

Minutes
WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL
November 9, 2023
9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

WebEx Virtual Meeting

A Statement of Mission

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council, working on behalf of Wisconsin residents with disabilities, will review, analyze, and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities in providing quality services to persons with disabilities.

WRC members present: Alexis Riggs, Alicia Reinhard, Delora Newton, Liz Kennedy, Gadeen Taylor-Duke, Jacci Borchardt, Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Jenny Felty, Jolene Wanek, Kathy Meisner, Kyle Kleist, Lindsey Kreitzman, Lori Karcher, Megan Bisonette, Michael Jackson, Natalia Graf, Norene Lueck, Dick Straub

WRC members absent: Ann Franz, Alan Kaltenberg, Dr. Debbie Lee

DVR staff present: Meredith Dressel, Deanna Krell, Allison Gordon, Tania Hanford, Anna Eggebrecht, Kathleen Enders, Kay Schoone, Susan Chandek, Amy May, Meghan Lindberg (DVR attorney)

Guests: Laura Plummer, WisTech Coordinator

Roll Call and Introductions

Announcements

- Dick asked members to think about what agenda items they would like the WRC to address in the future.

Quorum Check

- 11 voting members at the time of roll call. More members joined later. Quorum obtained.

Approval of Minutes – August 2023

- Motion to approve August minutes by Liz. Seconded by Lori. Passed.

Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals:

- **A review of each committee's tasks was completed.**
 - Council Engagement Committee
 - Recruit new members, assist with training for Council or future members, and make sure there is a full Council.

- Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee
 - Recent work included review of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) survey, updates to DVR technical specifications and the DVR section of the Combined State Plan.
- Policy Review and Administration Committee
 - This committee reviews new/updates to DVR policies and procedures. Example is the administrative rules updates.
- Services to Business Committee
 - Mainly works with business services consultants and discusses DVR services being provided to businesses. Also reviews how WRC can partner to focus on services to help job seekers.
- Annual report Committee
 - This is a short timeline group, usually at the end of the year. They review the annual report and assist in revising the public-facing report.

- **Council Engagement Committee**

- Jacci has volunteered to be the chair of this committee.
- Lori provided a summary of their last meeting.
- Reviewed the Sharepoint site and reviewed how to access notes for all Committees.
- Currently there are five voting members.
- Discussed WRC vacancies. Currently there are two DVR consumer vacancies and one Business/Labor vacancy.
- Delora shared that the Governor's office has a new Director of Appointments so there will be delays.
- WRC has a brochure for outreach to recruit new members. The document directs potential members to the website for more information. Kay will forward that document to the full council for distribution.
- The committee is working on orientation materials for new members.
- Dick asked if DVR has a list of businesses that have been engaged with DVR and hiring individuals with disabilities to outreach for potential WRC representatives. Deanna will consult with Patti Johnson (DVR Business Services) to develop a list.
- Dick attended NCSRC meeting last week. They have a training manual for council members. Members agreed the council would benefit from this manual.
- Lori talked about a succession plan for someone to replace her on WRC when her term is up. She encouraged others that have an appointed permanent seat to do the same.

- **Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee**
 - Have not met since the last WRC meeting.

- **Policy Review and Administration Committee**
 - Have not met since the last WRC meeting.
 - Currently has three members and no chair. Only one member qualifies to hold the position of the chair.
 - Delora shared the purpose of the committee.
 - Jolene Wanek volunteered to sit on the committee.
 - Dick asked WRC members to consider participation on this committee.
 - If members have interest in being on a committee in the future they should reach out to Dick, Delora, Liz or Kay.

- **Services to Business Committee**
 - Have not met since the last WRC meeting.
 - Meeting in December and Patti Johnson will provide overview of what the Business Services Consultant's do for DVR.

- **Executive Committee**
 - Meet monthly.
 - Focus has been on establishing agenda items for full WRC meetings.
 - Discussed the lack of chairs for committees.

