

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council  
Meeting Minutes  
August 9, 2018 - Pewaukee, WI

**Present:** Nancy Molfenter, Rob Buettner, Patrick Young, Delora Newton, Jaclyn Borchardt, Matthew Zellmer, Thomas Benziger, Ramsey Lee, Julie Barker, Beth Swedeen, Jodi Hanna, Cathy Steffke, Jason Ostrowski, Ann Wales, Matt Busch, Mollie Lonetti, Darla Burton

**Absent:** Traci Jones, Barb Klug

**Resource Staff/Invited Guests:** Diana Kiesling, Allison Gordon, Anna Eggebrecht, Deanna Krell, Lea Collins-Worachek, Kurt Barikmo, Sarah Lincoln, Jessica Holton, Alexis Baldwin

**Public Attendees:** Becky Hebda

**Recorder:** Sarah Lincoln/Jessica Holton

**Call to Order:** Nancy Molfenter called the meeting to order at 10:30AM.

**Roll Call & Announcements**

- To meet quorum, 13 members with voting rights must be present; 15 such members were in attendance, therefore quorum was met.
- Delora serves on WRC as VR Administrator and was also appointed as the representative for the Council on Workforce Investment (CWI). Recent guidance from RSA states that she may not serve in both roles, so she resigned as the CWI representative effective August 2018. The Governor's Office is working to find a replacement.
- November 2017, February 2018, and May 2018 minutes were reviewed and voted on:
  - Patrick Young motion to approve November 2017; Cathy Steffke seconded; all in favor, none opposed.
  - Rob Buettner motion to approve February 2018; Ramsey Lee seconded; all in favor, none opposed.
  - Ramsey Lee motion to approve May 2018; Rob Buettner seconded; all in favor, none opposed.

## **Old Business**

- Tom Benziger expressed gratitude to DVR for providing copies of the WDA map to assist during conversations.

## **New Business**

- Cathy Steffke noted her excitement that Darla is now on WRC and requested training on apprenticeships at a future WRC meeting.
- Matthew Busch asked what WRC can do to help Wisconsin be a leader in unemployment rates for people with disabilities, especially since the state and national unemployment rates are so low.
- WRC members discussed transportation-related barriers to employment for people with disabilities, and Cathy Steffke asked if a representative from Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) would be worthwhile to invite to discuss these transportation issues.
- Rob Buettner thanked Meredith Dressel for presenting with business partners on employment for people with disabilities at Beyond Vision's Live @ The Lakefront event in Milwaukee.
- Beth Swedeen requested a presentation on the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) assessment on Long Term Care service provider capacity, and suggested starting with Curtis Cunningham, Deputy Administrator, DHS Division of Long Term Care.
- WRC members discussed the need to hold a special election in November for the Chair and Vice-Chair roles. DVR will research to determine if a special nomination committee must be formed.
- Cathy Steffke motioned to have WRC write a letter to Secretaries of both DWD and DOT recommending that someone from WRC review the DOT/DWD grant RFB for disability perspective; Jodi Hanna seconded; all in favor, none opposed. The grant is due early September. Cathy and Beth Swedeen (or their staff, as appropriate) will work to draft the letter.

## **Public Comment**

- No public comments received prior to the meeting.
- No public comments from meeting attendees.

## **Agenda Item: PROMISE Grant Status Report and FY 2019 Plan**

Ellie Hartman, Promise Grant Project Manager

- Promise youth currently receiving services will continue with VR cases as consumers, and family members, if they have disabilities, have been referred to DVR (over 90 family members so far). Family members without disabilities have been provided information on community resources and given the tools to be successful throughout Promise.
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) can continue to be used through March of 2019.
- Family advocates will be providing training for people to become mentors/leaders in their communities to increase employment for youth with disabilities.
- The Promise Grant team is working on collecting and analyzing data from DVR, Medicaid, schools, child welfare programs, Wisconsin Works (W2), and other programs. This data will be used at the federal level to make decisions about sustainability and future grants.
- DWD Assistant Deputy Secretary BJ Dernbach is going to D.C. in September to discuss Promise findings in congressional hearings.
- Options continue to be explored for continuing support for family members. Data sharing agreements with DHS are being considered to show positive Promise outcomes related to SSI and Medicaid use. Medicaid-eligible individuals are also eligible for targeted case management, which could be another support for youth and families.
- Updated data will continue to be posted on the Promise website.

## **Working Lunch: Business Services Consultants and Aurora Health**

Kurt Barikmo, *Business Services Consultant*, DVR

Jerry Baake, *HR Business Partner*, Aurora Health Care

Beth Lohmann, *Director of Employment and Community Services*, Easter Seals of Southeast Wisconsin

- Kurt shared his experiences and insights and clarified roles and responsibilities of BSCs. Kurt also shared DVR's draft one-pager to be used when marketing DVR's Business Services.

