



# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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## State Rehabilitation Council Meeting

Nebraska State Capitol

Lincoln, NE

February 12, 2019

### 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:** Jerry Bryan, Michael Bursaw, Lindy Foley, Gayle Hahn, Tobias Orr, Diane Owen-Downs, David Scott, Alice Senseney, JD Simmons (via teleconference), Adriana Springer (via teleconference)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Lonnie Berger, Crystal Booker, Chris Gaspari, Deanna Henke, Lisa Kent, Susan Madsen, John McNally, Jonathan Moeller, Vicki Newman, Sandy Peterson, Cassidy Wall, Camie West, Carly Weyers

**VR STAFF PRESENT:** Angela Fujan, Brigid Griffin, Ashley Hernandez, Victoria Rasmussen

*The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:01 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**

Tobias Orr moved and Michael Bursaw seconded the motion to approve the agenda with the amendment to move the Director's Report to the first order of business. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **DIRECTORS REPORT**

Lindy Foley delivered the VR Director's Report. Lindy reviewed that Nebraska VR has been under an order of selection since December 2017 with all three priorities groups closed. Lindy reported re-allotment funds were made available to begin taking some individuals off the wait list. *Lindy reported updated numbers regarding individuals on waitlist: Priority Group 1: 1651; Priority Group 2: 532; Priority Group 3: 339.* Lindy discussed eligibility for services is determined by priority group in the order of the date applications were received. Lindy discussed when individuals

are placed on the waitlist, they are given information and referral which directs the individual to possible resources from partners such as the Department of Labor. Individuals are given much more than a basic referral a VR counselor sets-up a meeting and assesses and discusses resource options. Lindy shared that they have not only been communicating with partners regarding referrals, Nebraska VR has provided partner staff training and continues checking in regarding any questions or concerns of partner agencies. Lindy shared the majority of VR agencies throughout the United States are under an order of selection unfortunately, but these states are collaborating and brainstorming how to best serve individuals under an order of selection. Lindy reported individuals began to be pulled off the waitlist starting in October and the process began in order of application date in priority group one. Lindy reported 200 individuals were contacted and staff have been working to assess and progress. Lindy shared there are monthly progress reports assessing the current cases and they are being very intentional in monitoring and assessing the needs as these cases go into planning. David Scott asked if there has been data capturing if any individuals that possibly no longer require services due to finding other resources while on the waitlist. Lindy shared as they are gathering information regarding which cases move to plan and which do not, they will be able to have a better understanding and possible trends projections as they move forward. David suggested a celebration when VR reaches the turning point of taking more individuals off the waiting list than those going on.

Lindy reviewed last meeting's discussion of retention services as it is currently built into the state plan. Lindy reported they completed their team tour and retention was part of that discussion. Lindy shared some offices reported retention services are a struggle when individuals no matter their priority group if applied for retention they move to the front of the line. Other offices reported it was a great benefit to keep individuals employed as well as a benefit to employers. Lindy shared Angela Fujan is the point person for retention cases verifying that cases are handled consistently. Angela reported from the employer perspective it has been a difficult spot to require employers to write a letter stating an employees' disability is putting them at risk for termination. Angela shared the employer committee will be reviewing some potential questions to discuss with employers to replace the letter requirement. Angela shared assessing and reviewing the retention cases is a challenging process. Lindy and Angela discussed that many other states have opted to not have retention as part of their state plans. Lindy stated retention will continue to be monitored and its effects on the budget. Lindy reported they are paying attention to the equipment and services under retention and seeing if there are other resources with partners that could address those needs. Lindy reported 24 individuals were assisted and were able to maintain employment thanks to retention services. Members discussed rules and regulations of wait list procedure as well as potential client needs. Tobias Orr commented that he believes from the data provided and his experience it appears the lower numbers in priority group 2 and 3 are due to VR staff doing an excellent job in referral and locating alternative resources. Lindy shared she cannot say enough positive things about the great work of all the VR staff during this challenging year.

Lindy shared a leadership team was created with a representative from each office in October and they worked together to discuss providing quality services. The leadership team determined three priorities. 1. Improving and maintaining outreach procedures. 2. Developing and training positive staff. 3. Establish and continue developing community programs.

Lindy shared there is currently a legislative bill regarding Olmstead to ensure individuals with disabilities are included in the least restrictive environment. Lindy shared herself and Tobias have been attending meetings with DHHS who is managing the Olmstead process. Lindy shared Nebraska VR has not yet officially taken a position on the bill but are at the table and willing to share input.

## **APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 9, 2018 MINUTES**

Gayle Hahn moved and Michael Bursaw seconded a motion to approve the October 9, 2018 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

## **SRC NEW MEMBERS**

David Scott announced the Dea Henke will be joining the SRC as the SILC representative.

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

### **Senator Outreach**

David Scott discussed the postponement of today's senator outreach event to May due to the weather. Members discussed it is beneficial the legislature will still be in session in May but in the future to attempt to maintain the February date in order to catch senators if there are related bills to discuss. David shared he would like to look into the possibility of providing food if a room is available. The awards will be held in State Capitol room 1510 from 8:00-9:30 on May 14, 2019 prior to the SRC meeting with the council meeting to follow at the State Office Building.

