

State Rehabilitation Council Quarterly Meeting July 25, 2022

Present

Council Vice-Chair Darin Lindig, Tim Blonksy, Randi Cole, Jami Davis, Jane Donnellan, Pam Harris, Ramona Medicine Horse, David “Max” Maxwell, Ron Oberleitner, Nathan Ogden, James Pegram, Stephanie Taylor-Silva, Sarah Tueller.

Absent

Council Chair Janice Carson, Christine Meeuwsen

Guests

IDVR Planning and Evaluation Manager, Teresa Pitt; IDVR Fiscal Manager, Kean Miller; IDVR Business Relations Manager, MiKayla Monaghan; IDVR Apprenticeship Counselor, Caleb Tibbetts

Welcome

Council Co-Chair Darin Lindig called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda. Wendy Page conducted roll call and Jane Donnellan confirmed a quorum.

MOTION

James Pegram motioned to approve the Minutes from the April 26 – 27, 2022 meetings. **Nathan Ogden** seconded the motion; all council members present voted in favor of approval of the April Minutes.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Membership Sub-Committee Update

Two candidates submitted for consideration for SRC membership. Former Applicant or Recipient and Business and Labor have current vacancies. Members were asked to make recommendations for those members whose terms will soon expire.

MOTION

The committee made recommendation of Mark Reinhardt as former VR applicant or recipient. Stephanie Taylor-Silva motioned to accept the recommendation; **Ron Oberleitner** seconded the motion; all council

members present were in favor of accepting the recommendation.

The committee recommended Diana Kadekian Colgrove, for representation of Business/Industry and Labor.

MOTION

Pam Harris motioned to accept the recommendation of Diana Kadekian Colgrove, **Max Maxwell** seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of accepting the recommendation.

Annual Report Sub-Committee

Council members were invited to participate in the Annual Report sub-committee. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss the development of the upcoming Combined Annual Report for 2022. The submission date for the report to RSA and the Governor of the State of Idaho is December 31, 2022.

Program Effectiveness Sub-Committee

Customer Satisfaction Survey data and the CSNA report were reviewed. The committee will evaluate the CSNA in more depth at the next committee meeting.

Planning and Public Policy Committee

The committee was unable to select a chair for the committee. Upcoming policies were reviewed, and the committee was updated on the process of policy approval. CIE Policy will go through RSA approval prior to the SRC review of this policy.

No further action is needed until October.

AGENCY UPDATES

IDVR Business Services Update

MiKayla Monaghan, IDVR Business Services Manager, presented an annual update which included VR Success Stories and the statewide business engagement plan.

Three core areas were also reviewed. Staff development and competency

with business engagement activities, quantity of businesses served and quality of business contacts/relations. This included increased staff understanding of the purpose of business engagement. Each region exceeded their goal for number of contacts. Each region also identified businesses to engage with on a deeper level than previously. A dual customer model focus has been effective in increasing staff engaging with businesses in more meaningful ways.

Business involvement with Pre-ETS has provided opportunities for the two programs to collaborate, which adds to Pre-ET services. The following strategies were among those implemented:

- Disability etiquette training was provided to staff for three state agencies including State Board of Education, CTE and Next Steps.
- Business Spotlights, 14 spotlights were completed, allowing a platform to share and learn about the business and their needs. The goal for the next year is to continue provide BE support to regions throughout the state.
- VR established work-based learning experiences for out of school youth and adults with Create Common Good, an organization that helps individuals to develop skills in the culinary field.
- MiKayla collaborated with the CRP manager on the Job Ready Project, which provides guidance and training to staff on how to assist VR customers to be “job ready” in seeking employment. This project was initiated based on customer feedback.
- A directive was received from the Workforce Development Council to promote equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA).
- Moving a counselor position to the central office to work directly with the business relations manager in order to support registered apprenticeship programs

Registered Apprenticeship (RA)

Caleb Tibbetts, Apprenticeship Counselor for VR presented to the SRC on the registered apprenticeships. Caleb is the central point of contact at VR

for staff, customers, and businesses on registered apprenticeships.

Caleb reviewed the details of the apprentice programs which include on the job learning, related technical instruction and wage increases for specific skill gains and hours worked that can be applied in a variety of professions.

The benefits for the employer were also reviewed including recruitment, reduction in turnover, increased employee morale and retention, increased employer productivity and profits. (See slides for further details.)

Tim Blonsky added that RA's can also be beneficial to retaining current talent providing a career pathway for current employees.

SRC members asked questions and offered suggestions for types of RA's that could be effective including continuing education, the involvement of the peer mentoring program and other state agencies.

Transition Services

Jane Donnellan, IDVR Administrator, presented Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) updates to council members. Videos featuring students who communicate through American Sign Language that are posted on the IDVR website were viewed by the group.

There has been an increase in participation for pre-employment transition services. There has been growth in all the areas of required services.

The agency's area transition counselors (ATC's) have contributed significantly to the growth in the numbers. The purpose of the ATC's is to collaborate with Alison Lowenthal to build out programs and engage with the education agencies as well as collaboration with field staff.