- Jerry shared Aurora's experience with DVR's Temporary Work Experience (TWE) program:
  - Aurora intends to have an 80 percent employment rate or higher when bringing DVR consumers in under a TWE.
  - Aurora treats the TWE service as a training period for permanent employment and experiences a high retention rate when TWE participants are hired permanently.
  - Aurora is developing an internship handbook for their employees with disabilities and hired an advocate to help with Aurora's outreach to workforce partners.
- Beth has over 20 years of experience working with people with disabilities to find employment, working collaboratively with DVR, businesses, and other providers in the area.
- DVR's website, specifically the Business Services webpage, has been very useful for Easter Seals in accessing labor market information and training assistance, but targeted relationship-building and collaboration could be improved between DVR and providers.
- Collaborative trainings and joint WDA meetings with DVR staff and service providers are beneficial and effective as they bring everyone together in the same room.
- DVR's Project SEARCH partnership with Easter Seals has been successful, Easter Seals currently works with five of Wisconsin's 27 sites. Recruiting the number of students needed to operate the program continues to be a struggle, as business demand for program graduates exceeds the number of annual student referrals.
- Easter Seals continues to work to make training for their staff more consistent to give each business they work with the same support.
- Easter Seals staff struggles with each DVR office operating somewhat differently. DVR has worked well with Easter Seals in addressing issues related to these differences, including providing joint brainstorming sessions which have been successful.
- DVR's number of required service provider reports has increased. Streamlining these reports, as well as providing information on other programs already connected to DVR, would assist Easter Seals in

their continuing partnership with DVR. Recent revisions to the technical specifications have helped clarify roles and responsibilities.

- Easter Seals serves 750-1000 individuals at any given time and is in constant need of job coaches due to high turnover in this position.

### **Agenda Item: Response to May 2018 Data Inquiry**

Allison Gordon, Bureau of Consumer Services Director

- Meredith Dressel and Cathy Steffke have been in communication regarding needed clarifications to Cathy's data request that was made following May's WRC Meeting.
- After a thorough review, it was determined that the request would be best reframed as a refresh of the 2015 LAB Audit data.
- DVR will provide this data update at November's WRC Meeting.

### **Agenda Item: DVR Administrative Updates**

Delora Newton, DVR Administrator

- Delora Newton shared performance updates in Program Year (July 1, 2017-June 1, 2018) instead of fiscal year for most measures per WIOA requirements.
  - Of the 4,143 DVR consumers whose cases closed successfully in PY 2017, 1,357 receive benefits from their employers.
  - Post-employment data (employment stats at six and 12 months after case closure) is now available and will continue to be shared at WRC meetings as it becomes available.
  - DVR is on track with Pre-ETS spending, currently at \$7.7 Million and expecting to reach the \$9 Million spending requirement by September 30, 2018.
- DVR recently completed stay interviews for all DVR staff and intend to use this information to determine best practices and implement changes with the goal of retaining current staff.
- Allison Gordon shared DVR staffing updates, including information about transitioning Consumer Case Coordinators (CCCs) to the new Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist (VRS) or Fiscal Specialist positions. Workload shifts between positions still being sorted out.

- Delora updated council members on progress of the UW-Whitewater interviews required by WIOA Section 511. Year 2 findings will be presented to WRC in November. Year 3 cycle begins in September.
  - If a 14c employee indicates during the interview that they are interested in competitive, integrated employment (CIE), the interviewer provides a DVR application coded specifically to show that the application came from a 14c employer.
  - DVR is developing a "What Can I Do Next" document to guide interviewees through the process of applying for DVR. WRC will have an opportunity to review the document in November.
  - The CIE team met recently to work on recommendations to be provided to leadership regarding the data to be collected and analyzed by each state agency.
- Wage Documentation is now required for successful (Status 26) case closure. Under WIOA, DVR is required to attach wage documentation to the case file. If a consumer is working with a provider, the provider will be required to gather wage documentation for DVR in order to be eligible to receive their retention/transition to LTS payment. If the consumer is not working with a provider, then DVR staff is required to gather the documentation.
- ALJ training will be held in Milwaukee on September 28, 2018. The training will feature a rule and regulation review with examples of common appeals scenarios. Nancy Molfenter asked that DVR track which ALJs participated in the training and share this with the WRC Executive Committee.
- All CSNA focus groups have concluded except in WDA 5 – those groups will take place on September 10, 2018. CSNA interviews with staff occurred on a volunteer basis, and online surveys were offered to businesses, consumers, and providers. The survey was also available to the public on the DVR webpage.
- In collaboration with DHS and DWD's Divisions of Workers Compensation and Employment and Training, DVR applied for the RETAIN grant. The purpose of RETAIN is to implement and evaluate stay at work and return to work early intervention strategies to support injured or ill workers in remaining at or returning to work by

providing coordinated health and employment services for up to six months that support labor force attachment. The grant also supports services to workers with opioid addictions. RETAIN grant recipients will be announced in early September.

