



State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509

State Rehabilitation Council Meeting Center For People In Need October 9, 2012

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: Lisa Alexa, Mitch Arnold, Barb Benes, Sharon Bloechle, Robert Danner, Jaime Galloway, Sue Gieschen, Gayle Hahn, April Isaacs, Tim Kolb, Vicki Newman, Leslie Novacek, Vicki Obrecht, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, Mark Schultz

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sherri Kelley, Seamus Kelly, Joni Thomas

VR STAFF PRESENT: Don Crouch, Pia Brady, Dave Altman, Mark Mason, Jim Coyle

The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:00 a.m. Public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introductions were made as there are four new members on the Council. New members are Kipp Ransom, Jaime Galloway, Robert Danner and Vicki Newman.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mitch Arnold moved and Vicki Obrecht seconded a motion to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 14, 2012 MINUTES

Gayle Hahn moved and Kipp Ransom seconded a motion to approve the August 14, 2012 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

REVIEW ATP NEEDS AND ATP PLANS

Dave Altman from ATP was present to give an update on the work at ATP and the partnership with VR. ATP and VR started a working together in 1989. Dave has been visiting all the VR offices across the state. Three areas that they are working on are communication, timeliness and efficiency. Communication between VR and ATP has increased by new guidelines. Timeliness is improving and is a struggle in some areas of the state. Performance measures will be implemented this year to improve the amount of time between receiving a referral and a client receiving services. Last year ATP received 531 requests for assistance. Dave will be

simplifying the referral form that VR completes. A question was asked about how far the funding can stretch if the referrals continue to rise. Leslie Novacek explained that other sources of funding that each client might be eligible for can be accessed which helps to stretch the ATP budget. Further questions can be directed to Dave, david.altman@nebraska.gov.

NEW COMPUTER APPLICATIONS THAT ASSIST INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Patti Neill with ATP/Education works with children birth to 21 across the state to provide educational assistive technology. Patti is in the Cozad region which is one of 8 regions across the state. There is no charge for their services to schools and families that need a consultation about assistive technology that may help a child to learn. Patti shared the features of the latest iPad and provided a handout. She also shared some new apps that she finds valuable.

MEMBER RECOGNITION

Mark Shultz awarded a plaque and thanked members who have served a three-year term on the Council. Members recognized were: Leslie Novacek and Sharon Bloechle.

PROPOSED VR MARKETING PRODUCTS

Pia Brady spoke about VR marketing plans. She is suggesting: that language translation be implemented on the VR website; that Twitter be used to promote events and for two-way communication; to expand upon You Tube; to add a calendar of events on the website; to track visits to the website; adding the orientation video to the home page; and to establish a yearly marketing calendar. Discussion was held about the SRC website and what changes might be needed. It was suggested that the front page share that the membership is made up of at least 51% of persons with disabilities. Members would like to add this item to the agenda for the next meeting. It was also suggested that a mission statement be considered for the Council.

Kipp Ransom moved and Jaime Galloway seconded a motion for the Council to investigate and/or write a mission statement. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR

Sue Gieschen shared that a man from Ogalalla who had been awarded the Entrepreneur of District Award from the SRC has expanded his saddle making business.

Lisa Alexa shared that Disability Awareness Month is being celebrated by VR. Many public announcements and appreciation days are being held.

April Isaacs reported that a former Project SEARCH intern was awarded Employee Of The Month at St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center.

CAP REPORT

Vicki Rasmussen shared a written CAP report in the packet. In preparing a CAP report for VR Office and Program Directors, Vicki noticed that many cases used to be about customer service types of issues, returned phone calls, etc. She is seeing this begin to return. Timeliness of services is also being seen as an issue. Staff should be reminded that they operate as a team so that when one person is gone, others can fill in.

MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS

No comments were made.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mark Schultz shared the Director's report.

