



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 27th St. Lincoln, NE May 8, 2018

Draft 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: Crystal Booker, Jerry Bryan, Lindy Foley, Vicki Newman, Tobias Orr, Diane Owen-Downs, Sandy Peterson, Kipp Ransom, Michael Reed, David Scott, JD Simmons, Camie West

MEMBERS ABSENT: Michael Bursaw, Chris Gaspari, Gayle Hahn, Lisa Kent, John McNally, Jonathan Moeller, Adriana Saunsoci, Cassidy Wall, Carly Weyers

VR STAFF PRESENT: Shari Bahensky, Angela Fujan, Brigid Griffin, Ashley Hernandez, Mary Matusiak, Victoria Rasmussen, Paige Rose, Mark Schultz

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.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

No public comment was given.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 13, 2018 MINUTES

JD Simmons moved and David Scott seconded a motion to approve the February 13, 2018 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

SRC NEW MEMBERS

Kipp Ransom reported new member, Jerry Bryan joined the council as the new CAP Director. Jerry introduced himself to the council.

Kipp shared that the council is in need of additional business representatives and a state education representative for public education of students with disabilities; stating that is currently being pursued. Lindy Foley reported they have met with the Special Education Department and they are hopeful a representative will be assigned soon. Angela Fujan reported she has been in contact with recommended business representatives and she is hoping to hear back with their interest. Kipp stated that a youth representative from the NYLC is also being recruited for the council.

FOLLOW UP OF LAST MEETINGS ACTION ITEMS

Senator Outreach

David Scott discussed the most effective outreach event occurred last year when senate interns and aides met for coffee with council representatives and could talk one on one about the benefits of the SRC and Nebraska VR. David shared it did not work as well this year as there were date conflicts and difficulty with coordination of schedules. Members determined senator outreach will occur February 12, 2019 at the State Capitol from 8-10am prior to the SRC meeting. Sandy Peterson shared she feels all council members could write a personal note to their local senator to personally invite them to the outreach event. Kipp shared that Constant Contact email can also be utilized for invitations to senator offices. Sandy Hamm stated she will work on booking a room at the State Capitol for February 12th so there will not be a scheduling conflict. Sandy shared that the state website is great for searching members' representatives. David stated a letter template draft for council members to invite their senators with would be beneficial to review at the August meeting and then approved for members to utilize following the October meeting.

Disability Employment and Inclusion Awards

Mary Matusiak shared with members nomination forms for the Annual SRC Disability Employment and Inclusion Awards for member review. Mary reviewed the different award categories: Entrepreneur Award, Small Business Recognition, Large Business Recognition and an Individual Champion. Mary reported the nomination form will be emailed at the end of the month to all VR staff for them to nominate potential award recipients. Mary shared those nominations will be reviewed by the Employer Services Committee in July and the selected winners will be reported to the council in August prior to the October awards. Tobias Orr asked where the awards will be held in October as well as the coinciding council meeting. Sandy Hamm stated she will work on reserving a room at the Capitol for the awards coordinating with the October 9th, 2018 council meeting. Tobias discussed if the Governor is not available to attend the October awards perhaps the RSA Director or Lieutenant Governor could be invited. Kipp reported Sarah Chapin in the marketing department will manage invitations for the awards ceremony.

David Scott shared the senator outreach and inclusion awards room booking dates need to be standing events on the SRC calendar as active action items so these dates are not missed in the future.

Members were presented with the following proposed 2019 SRC dates for approval.

- February 12, 2019
- May 14, 2019
- August 13, 2019
- October 8, 2019

David Scott moved to approve the 2019 dates as provided, Sandy Peterson seconded the motion. 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 shared.

CAP REPORT

Shari Bahensky provided members with a written report outlining CAP cases from January, February and March 2018. Shari summarized and reviewed the three cases and their outcomes with the council. Kipp commented that only having three cases especially during order of selection demonstrates the great work of VR staff. David Scott asked how clients are made aware of CAP and their ability to share grievances. Shari stated clients are provided with a CAP informational brochure during the application process as well as a new CAP video has been created for client information.

MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS

Members were provided with written reports from the Ombudsperson, ATP and CAP. Members discussed the lack of reports for NYLC and SILC. VR staff stated they will contact these representatives to provide reports for the next meeting. Sandy Peterson shared she is very concerned regarding the restructuring with the Department of Education in regards to its potential negative effect on transition services and great difficulty it could create for ATP and its counselors. Tobias Orr shared there will be new staff with the specific focus of youth, age birth to twenty-one, not placing a burden on existing staff. Tobias shared by bringing all individuals in-house there will be improvements in data collection and outcome management. Tobias discussed how in the past education services were granted out to ESUs but now having all clients served in-house there will be better control and management of territorial representatives. Tobias shared this first year will be a trial run but he foresees a lot better service and coverage by year two. Tobias stated that this change will also standardize training across the state. No additional comments were shared.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Kipp Ransom summarized the three subcommittees' work for new members in attendance. Members broke into committees.