Committee Chair Vacancy Discussion

- Council Engagement Committee and Policy Review and Administration Committee
 - Motion to appoint Jacci Borchardt to the Council Engagement Committee and Jolene Wanek to the Policy Review and Administration Committee. Liz moved, Jenny Felty seconded. Passed.
- Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee
 - Motion to appoint Kathy Meisner to the Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee. Liz moved, Jacci seconded. Passed.
- Policy Review and Administration Committee
 - Motion to appoint Kathy Meisner to the Policy Review and Administration Committee. Liz moved, Kyle seconded. Passed.
 - Motion to appoint Jenny Felty to the Policy Review and Administration Committee. Liz moved, Jolene seconded. Passed.
- Services to Business Committee
 - Motion to appoint Liz Kennedy to the Services to Business Committee. Liz moved, Lori seconded. Passed.

Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report - Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Disability Rights Wisconsin

- Jen reviewed CAP data via PowerPoint. The information does not include information and referrals that did not result in opening a CAP case.
- There is not a typical timeline for CAP cases, each case is individualized.
- CAP currently has three staff and one supervisory staff. In state fiscal year (SFY) 2024 the staffing will change based on need.
- Jen will share a link to CAP's Protection and Advocacy Priorities and CAP Priorities for SFY 2024 with Kay so she can forward to WRC members for public comment when it goes live.
- CAP intends to offer training to DVR staff in SFY 2024.
- CAP has new brochures and one pager in various languages explaining the services they can provide. Working on consumer rights information as well.
 - To request materials send an email to info@DRWI.org

Self-Employment Toolkit Update - Sarah Kuehn, DVR Program and Policy Analyst **Proposed Revisions to Toolkit:**

- Defined small business.
- Reworked feasibility process steps.
- Created a three-tier fee schedule, no in-kind required. Working capital is required for all three tiers.
- Entrepreneur Readiness Questionnaire (ERQ) – simplified and revised questions to assist the consumer in completing the Business Assessment Scale (BAS)
- Revised BAS scoring guidance.
- Business Plan Review Committee (BPRC) process developed from Pilot.
- Independent Contractor guidance drafted as a stand-alone guidance that will be linked in toolkit for reference.
- Reworked the steps in the toolkit to simplify the process.

DVR Administrative Update - Delora Newton, DVR Administrator

- Spelled out all acronyms in the update as requested.
- Dick shared that when he was at CSAVR he was impressed with WI DVR outcomes compared to other states. WI DVR does not turn back federal funds, have met statewide performance measures, and reached the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) expenditures requirement every year since the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was implemented.
- Members asked what WI DVR does differently to spend all their federal dollar?

- Some state's legislatures do not provide the required state match. WI reviews spending trends and makes adjustments as needed, including increases to service providers. DVR can adjust service provider fees more quickly and easily than can other VR agencies because we do not include dollar amounts in service provider contracts. They are included in Technical Specifications instead, which can be revised at any time.
- WI median incomes are below the national average and some of that is due to the higher number of supported employment consumers WI DVR serves (22% of DVR closures). WI also has a low minimum wage as compared to other states. That being said, WI did surpass RSA's negotiated measure of \$3,100 per quarter by over \$300.
- Member asked if 14c wages are included in our median wage? Meredith clarified that DVR does not count those wages in our median wage because DVR does not support sub-minimum wage employment for our consumers.
- Member asked if WI DVR will advocate for more federal funds with the authorization of WIOA?
 - Delora shared that we will not be advocating for more federal funds because our budget is sufficient to meet our consumers needs.
- RSA visited WI CPA grant staff in September 2023 to review the grant processes and practice. After the visit RSA granted WI DVR an additional \$6.4 million dollars on September 30, 2023, so WI could exceed the original enrollment goal (500) for the grant and do a deep evaluation after the grant ends. Currently DVR has 526 individuals enrolled. Grant ends September 30, 2026.
- Administrative Law Judge training was provided. There were five separate sessions provided by Disability Rights Network. Several WRC members attended the trainings and felt they were comprehensive and informative. There will be annual trainings provided each year.
- NCSRC and CSAVR highlights: Dick attended NCSRC and CSAVR. Delora, Meredith and Deanna attended CSAVR. Good exchange of information and networking with staff from other states is the most valuable part of the conference.
 - Lori shared how valuable it was for her to participate in CSAVR virtually when sessions were offered that way during COVID. She shared it was a great insight into the bigger picture of VR across the country.
 - Delora shared that WRC does have a training budget and can decide how that money is spent. If the Council Engagement Committee wants to adjust the budget priorities that can be done.

