

State Rehabilitation Council Quarterly Meeting October 25, 2022

Present

Janice Carson

Jami Davis

Darin Lindig

David White

Diana Colgrove

Mark Reinhardt

Council Secretary, Wendy Page

Ron Oberleitner

Christine Meewsen

Pam Harris

Max Maxwell

Jane Donnellan

Nathan Ogden

Absent

Tim Blonsky, Ramona Medicine Horse, James Pegram, Sarah Tueller, Randi Cole, Stephanie Taylor-Silva

Guests

IDVR Planning and Evaluation Manager, Teresa Pitt; IDVR Fiscal Manager, Kean Miller; IDVR Field Services Chief, Darrell Quist

Welcome

Chairperson Janice Carson called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION

Nathan Ogden motioned to approve the Minutes from the July 26, 2022, meeting. **Jami Davis** seconded the motion; a quorum having been established; the council unanimously approved the Minutes.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Program Effectiveness Sub-Committee

CSNA Report - Teresa Pitt, IDVR Planning and Evaluation Manager provided some background history of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) as well as an update. The contract with San Diego State University has been finalized. Input from the SRC and IDVR staff will be solicited especially those staff that service various populations, when preparing the survey. The survey groups consist of the customer, agency

staff, partner agency, vendor and various stakeholders. SRC members were asked to forward the surveys to populations in their respective areas and people they know. A copy of the previous survey along with some additional information was provided to the council.

The consensus of the council is to send paper surveys to those individuals who do not have access to the survey electronically. Additionally, a meeting will be scheduled so committee members, select IDVR personnel and any council members that would like to participate can review the survey.

The importance of having plain language in the survey as well as employer outreach was discussed. More employer/businesses feedback is desired, and it was suggested that a chance to win a gift card may prompt more response. Outreach efforts to employers have been made through the Workforce Development, the IDVR Business Services Team and the Department of Labor.

The prior survey and data will be sent to council members.

There was some discussion around the strategy for getting feedback from Idaho employers through survey method.

Annual Report Sub-Committee

Council members were updated on the progress of the Annual Report. They were notified that a draft of the report will be sent out for council review.

Planning and Public Policy Committee

Agency Policy – The Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) and Post Employment Services policies have been drafted for SRC review. Additionally, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has reviewed the policy and have provided some feedback. A virtual meeting will be held to discuss the elements of the policies. RSA provided two FAQs on Post-Employment and CIE policy.

Public comment is scheduled for February-March. The policies to go into effect in July 2023.

Presentation – Communicating with your Legislator

Mel Leviton, State Independent Living Council and Richelle Tierney, Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities presented to the council on educating state legislators on VR program needs as well as effective communication techniques.

MEMBER UPDATES

Chairperson Janice Carson spoke about the upcoming Tools for Life Conference, being held in Boise at the end of February. Tools for Life is a transition technology conference for secondary students. She also shared about the Agri-ability Grant for farmers and ranchers who are injured or acquired a disability and how the Idaho Assistive Technology Project can help with equipment purchases, adaptive equipment, and vocational rehabilitation services.

Jami Davis reports the State Independent Living Council has completed 31 Listening Sessions, surveys have been received, and data is being processed. Jami presented to VR counselors in regard to ABLE accounts and has seen some referrals in response to the presentation. Caregiving and family supports are a big topic of concern that has arisen from the feedback they have received.

Co-Chairperson Darin Lindig shared that he leads a global disability impact network also known as employee resource groups. