

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council

February 14, 2019 – Madison, WI

Meeting Minutes Approved 08/08/19

Present WRC Members: Matt Busch, Tom Benziger, Mollie Lonetti, Jaclyn Borchardt, Becky Hebda, Ramsey Lee, Darla Burton, Beth Swedeen, Jason Ostrowski, Delora Newton

Absent WRC Members: Julie Barker, Jodi Hanna, Cathy Steffke, Ann Wales, Debra Notstad, Anntrice Brown, Patrick Young, Matthew Zellmer, Barb Klug

DVR Staff: Sarah Lincoln, Meredith Dressel, Anna Eggebrecht, Allison Gordon, Nick Lampone, Diana Kiesling, Jessica Holton, Alaina Knief

Guests: Deb Henderson-Gunther, Curtis Marshal, Angels Nimmeson, Madelynn Corbeck, Sarah Lindall, DWD Secretary Caleb Frostman, DWD Deputy Secretary JoAnna Richard, BJ Dernbach, Mike Greco, Chaz Compton, Fred McFarland

Call to Order: Matt Busch called the meeting to order at 10:00AM.

Roll Call and Announcements

- Matt Busch welcomed the Council in his first meeting as Chair. Jaclyn Borchardt also addressed the Council as new Vice-Chair.
- Matt will be attending CSAVR and NCSRC with DVR Senior Leadership in April.
- Quorum not met with only 9 of 22 voting members in attendance. Need 13 voting members for quorum.
- Matt and Delora Newton clarified that WRC cannot vote on any motions during this meeting due to lack of quorum. Any new motion or topic must be added to the next Council meeting agenda for a vote.
- The Council will receive a refresher training on the Robert's Rules at a future meeting.

Review of November 2018 Minutes

- November 2018 minutes cannot be approved due to lack of quorum.

Old Business

- Request for Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) presentation: Invite Molly from Goodwill to provide information on APSE's work. Beth Swedeen indicated that Molly is interested in applying to the Council. If that is the case, she can do a presentation at that time.
- Request for DHS Representative on WRC: WRC used to have a DHS representative, and about a year ago WRC requested someone from DHS to apply for membership. The request was declined then, but with the new leadership it is timely to ask again.
- Request for a Youth Apprenticeship Presentation: Darla indicated that TIG will be doing a webinar that will be recorded and could be shared with the Council to educate WRC members on Youth Apprenticeship.
- Request for a presentation on financial literacy.

New Business

- Matt Busch asked how the Council feels about receiving presentations.
 - Members indicated that the Council has a lot of decisions to make right now so it may not be the right time to get educated on issues outside of WRC oversight.
- New WRC Member Training: Many of the new members need training on the role of the Council and Robert's Rules of Order. It would be important to include a refresher for the entire Council on the mission and vision of WRC (and DVR).
- Recommendation to send emails that include potential legislation to WRC members to help shape agendas. Delora includes all potential legislation DVR is aware of in the DVR Administrator Update.

Public Comment

- Deb Henderson-Gunther: An online tool (Edition 36 from the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues) includes guidance for the State Rehabilitation Council. This could be used for WRC training.

Agenda Item: DVR Administrative Updates

Delora Newton, DVR Administrator

- Program Year 2018 Successful Employment Outcomes to date = 2,006 (84% of year-to-date goal so we are a bit behind)
 - Beth Swedeen asked if DVR has a Supported Employment (SE) closure goal; DVR does not set an SE outcome goal.
- Staff Turnover
 - 2018 – The 10% staff turnover is the lowest since 2015.
- 511 Interviews Update
 - DVR received new RSA guidance on the definition of 'annual', previously it was anytime during the state fiscal year, but it changed to once every 365 days. This is a significant shift and DVR/UW-Whitewater are in the process of addressing the timing. New guidance is expected to be released by DOL regarding the new 'annual' definition.

Agenda Item: DWD Leadership Remarks

Caleb Frostman, DWD Secretary

JoAnna Richard, DWD Deputy Secretary

- DWD is dedicated to:
 - Connecting individuals with disabilities to quality jobs that provide them the opportunity for advancement and independence.
 - Ensuring corrections facilities provide vocational rehabilitation and get formerly incarcerated individuals back in the workforce
 - Focusing on education so students are ready for work or continuing education/training when they exit school.
- JoAnna Richard shared her past experience with DWD and DVR.

Agenda Item: DVR Administrative Updates (cont.)

