussed the client satisfaction survey. There was an increase in number of surveys completed. Overall satisfaction results also increased. Shari reported the committee also discussed a survey question regarding individuals who quit their job, many responded they quit because it was not a good fit. The committee determined they will add a follow up question to explore why it was not a good fit. Shari shared they discussed having Omaha Tribal VR representation on the council starting in October and having the client services committee reach out to serve that population.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Mark Schultz reported September 5, 6 and 7th Nebraska is holding a national conference in Omaha of the Program Evaluation Summit Group. The majority attending are associated with the VR program and will be discussing evaluation methods. They are expecting approximately 150 people for the conference. Two employers, the Omaha Zoo and Warner Enterprises, will be speaking regarding measures of success. Mark shared and discussed presentations being made by VR staff. Mark stated he is currently working to negotiate agreements with One Stops, also called American Job Centers (AJCs) which are located in Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island and Beatrice. Mark reported law requires VR contributes towards the infrastructure costs of the centers and if there are service costs VR is to contribute to the services that support VR clients, difficulties arise in determining those costs. Concerns arise that there are 12 VR offices throughout the state and only 4 AJCs where only approximately 100 referrals come from. Mark discussed the need to determine how to allocate expenses between agencies. Members discussed training is needed for staff of the job centers. The agency must provide the full range of services listed in the Rehabilitation Act, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals who apply. In the event that services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals the agency must implement an order of selection policy. If VR services go into an order of selection, those individuals determined to not meet the most severely disabled category of priority group(s) being served will be referred back to One Stops which will complicate things. Mark discussed the many access points throughout the state that individuals come into for services, the majority being VR offices. Mark reported they will be

negotiating those costs and if they cannot come to an agreement it will go to the Governor for allocation.

Mark shared the infrastructure costs are already in place. Mark reported a fantastic partnership is occurring with Developmental Disabilities working together in regards to competitive integrative employment. They have transferred over 1.7million dollars to VR to use for that purpose. Mark stated they will be proposing to the federal level to see if a match is possible. Mark discussed that this fund transfer will create a match penalty struggle in a couple years, but they have a plan in place to minimize the hit. With an increased number of referrals due to the collaboration with DD, an order of selection is anticipated to be needed by next summer. Council members discussed the process and regulations regarding an order of selection. Members discussed the need of additional new members and the need for additional advertising and outreach. Members will reach out to members from the DD council and people first.

NEXT MEETING

October 10, 2017 at 10:00am

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned 1:40pm.

ACTION ITEMS:

- NCSRC Fall Conference council attendee – JD Simmons?
- NCSRC conference agenda follow up – Kipp Ransom
- Room reservations at State Capitol and State Office Building for October SRC meeting – Angela Fujan
- SRC website membership photo updates
- Creation of Nebraska SRC Facebook page
- Written reports added to webpage – Ashley/Sarah C
- New member recruitment – Executive committee
- Employer Award Recipient – Employer Services Committee