- Mark shared a draft of the new VR website. The tag line is "Where Your Future Begins". Success stories are a highlight of the site.
- The State Plan has been approved and is available on the VR website.
- The Corrective Action Plan from the federal monitoring visit required a change in the transition program. Students will be found eligible for VR services prior to any services being given.
- If sequestration occurs in January due to the budget not being resolved, an 8.2% cut will be applied to discretionary programs. Mandatory programs, such as VR, will receive a 7.4% cut which amounts to just over \$1 million for VR. Plans are being considered about what will be done if this occurs.
- The certificate program with community colleges has also gained attention by other agencies. The Institute on Community Inclusion (ICI) in Boston is talking with Nebraska VR about some partnering opportunities. A grant was received by ICI which allows for Nebraska VR to create a new position. This person will work with Jim Coyle to see how careers can be expanded in this program.
- There are 10 project SEARCH programs across the state. Four of them achieved 100% employment placement at the end of last year.
- Judy Volland has agreed to serve as Program Director of Community Services after Dennis King's retirement. A new Grand Island office director, Terry Sautter has been hired. A Program Director position around corrections has been posted, to fulfill the work Mark Mason had previously been doing.
- VR Staff Conference will take place on Oct. 23 & 24 in Kearney. SRC members are invited to attend. The keynote speaker will address the message being heard from congress that VR needs to change the way business is being done.
- Compressed work week schedules are being piloted by staff. Staff can choose to work 4 ten-hour days, 4.5 days, or change the workday hours. This flexibility in scheduling is being done to help with retention and recruiting of staff. The change will be assessed after 90 days. Mark would like to know if anyone hears any complaints.
- One focus for the coming year will be to improve services to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. VR is serving almost 400 clients who are hard of hearing and 100 clients who are deaf. They will look at issues around placement and at being a stronger advocate.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Client Services Committee

Vicki Rasmussen reported.

- Two Outreach Focus Groups will be piloted in Lincoln and in one other location. The first Focus Group will be around the Latino population and the other around the deaf and hard of hearing population. Pia Brady sat in on the Committee's conversation to lend her input. The Latino Focus Groups will involve employers and community leaders. A list of questions for each group was drafted. The Committee hopes to have the project completed by February or March.
- The Committee will work with the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing on recommending individuals for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Focus Group. They will invite community leaders, business owners and individuals of a variety of ages. Questions for the group

were drafted. When the new VR position is filled, it would be a good person to include in the meeting. Someone should be hired by the end of the year.

- The Consumer Input Committee did a survey on three VR brochures. Comments shared were around font size, bullets were liked, success stories were liked, important to use the word disability, and important to have a phone number and contact information.
- A job seeking skills Power Point was created and input is being gathered.

Employer Services Committee

April Isaacs reported.

- The State Senator luncheon will be held on February 5. They are looking for a Senator who will sponsor the event. Tim Kolb offered that he knows the senator from Holdrege.
- Project SEARCH is in the process of adding a site in Omaha.
- The Certification Program is training individuals in HVAC, auto work and welding. The programs are being evaluated. The placement rate has been very good.
- A survey for businesses to see why they are not working with VR is being written. Questions were drafted and reviewed. Phone surveys will start in the next couple of weeks. They have a list of employers that have agreed to be surveyed.

Transition Services Committee

Vicki Obrecht reported.

- The CAP was approved by the federal office. There is a new transition process in place. Special Education Directors will be informed of the new process. The new referral form can now be found online.
- The Committee continues to look at ways to inform parents and students about VR and what services they can provide. They have talked about attending college fairs.
- WIN Ahead is an organization that assists persons with a disability to achieve their needs in post-secondary education. They are a good resource to share with clients.

WHAT SHOULD VR LOOK LIKE IN FIVE YEARS

Mark Schultz asked each member to draw a picture of what they thought VR should look like in five years. All drawings showed some type of change, improvement, technology and being known by the community. Some shared the image that should be created through marketing. Some talked about the impact on the entire family, not just the individual.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on February 5, 2013.