Public Comment

- No comments

Overview of DVR Supported Employment and Customized Employment Services SE and Statewide services - Andrzej Walz-Chojnacki, DVR Program and Policy Analyst

- Review of Supported Employment (SE) and Customized Employment (CE) services.
 - Goal of Competitive Integrative Employment
 - Service is for individuals with most significant disabilities (Category 1)
 - Utilization of "Long-term supports"
- Addressed what a SE support team is.
- Touched on 2017 Wisconsin Act 178
- The three main points of SE Services and coordination:
 - Career Profile Review
 - 60 Day On-the-Job Review
 - Transition to Long-Term Support
- The three modes of SE:
 - Traditional Supported Employment (SE)
 - Individualized Placement and Support (IPS)
 - Customized Employment (CE)
- Touched on timeline and resources
- Employment supports
 - Job and Task Analysis
 - Systematic Instruction
 - Partners with Business
 - Natural Supports
- WRC asked who funds long term support – this is primarily the Department of Health Services (DHS). They are funneling Medicaid dollars.
- WRC inquired about natural supports success compared to job coaching on the job. Andrzej addressed how they are different. Natural supports are something that most of us have on the job. The hope is that DVR helps to instruct employers how to provide successful natural supports. Service providers are experienced and knowledgeable with working with individuals who are SE. Thus, both can be successful.
- Jen (CAP) addressed how natural supports are generally unpaid supports. Natural supports can be a complicated set of supports. Deanna clarified, that when DVR discusses natural supports, they are referring to on-the-job supports. This would be a coworker/manager assisting with tasks on-the-job, not necessarily personal care supports. DVR clarified personal care supports are a part of the conversation to ensure long-term success on the job.

WisTech Program Overview - Laura Plummer, DHS Assistive Technology Program Coordinator

- Reviewed definition of Assistive Technology (AT) and AT services.
- Reviewed AT examples.
- Addressed WisTech program and supports.
 - Touched on AT Providers and certifications
 - AT act and services flow
 - State AT Advisory Council and state plan
 - Activities with WisTech: State Leadership and State Level
 - WisTech Partners:
 - Independent Living Centers
 - Bureau of Correctional enterprises
 - Department of Public Instructions/CESA2
 - AgrAbility
 - ALS Assoc
 - UW Madison
 - TEPP, TAP, ICC
 - Review PowerPoint for resources
 - Touched on AT loan program
- WRC inquired how much Laura works with non-profits. She answers questions and addresses resource supports often with non-profits. Also WisTech is partnered with AgrAbility, which is a non-profit.
- Laura was asked if she could do a similar presentation in Milwaukee. Laura said she could help and they may want to connect with Independence First as an additional resource.

Review Action Items and Identify Future Agenda Topics

- Dick asked about WRC items for future agendas or further discussion.
 - No one addressed any items
 - This will be a follow up item for the Executive Committee Meeting.
- Kay said there are no full Council meetings scheduled for 2024 yet. Kay is working on this, and Sarah Kuehn is filling in for her while she is on maternity leave.

Adjourn

- Liz motioned, seconded by Kyle. Adjourned

*Public comment is limited to the time listed on the agenda. Comments can be sent at any time to: DVRWIRehabCouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

Comments sent to that e-mail box will be read to the full council at the next meeting unless a specific subcommittee is listed. If a specific

subcommittee is listed, comments will be sent directly to them and reviewed at their next committee meeting.