



# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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

State Rehabilitation Council Meeting  
Nebraska VR Office  
3901 N 27<sup>th</sup> St. Lincoln, NE  
February 14, 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, Rita Hammitt, John McNally, Tobias Orr, Sandy Peterson, Kipp Ransom, Mark Schultz, David Scott, JD Simmons, Joni Thomas

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Gina Geiger, JaToya McIntosh, Jon Moeller, Vicki Newman, Carly Weyers

**VR STAFF PRESENT:** Lindy Foley, Angela Fujan, Brigid Griffin, Ashley Hernandez, Paige Rose

**VISITORS:** Frances Beaurivage, Crystal Pierce

*The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:16 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 Sandy Peterson 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 11, 2016 MINUTES**

David Scott moved and JD Simmons seconded a motion to approve the October 11, 2016 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **SRC NEW MEMBERS**

Kipp Ransom shared that new member, Carly Weyers will be replacing Brenda Chappell. Joni Thomas shared she is no longer with Independence Rising and is now with Nebraska Total Care as the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Liason and will carry out the remainder of her term

with the SRC. Kipp also stated the John Hogue has resigned from the council. Angela Fujan shared that the council is open to receive new member applications. Council members whose terms will be expiring in the Fall discussed serving a second term. Rita Hammit stated she would like to serve a second term. Jon Moeller was not present. Sandy Peterson stated she would like to serve a second term. David Scott shared he will discuss a second term with his employer and get back to the council. Joni Thomas will serve through October.

## **FOLLOW UP OF LAST MEETINGS ACTION ITEMS**

### **Senator Outreach**

David Scott shared that he has reached out to Senator Kate Bolz in hopes to coordinate an outreach breakfast as was done last year. David said due to schedules they have had difficulty getting a hold of Senators or someone to potentially sponsor the event. Michael Chittenden shared he worked on a training for incoming senators called Medicaid 101 in November and discussed its results. Michael shared he thinks a similar breakfast to last year could be done fairly easily in March and suggested having food being paid for by the MCOs. David Scott discussed he likes the idea of trainings and the potential benefit of having something quarterly. Michael stated legislative session is not complete until June and stated March is Disability Awareness Month although outreach could occur in another month. Michael stated they typically give each sponsoring MCO approximately ten minutes to share regarding their companies and focus the majority of time on a featured speaker such as a possible “VR 101”. Members discussed how long senators or aides would potentially sit in a training and or meeting, as well as best time of the day to find available aides. Michael suggested a few senators he felt would be open to sponsoring this type of training. Members discussed that to get senators and aides to attend food does need to be provided. Members discussed highlighting the aides and their value at sharing the information with the senators. Michael discussed having a “hook” or something special to bring in the senators and aides. David Scott asked if going back to individually meet with aides at their offices to share information would be a good idea. Members discussed setting up appointments and the ideas of reaching out to aides in person at the time of a potential breakfast. Kipp Ransom reviewed information that was delivered to senators and their aides in the past highlighting the *VR Fast Facts*. Michael stated he believes they can successfully create an event. Kipp stated they particularly need to target new senators who are likely not aware of Nebraska VR and the federal match. David stated he would like to focus on late March/April to lock in a date for a 10am event. Angela Fujan stated she feels the funding of the food is the challenge for these events. Sandy Peterson stated that creating personal contacts with senators and aides is the best way to spread the message and increase attendance.

### **VR Materials for Senators’ Briefing Packets**

John McNally shared that packets have not been distributed yet, due to new senators not having offices until January. John stated he thinks the coming weeks will be the best time to provide the materials when senators are settled and have time to review materials. John shared he feels it is important to inform senators not only what VR does, but also how VR fits into the big picture. For example, VR is part of the Department of Education not just an independent non-profit. John shared there are currently 18 new senators who will be provided the packets. John shared the packets which included and letter from Kipp Ransom and the council, VR fact sheet overviews, Pre-Employment Transition Services for Students brochure, and an overview of The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). Kipp shared he feels including links to the Pathways to Success videos would be very helpful.

## **CPAP AND CONSUMER/EMPLOYER SURVEY**

Janet Drudik the Project Director for Career Pathways Advancement Project (CPAP) reviewed the five year grant project. Janet reported there are 1,114 clients they are contacting to see if they are

wanting to advance in their current employment. The project's goal is to help clients retain a higher wage, increasing their independence as well as serving the employment partners. Janet reported they have reached out to 413 clients, 14% of those have started services. Janet shared that evaluation is part of the grant and ICI is completing that evaluation through a survey. Janet shared copies of the survey with council members for review. Janet shared that Shari Bahensky and the Consumer Input Committee provided input on the satisfaction survey. Janet reported they will be surveying all of the clients that have been worked with initially and then conduct surveys quarterly there after. Janet shared she thinks there will be a great response from clients. Janet shared that within the four career pathways they are looking to increase partnerships with employers that may have employees with disabilities who have not received VR services in the past who maybe interested in advancing in their positions where VR could assist. ATP will also be working with employers through the grant to provide ergonomic assessments. Janet shared all clients that have participated have advanced their education through the project.