Staff are working to achieve the 15% expenditure requirement. There are now nineteen counselors dedicated specifically to working with students with disabilities. Since 2019 the number of students served by the agency has doubled, however at this time 10% of the potential students with disabilities are being served.

Work-Based Learning and Careers in Technical Education (CTEs)

In the past academic year, the number of schools that provided work-based learning during the school day increased. During the summer IDVR was

able to work with various school districts to provide work-based learning. Many of the opportunities are in rural communities without rehab providers.

CTE programs have also increased. Jane Donnellan reviewed highlights of various programs being provided by various LEA's including instruction in culinary, small engine repair, welding, auto mechanics, home repair/remodeling, robotics, law enforcement, nursing and many others, which translate into various occupations.

Tools for Life is a program that is designed to provide students with programs in building skills for self-advocacy. This event involved various groups including the Department of Education, U of Idaho, LINC and DAC, IPUL as well as businesses.

Other programs mentioned were the Work of Art through Idaho Parents Unlimited and BSU Prep, which helps students to identify their strengths and abilities in pursuing post-secondary programs.

Examples of paid summer work experiences included placements at Alpaca Farms in northern Idaho, the Idaho Youth Ranch, car dealerships, fitness centers and many others.

Field Services Update

Darrell Quist, IDVR Chief of Field Services, provided field services updates including:

Mike MacGuffie transferred to the regional manager position for Region Treasure Valley East.

There is a new assistant regional manager in Pocatello, Sheila Hadden. John Orose is currently serving as regional manager for both regions in eastern Idaho.

A VRA recently completed her bachelor's degree and has been hired as a VR specialist.

The agency is developing a paid internship program with incentives for retention.

Under current rule IDVR can now use companies that have been

accredited by companies other than CARF or RSA. In order to better serve underserved communities.

The new goal for the pre-cases is to have them transition into a general VR program after they've completed high school. Designated counselors will work with students after graduation, focusing on transitional services. Student will then transition to a VR case if they want to continue working with a vocational rehabilitation counselor.

Virtual appointments continue to be provided to those customers that prefer to meet with counselors virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Annual case file review will be conducted in the next couple of months. A random sampling of cases will be reviewed by field managers and central office personnel.

Discussion ensued regarding how the council can assist with outreach to potential customers. The agency has an outreach plan and council members were encouraged to spread the word throughout their communities. Mrs. Donnellan explained that the agency collaborates with other agencies such as the Commission for the Blind and the VA VR program.

An example of someone with a disability that may not be eligible for services because the disability does not present a barrier to employment was shared. Part of the evaluation process includes a determination of how VR services can assist the individual.

The challenges of serving individuals with disabilities who are homeless are also affecting the services that the agency can provide.

The council members would like to have a business card that could be provided as they interact with people with disabilities in the community.

Fiscal Update

Kean Miller, IDVR Financial Manager, reported that there were no expenditures for the council for the last quarter.

Agency expenditures increased from 77.45% last year to 81.6% this year. The open grants currently include the basic 21 and basic 22 grants.

IDVR has had to relinquish funds back for several years. Reallotment typically occurs in July/August of the first year of the grant. Currently the basic 22 grant funds are being reallotted. \$2.3 million was reallotted from the 21 Grant for other agencies to utilize last year. The basic 21 Grant has \$2.7 million that could be spent however, there won't be enough time to spend it all so it's being closed down. \$2.3 million will be reverted so that the 22 grant can be spent.

The full 22 Grant is \$18.9 million. Of that, \$3.3 million will be reverted. By doing that, the 15% required under WIOA to be spent will be attainable. The plan is to reduce match funds so that the penalty will be less significant. Increases in spending should positively impact future grants. The revenue from other agencies, which affects the federal match has significantly decreased. The agency will be requesting additional match funds from the state to fill the gap.

Ron Oberleitner asked if there are stipulations as to where federal funds can be spent and that was confirmed. Kean mentioned that the agency is looking at purchasing a learning management system, which is a significant expense that is allowable. Any employment related services provided to the VR customer can be provided using federal funds.

Tim Blonsky asked about the rates in which employers can be paid for on-the-job training. He suggested that the agency reassess this type of training to utilize those funds.

HR Updates

Jane informed the council that various incentives for employers are being considered to increase opportunities for the VR customers.

She explained the intent for budget line-item requests for three additional FTEs to meet the needs of addressing business engagement services. The agency is restructuring administrative positions including the addition of a Management Assistant position, a part-time Administrative Assistant I and a full-time Administrative Assistant II.

The Division of Human Resources will become the employer for the agency's current human resource personnel effective January 1, 2023. IDVR's capacity to serve all the areas is affected by the high turnover in

staff. A satisfaction survey was sent to IDVR staff asking about their concerns as well as what is working well within their positions with the agency.

EES has been transferred to the Department of Health and Welfare as of July 1, 2022.