Delora Newton, DVR Administrator

- Federal CIE Legislation
 - H.R. 873 (House) and S. 260 (Senate) Transformation to Competitive Employment Act: These bills propose a program to assist 14(c) employers to transition their business models to CIE. This would be led by the Department of Labor, not the Department of Education (DVR is under DOE). DVR will not take an official position on the bills.
 - Re-Introduction of S. 255 Disability Employment Incentive Act. If it passes it would increase tax credits for employers that hire people with disabilities. Specifics on the tax credits are included [here](#). BSCs are educated on this legislation so they can talk to businesses about the potential benefits.
- WRC Appointments
 - Delora and Alaina Knief met with the Director of Gubernatorial Appointments, Cassie Fenilli (cassie.fenilli@wisconsin.gov) to discuss previous issues in getting appointments to the WRC.
 - Cassie informed DVR that any appointment requests submitted before Governor Evers took office must be resubmitted, as the former administration did not store/share previous applications with the incoming staff.
 - Delora encouraged members to fill out their re-appointment paperwork to ensure their re-appointments are considered, and asked WRC members to send a copy to Delora when submitting appointment requests so she can track who applies.

Agenda Item: Job Center at Oakhill Correctional – Pilot Project

Nick Lampone, DVR WDA 10 Director

Joe Ledger, DET Director

- Wisconsin has 23 state-run prisons.
- The pilot at Oakhill began in October 2019, which involves each pilot participant creating a Job Center of Wisconsin account.

- The Job Center is looking at options to bring in employers for face-to-face interviews or securing Skype for Business to have supervised interviews with employers.
- DVR is one of many partners at Oakhill including the Office of Veteran Employment Services (OVES) and Apprenticeship.
- DOC has trained three VRCs in WDA 10 to work with offenders.
- Starting in February, staff will go to Oakhill once per month to conduct orientations.
- DVR has requested that DOC send referrals to DVR no more than three months before an inmate's release date due to the 60-day eligibility determination and 90-day timeline for IPEs.
- About 85% of individuals incarcerated at Oakhill will not be released into Dane County because DOC releases inmates back to the zip code where they offended.
 - DVR is working on a process to get things started early and set up meetings with them for after Oakhill exit so it is already set.
 - According to DOC, 20% of inmates at Oakhill self-identify as having a disability. Jaclyn Borchardt mentioned this seems low and hoped a process would be developed to find others.
- What accommodations are in place for inmates with disabilities?
 - If a person required ASL for session, DVR would provide it.
 - It would be good to ask DOC about their policies surrounding accommodations and accessibility.
- Length of time for the pilot is currently undetermined.
- Oakhill Job Center has assisted about 50 inmates to date; half have been released and then connect with their local Job Center.
- As Oakhill rolls out, plans are in the works to do more training with other Job Centers and districts.
- Jaclyn offered to look into the program that gives prisoners the opportunity to train support dogs (Jackson Correctional, Oshkosh).

Agenda Item: Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)

Chaz Compton, Project Director

Fred McFarlane, Professor Emeritus

- Federal law requires each Designated State Unit to complete a CSNA every three years
- The CSNA informs the development of the Combined State Plan and makes recommendations for improvements
- SDSU has been contracted to conduct 26 CSNAs over last five years across country with combined, general, and separate blind agencies
- Chaz runs WINTAC via RSA to provide technical assistance to state VR agencies across numerous areas
- Chaz analyzed national, state, and agency-specific data, conducting surveys of consumers, partners, DVR staff, and businesses, including individual and group interviews across four groups
- Reaching out to businesses is a challenge nationwide; the suggestion is to rely on local areas with already-developed relationships with businesses to get surveys completed
- A consumer no-show rate was not calculated as part of the CSNA
- **Overall Agency Performance**
 - Agency performance not a CSNA requirement under WIOA, but is required under RSA's assessment guide
 - As the first CSNA since the common performance measures were fully implemented, this report transitioned to looking at common performance measures and not old standards
 - Kudos to Wisconsin DVR for pulling data from their case management system and reporting; this is very rare
 - Employment rate from Q2 and Q4 is consistent 2015 through 2017 and comparable to other agencies
 - The consistency from 2015 to 2017 is remarkable as this was not a consideration before WIOA; median wages also consistent during this time period

- Turnover rate may be problematic and appears to be related to pay – more pronounced in Wisconsin than in other states
- The need for adequate training to support people with disabilities is higher in strong economic times
- DVR's eligibility process allows ability eligibility determinations to be completed in half the time allowed by federal regulations; there are different viewpoints statewide on this process
- VR agencies across the country have struggled with WIOA changes; Wisconsin DVR has been proactive
- Recommendations
 - Pay staff more, either through reclass or restructure
 - Encourage continuation of wellness programs
 - Involve staff in work groups (e.g., Quality Assurance)
 - Look into the discrepancy that DVR serves 10% more male consumers than female consumers – this is a larger disparity than in most VR programs
 - In Wisconsin, more males receive SSI, more males participated in Wisconsin Promise, and with higher student caseloads than other VR programs it is notable that more males are placed in special education
 - LMI in IPE development
 - Get feedback regularly from the field about eligibility process
 - Expand transportation programs, especially in rural areas
 - WRC suggested to take this topic to DPI and DHS to work on developing solutions
- **Needs of People with Significant Disabilities, including Need for Supported Employment (SE):**
 - Transportation remains the largest issue, especially rurally
 - Need to educate employers about people with disabilities
 - Demographic of VR program has been changing, Mental Health and AODA training needed as these issues are increasing

- In 2016, 9,000 worked in subminimum wage in Wisconsin; by July 2017 it was roughly 6,000, so a third went somewhere else
- DVR needs to be prepared to address the needs of those leaving subminimum wage employment
- DVR has a relatively high and increasing number of SE cases compared to other states
- Number of successful closures in SE program is increasing and is being done at a reasonable cost
- DVR does not have sufficient SE provider capacity, especially in rural areas
- In most states, 25-20% of VR consumers have SSI/SSDI while in Wisconsin it is 47%, which has implications across programs as consumers may want to work part-time to continue receiving benefits as safety net
 - Beth pointed out that Wisconsin has Promise, which increased SSI/SSDI numbers as all participants had SSI
 - Jaclyn recommended informing people with disabilities who currently work in professional-level positions about DVR services available to help them maintain employment (Linda Vegoe, former CAP Director, had mentioned this observation in the past)
- Training for both SE and Customized Employment (CE) is an ongoing issue
- **Needs of People with Disabilities from Different Ethnic Groups and Unserved/Underserved Populations:**
 - Wisconsin has a high percentage Caucasian population
 - Overall percentage of minorities is small, but heavily concentrated in certain areas of the state
 - Language difficulties with Spanish and Hmong-speaking populations; DVR needs staff to fluently speak these languages and needs to perform targeted outreach to these communities
 - Hmong, Native American, and LGBTQ populations are underserved

- Amish and Mennonite communities are underserved, not due to lack of outreach, but because these communities tend to prefer to limit government involvement
 - Tom Benziger asked about deaf culture and deaf language, which are not addressed in this section
- **Recommendations**
 - Work with Title II to ensure continuing collaboration on developing career pathways
 - Re-establish need for regularly scheduled visits by DVR Tribal Liaisons to tribal lands
 - Work to maximize equity in disparate areas via staff training
 - Determine if there are existing disparities among ethnic groups related to case processing timeline, training, and employment outcomes
- **Needs of Youth with Disabilities in Transition**
 - PROMISE staff are great resource for training for all staff
 - Increase collaboration with programs to assist with transition of youth to adult support systems with co-enrollment, braided funding, and blended services
 - Develop programs in partnership with secondary and post-secondary schools throughout Wisconsin to ensure students with disabilities have accommodations in place at day 1 to increase student success
 - DVR should work with Title I youth partners to provide targeted services to foster care and juvenile justice youth as well as other out-of-school youth in the state
- **Needs of Individuals Served through other Components of the Statewide Workforce Development System**
 - DVR and core partners need to identify methods of tracking when cases are jointly funded
 - WIOA partners should develop ongoing cross-training for staff so each partner agency's staff is familiar with and knows allowable services for all other WIOA partner programs

- DVR should work with core partners to pilot a career pathway program model in vocational planning and IPE development intended to increase higher paying jobs and self-sufficiency
- **Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)**
 - The demand and supply mapping system DVR has employed is a positive and unique approach
 - DVR should work to develop service providers in rural areas
 - DVR needs service providers that are skilled in working with people with disabilities (Motivational Interviewing)
- **Recommendations**
 - Expand the Partnership Plus model
 - Develop more SE and CE service providers in rural areas
 - Review reporting requirements for providers to determine if reductions are possible without compromising the needed documentation to effectively report progress/outcome measures
 - Ensure quarterly provider meetings are consistently held in all WDAs statewide
- **Needs of Business and Effectiveness in Serving Employers**
 - DVR BSCs were viewed favorably by respondents
 - Employers may be more likely to hire people with disabilities if they have access to quality disability education that informs them about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities
 - BSCs should work closely with Title I program business services staff to strengthen their relationships
- **What can we do with the provider payment structure that currently incentivizes quick placements and minimizing caseload length?**
 - Consider creating a career pathway service category
 - Consider systems change and new reward systems to create incentives for service providers when they do well with connecting consumers to sustainable jobs and/or support faster fading supports when appropriate

Agenda Item: Competitive Integrated Employment Plan and Videos

Meredith Dressel, DVR Deputy Administrator

Sarah Lincoln, DVR Policy Analyst

- Wisconsin Act 178 passed in March 2018 which requires DVR, DPI, and DHS to develop a joint plan to increase competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities in Wisconsin
- The partner agencies had already developed MOUs and agreements in the past that supported the requirements of the Act, and have been working to develop the required plan since June 2018
- As the lead agency, DVR created a website where the draft plan is linked to get input – report will be published on the site when finalized along with a link to Wisconsin Act 178
- DHS and DPI will be linking to the DWD page rather than creating their own CIE pages
- Announcement went out to stakeholders yesterday for input, including a link to submit electronic comments about the plan
- Stakeholder input session scheduled for February 27, 2019
- Sarah and Andy initiated workgroup via leadership connections, and the core leadership group became CIE leadership group
- The CIE plan been revised and reviewed numerous times between leadership and the workgroup
- Three main strategies that the three departments work on together collaboratively (plus departments maintain their individual efforts):
 1. Increase awareness that CIE is possible for people with disabilities (release DVR videos and create messaging campaigns, materials, etc. on how work can impact benefits)
 2. Align service delivery systems and strengthen coordination to increase CIE for people with disabilities
 - A Data Integration Workgroup created and led by DVR's John Gellea includes Emily and Mike from Promise as they are experts on data-sharing agreements
 3. Prepare students for CIE through educational experience, connecting them to vital services during and after high school

- WRC Member comments on the plan:
 - Plan should address service capacity (services to everyone) and rate of payments for those with more significant disabilities
 - Plan should address competencies for providers
 - Transportation is critical to success and should be covered in the plan

Agenda Item: Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report

Deb Henderson-Guenther, CAP Director

- Deb shared highlights from the RSA 227 Annual Report (October 1, 2017 – September 2018)
- Members asked Deb to provide a visual/written report out for each meeting. Deb indicated that she is unable to share specific information about CAP contacts in writing for confidentiality reasons
- October 2018
 - 38 calls (highest in WDA 2 and 10); top 3 issues identified = communication, customer service, other
- November 2018
 - 26 calls (highest in WDA 2 and 10); top 3 issues identified = education, communication, other
- December 2018
 - 26 calls (highest in WDA 2 and 10); Top 3 issues identified = case closure, communication, other
- Jaclyn asked when the new staff will person be hired – middle of May is the soonest that position will be filled
- Beth asked for specifics on the communication issues – For some it is difficulty understanding how DVR works or problems getting phone calls/emails returned
- Deb indicated that the DVR Policy Manual is sparse, and the guidance pieces can be difficult to interpret

Agenda Item: WRC Committee Reports

- **Executive Committee**

- Beth Swedeen and Becky Hebda are other committee chairs who are now part of the Executive Committee
- WRC still needs a State Performance Committee – hold a vote for Committee Chair in May
- Possible discussion and action on by-law amendment for combination Pre-ETS/Section 511 Committee
- Committee discussed the possibility of revisiting the transportation and maintenance policy
- Committee discussed possible need for additional ALJ training after one ALJ mentioned a consumer's income in a decision

- **WIOA Committee**

- Looked at materials developed by DVR and UW-Whitewater with recommendations for ideas to make it more user-friendly and how to facilitate a warm handoff to DVR
- Kathleen Enders and Amy Thompson are working on materials and are hoping to finalize drafts in time to share at May meeting
- Interview scheduling for this year was based on understanding of interviews needing to take place during the fiscal year, but DOL has provided updated guidance advising that the interviews be completed within 365 of last interview
- DVR/UWW are in the process of hiring more interviewers to accommodate this requirement change

- **Services to Business Committee**

- The committee discussed priorities moving forward, including:
 - Educating employers about DVR job seekers and their ability to work in community
 - Developing training for service providers, employers, and BSCs about disability-specific issues

- Collecting written documentation of best practices and sharing with all BSCs, service providers, and employers for consistency
- Providing training and information on accommodations
- Getting business leaders on WRC
- Developing competencies for service providers and how to incorporate BSCs
- Committee discussed messaging that is already put together and how is it being delivered, as it is also a priority to ensure providers and BSCs are presenting information to employers in a consistent way

Review Decisions and Actions Steps

- Get phone numbers to Matt for follow-up to those who were not present at the meeting
- Schedule a meeting of Executive Committee members in about one week including Delora, Sarah, and Meredith

Adjourn

- Matt Busch motion to adjourn; Beth Swedeen seconded; all in favor, none opposed. Meeting adjourned.