### **NATIONAL SRC CONFERENCE REPORT**

Kipp Ransom shared he attended the NCSRC in the Fall. Kipp shared there were not break out sessions at the conference, but instead separate morning and afternoon sessions. Kipp shared that the directors reported they would be tackling WIOA, but did not share much information on the changes at the conference. Kipp reported that the only direction which was shared was to increase staff to meet the 15% transition spending requirement. Kipp stated himself and the other conference attendees were wanting direction on how to tackle WIOA, but they did not receive it. Kipp shared himself and others did leave the conference disappointed as they were hoping for more direction and guidance. Mark Schultz stated that we will not receive specific guidance until after five states have been monitored. Mark shared this year they will be monitoring 14 states, but those states will not be released until April. Kipp shared SRCs were well represented at the conference with participants from all over the country. Kipp reported they discussed the easiest mandates of SRC which included quarterly meetings, chairpersons and reimbursement. Kipp shared our council shares the most common struggles of other councils which includes, the struggle to maintain quorum and appointments. Kipp stated the Nebraska SRC situation is somewhat different as appointments do not have to be made by the governor, but instead members are approved by the Commissioner of Education. Kipp reported there was a big session on SRC Annual Reports. Kipp shared with council members the conference's most popular annual report was from West Virginia for members to review and stated the reports should be looked at as the council's business card. Kipp shared they reviewed if the annual reports included a council application, which Nebraska's does not, if it included a photo of the council and member bios, as well as listed council accomplishments. Kipp shared some SRCs meet more times a year and have more content. Kipp reported they discussed if the annual report should be more concise and provide fast facts and if too much information could be overwhelming. David Scott discussed the possibility of council accomplishments would balance due to effectiveness of their state's VR program. Mark discussed how each state's program is ran somewhat differently. Mark shared that our annual report has been used for a model for other states. Kipp stated he would like to see a council member application included in the future. Members discussed brochures versus electronic forms of information and their effectiveness. David Scott suggested the possibility of an actual business card that could have a QR code which would take individuals directly to the online resources. Kipp stated he is not disappointed in our report, but wanted to offer a contrast of what other states are doing. Mark suggested the council create a group that would discuss and make suggestions on the annual report. The next NCSRC will be held in Bethesda, Maryland on April 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Kipp asked members to please contact himself or Angela with interest. Kipp shared they discussed customer satisfaction surveys and frequency of surveys and return rates. Kipp shared those in his group were impressed by the effectiveness of Nebraska's quarterly surveyers by phone through the Easter Seals.

Satisfaction surveys are a priority for the Nebraska SRC. Kipp shared the conference was great overall. Mark shared that direction going forward with WIOA regulations will need to come from RSA at the federal level. Kipp shared that a fourth of the participants of the NCSRC went on to participate in the directors conference. Kipp also stated that having a link to the client satisfaction survey on the SRC website was highly recommended at the conference. Kipp stated at this point he does not see a need for great deal of change to our current report, but to be aware of how it is done elsewhere. Recommendations for the Annual Report will be discussed at the May council meeting. Kipp shared a quote he liked from the Hawaii SRC was “VR taking clients from tax takers to tax makers”.

### **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR**

Kipp Ransom asked council members if any feedback was brought to council members. Kipp shared a message from absent member Jon Moeller sharing how pleased he is with the services he has been receiving from VR.

### **CAP REPORT**

A written CAP report was provided to members. Shari Bahensky summarized some of the key topics of the report. Shari stated there were only two new reports over these past few months. Members discussed how outstanding it is that there were only two reports and how that is a big credit to VR staff.

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

Members were provided with written reports from VR Statistics, ATP, NYLC and NSILC. Members did not share any additional feedback.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Members broke into subcommittees for a working lunch.

#### **Client Services**

Joni Thomas reported the committee reviewed the client satisfaction survey results. Joni reported the question regarding why the client left employment where the option was added “not enough hours”. Approximately 50% chose not enough hours and the other 50% still chose “other”. Joni shared the committee discussed the issue maybe due to the way the question is being asked to the interviewee. Joni reported they are going to ask the Easter Seals to not list choices when administering the survey, but have it be an open ended question. Shari Bahensky shared that on the question if they would recommend VR services the answer “somewhat likely” was not listed. The committee decided to include very likely and somewhat likely as answer choices as well as add the question of “why” to respondents who answer “would not recommend”. Members discussed potential responses of clients and the possibility of inconsistency from the employer.