Employer Services

David Scott reported the committee discussed recruiting additional business representation on the SRC. Mary Matusiak will be reaching out to the BAMs for additional council membership recommendations. David shared the job fair held last week was a great success with approximately 350 student and 50 employers participating from throughout the state. Members discussed personal experiences and positive feedback from the job fair. David shared the committee also discussed the upcoming Disability Employment and Inclusion Awards nominations.

Transition Services

JD Simmons reported the committee discussed the restructuring of the Department of Education. JD reported members discussed getting VR service information into the hands of teachers and schools. Brigid Griffin shared information was sent out to schools sharing Pre-Employment Transition Services are still intact and services are available for students transitioning. JD reported currently 40 FPE are on staff for PETS. Brigid summarized the two school year RFPs which were funded, stating they have been very well received thus far. JD discussed Project Search graduations are occurring this month, and summarized trainings that will be occurring this summer. JD reported the new NYLC director, Michael Hruska, began work March 1st. JD and Brigid discussed summer work-based learning opportunities available for participating VR Pre-employment Transition Services.

Client Services

Victoria Rasmussen reported the committee discussed the client satisfaction surveys are now being conducted by VR staff instead of under contract with Easter Seals. Victoria shared staff are still learning and figuring out components of the survey. Victoria shared staff members' numbers are improving for survey completion and they are becoming more familiar with the survey and becoming more accurate. Victoria also shared that upon completion of the survey if clients have a piece of equipment which needs to be returned to VR that is noted and equipment return is arranged.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Lindy Foley delivered the VR Director's Report. Lindy thanked the SRC executive committee for the input and work on their April 23rd conference call. Lindy discussed VR's order of selection. Lindy reported priority groups 2 and 3 were closed and priority group 1 remained open in December. Lindy shared the difficult decision as of April 23th to close priority group one as found necessary by the budget committee due to the lack of decreasing expenditures. Lindy described the decision process. Lindy discussed putting into action core service partners referrals and providing training for those partners. Lindy reported on April 23rd the SRC executive committee convened to discuss the closing of priority group one. The executive committee met with VR Director (Lindy) and Assistant Director (Victoria) to consult on the reasons for closing Priority Group 1. The Committee had the opportunity to ask questions and provide guidance. The Executive Committee communicated their support for making the difficult decision to now close Priority Group resulting in all three categories being closed.

Lindy shared that they were able to meet with VR's partner, Developmental Disabilities Administration, and clarify that current clients would continue to receive services and prepare them for the future, offering support on how DD can serve new individuals. Lindy shared these conversations have not be easy, but very good conversations. JD Simmons asked if this shortage of funding is also a problem in other states and asked if anything can be done at a federal level. Lindy shared that as reported in March, approximately 37 VR agencies are in an order of selection and 8-10 of those programs are closed at all 3 priority levels. Kipp Ransom shared that the NCSRC and their website will be utilized for guidance going forward. Mark Schultz shared there was an over encumbrance in client services which will create a penalty in two years which is a big portion of the funding problem. Mark shared that if re-allotment funds are provided that could be a benefit in the future. Members discussed partner funds and the best usage of funding. Lindy outlined next steps that are planned. Lindy reported the week of April 23rd a video conference was held and staff had the opportunity to ask questions as needed. Lindy stated tomorrow team tours across the state begin, where each VR office creates the agenda and questions will be answered. Lindy stated they are continuing to work with DD Administration and Behavioral Health to explore service opportunities. Lindy reported the budget committee continues to meet monthly and continues assessment, in August the committee will be able to determine if Nebraska VR can apply for any re-allotment dollars. Lindy shared resources available to staff include fact sheets for clients describing order of selection. Vicki Newman asked how many clients are being served now versus prior to order of selection. Lindy assured the SRC that even under the Order of Seletion, the agency has a commitment to carry out the plans already developed and being implemented. Lindy also discussed VR is currently self-imposing a hiring freeze and some staff have been reassigned to pre-employment transition services (approximately 40 FTE). Lindy stated they are exploring all options to avoid staff reduction. Members discussed that referrals have to be specialized and individualized for applicants and the importance of the specialist/client discussion.

Tobias Orr shared that regarding ATP, they have numerous other funding sources apart from VR and they are tapping into additional sources and continuing to get technology into the hands of individuals who need it.

David Scott asked how other organizations are kept informed on SRC discussions. Kipp Ransom stated all meeting minutes are posted on the SRC website.

NEXT MEETING

August 14, 2018 – Nebraska VR Office, 3901 N 27th St. Lincoln, NE

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 12:46pm.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Senator Outreach, State Capitol room reservation for February 12, 2019 from 8-10am – Sandy Hamm
- Outreach event invitation letter template – Sarah Chapin
- October 9, 2018 Capitol room reservation for awards ceremony – Sandy Hamm