### **SRC Annual Report**

Copies of the 2017-2018 SRC Annual Report were provided to members for review.

### **VR Staff Safety Training**

Victoria Rassmussen reported since the council last metm trainings "Dealing with Difficult People" were scheduled as a reminder to staff. Victoria stated de-escalation training is also scheduled for March. Victoria shared that each VR office has an emergency plan and each plan was reviewed to assure all plans meet the Department of Education requirements. Victoria shared incident reports are also being updated to include additional staff care. Members discussed the need of good communication with VR staff and schools and/or employers regarding client care and safety.

## **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR**

David Scott asked council members if any feedback was brought to council members. No member feedback was shared.

## **CAP REPORT**

Jerry Bryan provided members with a written report outlining CAP cases from the past quarter. Jerry reviewed the four cases for October through December. Jerry summarized the first case which dealt with a client's complaint regarding perceived insufficient services. Jerry shared it was discovered there was medication non-compliance causing psychosis symptoms. Jerry reported professionals were consulted with permission, where it was determined the case needed to be closed for safety reasons as the individual was a danger to himself and others at this time. The second case involved a client complaint regarding a denial for his want for HVAC training. Jerry shared this case came down to policy and procedure, which determined the individual did not have an unmet need. Jerry shared it was suggested to the client he could possibly enroll in a HVAC certificate program which could be partially funded but the individual then changed his mind and no longer wished to work with VR and he withdrew his complaint. Case three was summarized regarding a client complaint stating her case was closed to soon. Jerry shared the client discussed previously agreeing to close but then later stating she did not need services at the time but now did. Jerry reported the counselor was able to find a job coaching resource for the client and the client was satisfied and the case was closed. Case four was summarized as a miscommunication with a client's mother believing VR no longer wanted to fund the client's post-secondary education. Explanation

was required from VR with the change of financial eligibility due to no unmet need after reapplying for funding. The client remained as an open case as he would again be available for funding if financial circumstances occur. Brigid Griffin questioned if the VR counselor could have better shared and explained the financial eligibility requirements before a complaint was filed. Jerry discussed in this case it was a miscommunication with the mother not the client.

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

Members were asked for feedback on the written reports provided from NSILC, ATP, NYLC, Ombudsman, and Deaf & Hard of Hearing committees. Jerry Bryan will report at the next meeting regarding CAP and Tobias Orr will report in August when a new NYLC staff is hired they will tentatively report at the October meeting. No additional feedback was provided.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Members broke into committees for discussion.

#### **Client Services**

Gayle Hahn reported the committee reviewed the most recent 178 client satisfaction survey results from the first quarter Oct.-Dec. Gayle shared only 11 respondents reported they were no longer employed which is a great percentage. Gayle shared the most common response to why they are no longer employed was their needs were not being met, most reported they were not getting enough hours with 4 respondents. Jerry Bryan reported the highest response to what was the most useful service was “encouragement and support of VR staff”. Gayle shared 155 respondents reported they are very likely to recommend VR services to friends or family and no individuals responded they would not recommend VR at all. Gayle shared Victoria Rasmussen has been working closely with VR office staff to insure consistent survey completion. Gayle reported the committee discussed the consumer input committee which is no longer active and the need to reactivate that committee and potentially having an SRC member representative on the committee.

#### **Employer Services**

Michael Bursaw shared the committee reviewed the phone questionnaire provided for employers in the case of the need of retention services and made some recommendations. Michael shared multiple questions were regarding accommodations and the committee suggested some clarification and combination of those questions as well as updating all language to be employer language. The annual job fair will be held Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Lancaster Event Center.

#### **Transition Services**

JD Simmons reported the committee discussed the summer grant program with 18 programs being awarded program grants. Work based learning will be limited to 210 hours. JD reported the NYLC facilitator interviews will be conducted soon. Surveys will be sent out for school satisfaction regarding VR services. Transition conference is coming up and quite a bit of work will be done regarding assessments.

### **MEETING ORDER**

Gayle Hahn moved and Michael Bursaw seconded a motion for future meeting agendas to have the Directors Report as the first item of business. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Adriana Springer shared concerns regarding an inconsistent relationship with the tribal community. Adriana shared she is working on renewing her office's current grant. Adriana requested data regarding how many American Indians are being served by VR in the state as well as information on successful outcomes of American Indians. Adriana questioned what the priority level is for serving American Indians by Nebraska VR in 2019 to this greatly underserved population. Adriana requested communication solutions and sharing of information individually to assist filling the communication gap. Brigid Griffin established a meeting with Adriana and Angela Fujan stated she will collaborate with the technical department to compile the requested data.

**NEXT MEETING**

May 14, 2019 – Nebraska State Office Building, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 12:45pm.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Senator Outreach Event May 14, 2019 – State Capitol