



# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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

**State Rehabilitation Council Meeting  
State Office Building Lower Level – Room C  
Lincoln, NE  
October 10, 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 Bursaw, Christine Gaspari, Gayle Hahn, Lisa Kent, Tobias Orr, Sandy Peterson, Diane Owen-Downs, Kipp Ransom, Mark Schultz, David Scott, Joni Thomas, Carly Weyers

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Michael Chittenden, John McNally, Jon Moeller, Vicki Newman, Michael Reed, Adriana Saunsoci, JD Simmons, Cassidy Wall, Camie West

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

**VISITORS:** Kelly Brakenhoff, Margie Propp

*The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:10 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 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 AUGUST 8, 2017 MINUTES**

Tobias Orr moved and Christine Gaspari seconded a motion to approve the August 8, 2017 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **SRC NEW MEMBERS**

Kipp Ransom reported several new members joined the council. New members: Mike Bursaw, Chris Gaspari, Gayle Hahn, Lisa Kent and Diane Owen-Downs introduced themselves to the council.

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

### **Upcoming SRC Meeting Dates**

Kipp Ransom proposed the 2018 meeting dates of February 13<sup>th</sup>, May 8<sup>th</sup>, August 14<sup>th</sup>, and October 9<sup>th</sup>. No concerns were posed by council members regarding the proposed dates. David Scott moved and Chris Gaspari seconded a motion to approve the 2018 meeting dates. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **Senator Outreach**

Members discussed senator outreach options for the upcoming year. David Scott shared he prefers to focus on the senators' aides, as this was successfully done last year versus knocking on the senators' office doors. Paige Rose commented that it would be useful to have more council members available for senator outreach stating sharing the date with a council meeting would be a good idea. David proposed having a coffee presentation at the State Capitol at 8:00am on February 13<sup>th</sup>. David Scott and Michael Chittenden will work to coordinate the senator outreach event and update the council as plans are finalized. Sarah Chapin reported she will work with David via email in preparing handouts

### **SRC Facebook Page**

Sarah Chapin shared she was unclear on the direction the council wanted to go regarding a Facebook page. Members discussed potential views and likes of an SRC Facebook page and the current VR page. Sarah reported Nebraska VR can share SRC information from their Facebook page. Sarah stated she can do a monthly post regarding the happenings of the SRC. Sarah shared it would be beneficial to have increased communication between the SRC and VR marketing team. Members discussed the public attendance of potential events. The number of postings and their content via the VR Facebook page was discussed. Sarah stated monthly postings on the VR Facebook page regarding SRC could include items such as, linking committee reports, meeting minutes, sharing events, new member information, etc.

David Scott moved that the SRC utilize the VR Facebook page with 8-12 postings yearly made by the VR marketing team, Chris Gaspari seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **Written Reports and Webpage Updates**

Sarah Chapin reported the written reports have been added to the SRC webpage and will continue to be added whenever made available following council meetings. Sarah shared that new member photos have been taken and will be added to the SRC webpage soon.

### **Disability Employment and Inclusion Awards**

Members discussed the Disability Employment and Inclusion awards being held following the SRC meeting today at 1:30 p.m. at the State Capitol. Sarah Chapin reported all senators have been invited. Sarah outlined the awards ceremony schedule of events for all members who will be in attendance. Kipp shared that this year's format of the awards is slightly different as self employed individuals are not being honored and instead the focus will be on employers who have worked

with employees with disabilities. This year's employer recipients are Ricardo's Mexican Restaurant in Norfolk, NE and Old Chicago in Omaha, NE.

### **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR**

Kipp Ransom asked council members if any feedback was brought to council members. No member feedback was shared.

### **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. Two CAP cases occurred over the past three months, Shari summarized the details of the two cases which have thus been resolved. Members discussed potential missed steps or miscommunication that may have occurred with the presented client before the case went to CAP. Members discussed the high-quality VR work creating the positive outcome of only two CAP cases.

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

Members were provided with written reports from ATP, and NYLC. Sandy Peterson shared she felt expectations of ATP counselors to attend all IEPs, IFSPs and special education meetings seems unreasonable. Tobias Orr stated he does not feel that is the current expectation, sharing that is not currently a problem for ATP counselors. Members did not share any additional feedback.