#### **Employer Services**

Lindy Foley shared that the committee discussed a Project Search job fair which will be held on March 27<sup>th</sup> at the Cornhusker Hotel. The committee discussed potentially rotating yearly the job fair between Omaha and Lincoln. Lindy shared the job fair is a way to cater to both the individual clients and employer partners. Mock interviews and resume review will be a component of the job fair. Lindy reported they will be sharing the knowledge learned and blueprint of the job fair for VR offices to hold similar job fairs throughout the state. Brigid Griffin shared all of the schools in Lincoln VR and Omaha VR office areas have been invited to the job fair. Lindy shared that college students majoring in special education from Doane and UNL will be volunteering to assist at the job fair.

## **Transition Services**

JD Simmons shared the committee discussed the transition conference which was held last week in Kearney. JD shared there were some different viewpoints on how collaboration and cooperation should occur. JD stated most often the school is the point where services are most often identified, but then the agencies still need to be invited to collaborate at IEPs. JD shared there are BAMS out in the community visiting with schools on their needs as well. JD stated that collaboration at the conference did occur between different agencies attending and there was a lot sharing of ideas.

## **DIRECTORS REPORT**

Mark Schultz reported that Lindy Foley is now the Assistant Director of VR and supervising the office directors across the state. Mark stated, Lindsey Brown has been hired as the Pre-Employment Transition Director as part of reorganization in Omaha. There is now a team exclusively for transition based out of the Omaha office to work directly with schools and students to increase the numbers of those served in the school community. There are two other Omaha teams which serve adults. Mark shared VR is currently advertising five open positions for pre-employment transition coordinators in Omaha, stating there has been a very large number of applicants. Mark reported youth rehabilitation treatment centers (YRTC) located in Kearney, Geneva and Hastings were determined by HHS as needing vocational service. VR is partnering with WFD to work with those students one day a week teaching job skills. VR is also working to establish these services with Lancaster County Youth Detention. Feedback so far has been very positive. Mark reported Jen Papproth has been assigned to develop learning plans and new staff training for VR. Mark reported the Governor's recommendation was to cut 4% of the current VR budget. It was resolved on the legislative side that VR will not be getting cut as they will shift funds over to cover loss. Although, the Department of Education will need to make cuts. Mark shared that VR is being asked to do more all the time without any further funding. Funding loss causes the need to reduce services through order of selection which is not wanted. Mark shared the Department of Education, VR and Department of Labor need to get together to see how best to serve those with developmental disabilities. Department of Labor has a grant to improve this communication. Through the grant a common intake to determine needs and who will serve individuals is being developed, as well as improvements in service coordination and reporting are being addressed. Mark reported CSAVR is working on what is called *Vision 20/20*. The goal is, by the hundredth anniversary of the VR program in year 2020, to have created a more positive image of VR. States which have had struggling VR programs are being approached to offer assistance and guidance for improvement. CSAVR is in the process of creating business partners and holding consumer forums to be led by SRCs. Mark shared there maybe an opportunity for Nebraska's SRC to share more and the Pathway's to Success Videos maybe shared as part of Vision Twenty Twenty. CSAVR is working to create some positive change. Mark reported there is a great relationship with the Department of Labor and they are meeting weekly on WIOA and coordinating services. Mark discussed the fact sheet that has been distributed regarding the partnership with VR and Development Disabilities. Mark reported VR will be the gatekeeper to determine if an individual is capable of working competitively. Medicaid waivers can not be used to pay for sheltered workshops as of 2018, this has caused concerns with providers on how payment will occur. VR is working with DHHS to maximize funding through federal match in order to serve all individuals who want to be in a competitive workplace. VR will provide individuals working with sheltered workshops with counseling and information on alternative employment. Sheltered workshops do not need to close but can not be paid for by VR, schools or DHHS. Mark stated his hope is to create more Project Search like programs. Sandy Peterson asked how to handle a school district saying they do not need VR services as they can do it all. Mark stated he would like to continue to be present in these schools and remain positive while seeing that all five required services are met and if so seeing if there are

opportunities for VR to provide trainings for staff or parents to build an improved partnership. Mark stated VR needs to work with these schools and earn their trust. Mark discussed the Pathways for Success video featuring Amanda at HyVee and how that is very successful. Mark shared the Inclusion Works video with the council.

**NEXT MEETING**

May 9, 2017 at 10:00am

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 pm.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Senator Outreach March/April – David Scott & Michael Chittenden
- Distribution of new senator VR information packets – John McNally
- Annual Report Review Committee?, add SRC application to Annual Report – Kipp Ransom
- NCSRC April 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> attendance – council member volunteer
- Client satisfaction survey link added to the SRC webpage