- Commute to Careers Grant Program RFP has been released for DWD and DOT. Applications are due September 5, 2018, a cash match is required. Two-year grants will begin October 15, 2018. \$5 million in DWD grants for employment-related transportation programs, and \$3 million in DOT grants for capital equipment purchases for flexible transportation projects benefitting low-income residents. At least \$1 million of the DWD grants must be set aside for transportation services specific to workers with disabilities. DOT grants only available to non-profits and local public and tribal entities in areas of the state with low air quality.

#### **Agenda Item: Order of Selection (OOS)**

Delora Newton, DVR Administrator

- Delora Newton shared updates on DVR's current OOS categories and activation of those categories.
- Cathy Steffke motion to continue the OOS as-is and support the immediate activation of categories 1 and 2 and retain category 3 as closed indefinitely; Jodi Hanna seconded; all in favor, none opposed.

#### **Agenda Item: CAP Update**

Deb Henderson-Guenther, CAP Director

- Deb Henderson-Guenther, CAP Director, is absent due to illness; Cathy Steffke offered to provide the CAP update in her absence.
- Nancy Molfenter requested that Deb bring visual representations of data shared to future WRC meetings.
- Deb provided a recommendation for someone to fill the CAP seat on WRC – an application has been submitted and is awaiting approval. Deb checked with Governor's Appointment Office and has not yet received a response.
- CAP's new Complaint Investigator/Advocate, Karla Reehl, a former VRC with DVR, started her position on July 9, 2018.

- Current CAP cases involve issues with self-employment, assistive technology, medical restoration services, transportation, TWEs, and post-secondary education. CAP is also addressing vendor concerns.
- Jaclyn Borchardt asked for an update on customer service issues discussed during previous meetings. Cathy responded that issues seem to be individualized or related to specific VRCs.
- WDA Directors Lea Collins-Worachek and Deanna Krell mentioned that VRC consumer call response times vary from same day to seven business days depending on schedules. Staff have been instructed to update email and voicemail out of office messages and provide contact information for support staff in times of absence. This information is being shared in consumer orientation sessions and IPE meetings to ensure realistic consumer expectations.
- Delora Newton mentioned that she occasionally receives calls from consumers upset that they haven't received a call back within a few hours. Realistic call back times should be discussed with consumers early and often to avoid this issue.
- WRC discussed the possibility of voicemails being transcribed into email – this idea was explored years ago in WDAs 2 and 3.
- WRC asked that Deb provide concrete information on data being collected by CAP and noted that call logs had been shared in the past. CAP using a template of requested data was recommended.

## **WRC Committee Reports**

- Executive/State Plan/Performance Measures Committee
  - Rob Buettner reached out to all WRC members asking them to ask individuals to apply to WRC. If a member has referred someone, please share with Rob as he is tracking referrals.
  - Special WRC Election will be held in November as Nancy is leaving her position with DPI and Rob's term has ended. The Executive Committee will research what needs to be done so we can be prepared before the November meeting.
  - DVR will look into hiring a contract position to support WRC.



- Services to Business Committee
  - Committee recommends that a BSC continue to participate and provide a lunch presentation with information about how they provide services and interact with business and providers.
  - Committee recommends inviting APSE and the BPDD Partners with Business Initiative to present at a future WRC meeting.
  - WRC must recruit two business and industry slots on WRC. Committee members will research if retired business persons may be appropriate if still connected to business networks.
- WIOA Committee
  - Committee discussed a potential motion for WRC to write a letter of concern to Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos indicating that opening WIOA could have significant impacts.
  - WRC discussed that technical amendments can be used to make changes to WIOA, noting that it is not necessary to reopen the entire legislation. DVR and DPI have made significant changes in policy and data systems to meet requirements under WIOA and reversing those changes would have a significant impact on both agencies.
  - Beth Swedeen motion to write this letter; Patrick Young seconded; Matthew Busch and Ramsey Lee abstained from the vote citing the need for more information. Motion approved.
  - WIOA committee will draft the letter and send it through the Executive Committee for final approval.

## **WRC Meeting Dates 2019**

- Thursday, February 14, 2019: Madison
- Thursday, May 9, 2019: Wausau/Eau Claire/Stevens Point area
- Thursday, August 8, 2019: Milwaukee
- Thursday, November 14, 2019: Wisconsin Dells

## **Adjourn**

- Rob Buettner motion to adjourn; Ramsey Lee seconded; all in favor, none opposed.