### **ORDER OF SELECTION**

Mark Schultz summarized the funding of Nebraska VR and reviewed the potential of an order of selection as discussed at prior council meetings. Mark summarized the state/federal match that is utilized for VR funding. Mark shared in the past Nebraska VR has been successful in acquiring additional federal dollars that were not matched by other states by meeting the maintenance of effort requirement to receive additional funding during reallocation. Mark reported at the end of the fiscal year this past September for the first time that funding was not matched. Mark discussed the requirement of WIOA that 15% of funds must be used for pre-employment transition services has also created some budget challenges. Mark discussed the significant reduction of allotment funds and the large amount of funding required to be set aside for pre-employment transition services has caused an approximate 3.5-million-dollar reduction of funds for adult services. Mark discussed the substantial loss of funds and how VR could potentially handle this. Mark discussed the four biggest costs of VR: case services, staff, indirect costs and rent costs. Mark stated the only areas that can be controlled by VR are case services and staff. Mark shared there will be a shifting of more staff into pre-employment transition services occurring. Mark stated VR needs to go into an order of selection to meet budget needs. Council members discussed the need to go into an order of selection. Mark discussed the need to re-evaluate the state plan due to the lack of funds. Mark also shared many other states are in similar situations and are needing to go into order of selection due to the lack of funds. Mark established the three priority categories of an order of selection. Mark defined the priority categories as follows: Priority Group 1- individuals with severe physical or mental impairment resulting in a rating of very low in two or more functional areas. Functional areas include: mobility, communication, interpersonal skills, self care, self-direction, work tolerance and work skills. Priority group 2 -an individual with severe physical or mental impairment resulting in a very low rating in one functional area. Priority group 3- all eligible individuals. Mark then discussed the administration of the order of selection. Mark shared they are currently gathering information to determine which priority groups will need to be closed. As part of the State Plan process it can be set that if an individual comes to VR stating they will lose employment unless they receive services and that can be verified, they can be considered a top priority and pulled off the wait list. Mark suggested Nebraska VR choose that option as we do not want individuals losing jobs; sharing it is

easier to keep individuals employed than to find new employment. Mark stated that in terms of administration they will monitor expenditures and revenue and every month an established committee would review waiting lists and determine how many individuals could be pulled off the list to receive services. Members discussed council support of the necessity for an order of selection. Mark discussed funding penalties that can occur. Mark stated his goal is to establish a budget that is not dependent on reallocation. Mark reported the order of selection will go into effect as soon as approval is received from RSA. VR has instated an immediate hiring freeze and will be eliminating as much discretionary spending as possible to maintain funds for case services. Mark shared in response to these funding shortages he also recommends the SRC not send a representative to the NCSRC Fall Conference. Tobias Orr asked how pre-employment transition services will be affected. Mark shared that students in pre-employment transition services who are not currently receiving VR services will be placed on a waiting list for VR services if they apply for and are determined eligible for VR services. They will continue to receive pre-employment transition services. Mark reviewed the administration of order of selection including, fiscal forecasting, cost containment, staff resource assessment, SRC consultation, policy review, and a state plan hearing followed by setting a start date. Lindy Foley stated if VR is not able to serve a client due to order of selection, the core partners can assist those individuals. Mark discussed no cost services staff can offer individuals as well as referral options. Brigid Griffin noted that if those students are set up with pre-employment services earlier on they may not need additional services into adulthood.

Chris Gaspari moved to support VR's proposal to RSA for an order of selection, Gayle Hahn seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

## **DIRECTORS REPORT**

Mark Schultz reported they met with TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) regarding their employment program. Mark discussed employment service referrals from TANF and the agencies different definitions of disability. Mark discussed they shared information on informed referrals with TANF regarding VR services. Mark stated that TANF and programs in Department of Labor can be tapped into to coordinate and collaborate with the workforce system. Mark reported VR is required by law to contribute to American Job Centers (AJCs). Mark shared the partners are working together on a common intake information system. This will help reduce duplication of services. Mark reported the RFP should be coming out soon, and the goal is that it will be awarded February 1<sup>st</sup> and active as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mark shared there is a grant being used to fund the creation of that system. Tobias Orr inquired if individuals will have to apply for each core partners' services or if one application could be utilized for all partners. Mark reported that yes individuals will need to complete individual applications and sign a release of information, as well as be reviewed for eligibility of services for each agency. The core partners include: VR, Commission for Blind & Visually Impaired, Adult Education, Wagner-Peyser, and the Adult & Dislocated Worker's Program in the Department of Labor. Mark stated the partners also include unemployment insurance and TANF. Chris Gaspari requested a summary of required partners for council member reference. Angela Fujan will provide the list to accompany the minutes via email prior to the next council meeting.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Members broke into subcommittees for a working lunch.

### **Employer Services**

Lindy Foley summarized the actions of the committee over the past year, highlighting Project Search job fairs and collecting data from employers. Lindy shared they are grateful to have the council and employers to weigh in on the data collection.

### **Transition Services**

Brigid Griffin reported the transition service planning guides have been completed and are being utilized in the schools. Brigid shared feedback from the 23 summer programs is being reviewed now and overall feedback is positive. Brigid shared Madonna in Omaha will be coming on board as a Project SEARCH site. Brigid stated there is also a new Project SEARCH site at Nebraska Medicine at Bellevue which is doing well. Brigid shared they have been awarding some of the over 150 work based learning sites for their great work. Brigid reported they are currently working with Easter Seals, Goodwill, and Region V to establish trainings.

### **Client Services**

Joni Thomas reported they have been working on the post-employment client satisfaction survey. Joni stated the committee discovered the person writing the survey and those administering the survey see different items. It appears to be the way the survey is displayed on the computer. Gayle Hahn of Easter Seals, shared there now is an answer written when a client replies “other” but it is not always available to the committee for review due to a technological glitch. Shari Bahensky stated the glitch is hopefully isolated to this quarter and it will be correct in the future. Joni shared the survey is currently tabled by the committee as there maybe a new contractor assigned to conduct the surveys.

### **NEXT MEETING**

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 1:08pm to attend the Employer Awards at the State Capitol.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- Senator Outreach Coffee Event (2/13 8am) – Michael Chittenden & David Scott
- Required partners reference information provided to council members – Angela Fujan