Council members were asked to reach out to individuals in their communities to serve on the State Rehabilitation Council.

The state has a new position, an ADA Coordinator that will hopefully make an impact the areas of accessibility within digital content as well as other areas. Alternative Hire is an area that will be explored with the new position within DHR.

Jane announced that CSAVR will be having a face-to-face conference October 29 through November 4th. In the past the Chair and Vice Chair are encouraged to attend this conference. If neither is interested, an invitation would be made to the greater group.

Planning and Evaluation Update

Teresa Pitt, IDVR Planning and Evaluation Manager, presented updates on rules and the changes from the last legislative session. She explained that rules are a very complicated process, and the legislature has not approved all existing rules on the books.

Temporary and proposed rules have been developed in response to the findings from RSA finding to correct the residency verbiage in the current policy and in Rule. This information was disseminated to the council members.

IDVR is working to expand the community resource providers by lessening the burden on the accreditation process. Typically, there are two ways to become accredited either through CARF or RSAS, which can be very costly. A less expensive, less complicated system could help smaller and rural vendors to complete the accreditation process.

Corrective Action Plan for RSA

Language indicating a residency requirement was eliminated and the policy has been updated accordingly.

The second RSA finding was of lack of contract management. Tracy Warren, IDVR's new Contracts Officer, has been hired for establishing policies and procedures related to contracts as well as reviewing tracking and reviewing content within those contracts.

There are currently three draft policies, one of which concerns the federal competitive integrated employment law. Council members were encouraged to attend the public meetings around this policy.

The IDVR State Plan for FY 2022-2023 has been approved by the RSA.

Member Updates

Co-Chair Darrin Lindig discussed the HP Disability Employee Resource Group's international event on Global Accessibility Awareness Day. Topics included customer accessibility in product design.

customer support line that focuses on disability-related issues/requests. 2,000 people per month are served through this service.

Tim Blonsky discussed his involvement in a Department of Labor 4-year grant for youth apprenticeship programs. They currently have 81 apprentices with 35 new employers and are working to create in-school apprenticeship programs.

James Pegram presented the Workforce Development Council's support for apprenticeship programs and desire to remove barriers for women in the workplace. At Simplot, he shared, they anticipate 80 to 90 apprenticeships at CS Beef.

From their DEIA initiatives, they have hired an additional employee, created five resource groups and provided staff training.

Sarah Tueller reported on the success of the IPUL Work of Art Program in reaching out to students with significant disabilities. She asked for suggestions regarding ways \way to integrate funding to provide support services to students outside of family members.

Updates to the Building a Bridge, a program that helps students transition from home to adult life, are underway including strategies to consider adult

learning styles. More information to come on the website and Facebook page.

David “Max” Maxwell shared that the Department of Veteran Affairs currently has four counselors in the Treasure Valley including BSU and Pocatello. There is a three-month waiting period for an appointment for those veterans with disabilities who have a minimum of a 20% service connection.

Mr. Maxwell shared that the current VA focus on the Pact Act for veterans exposed to environmental toxins (a historically difficult group to connect to services) and efforts to support claims that have been denied. Veterans can access this free service through the Disabled Veterans Americans or the Idaho Division of Veteran Services.

David White announced that he has been working at VR for 10 years and wanted the council to know that there are many IDVR employees that are similarly committed to the vision and mission. He shared his experience at the National RA conference in Logan, Utah in which nationwide efforts to professionalize the credential were publicized.

Pam Harris reported on her collaboration with rangers at the Heyburn State Park who worked with VR Area Transition Counselors to provide a ride-along program, culminating in a graduation celebration. They anticipate more sessions and a longer program next year. St. Marie’s newspaper will be publishing an article on this event.

Her company has started to provide virtual job search assistance virtually with online applications, resume development and interview tips.

She and one of her employment specialists are writing a handbook for individuals with disabilities who have challenges in finding employment. The book will cover the basics and include worksheets to complete such as career interests and strategies.

Ramona Medicine Horse of the Shoshone Bannock Tribes reported that the building that housed the VR program collapsed and operations are currently held in an old casino building. They have been conducting job fairs and promoting agency collaboration. A disability-awareness walk will be held in October as well as a kids’ parade during an upcoming

community festival.

Randi Cole from the State Department of Education (DOE), is focused on analyzing data related to graduation, drop-out, post school outcomes including education, training, and work. She relayed that teacher training has been challenging due to restrictions imposed during the by COVID-19 pandemic. A grant is being pursued to help recruit and retain teachers. With interagency collaboration, the Transition Institute will be held in October and more information will be provided as it gets closer.

Jami Davis from the State Independent Living Council described efforts to capture feedback on the State Plan for Independent Living in virtual and in-person Town Hall Needs Assessments. One early finding highlighted the challenges of serving individuals who do not identify as having a disability.

www.SILC.idaho.gov has a link to the survey to establish goals for the statewide plan. People can also call in to complete the survey.

MOTION

Jami Davis motioned to adjourn, James Pegram seconded, all members voted to adjourn the meeting.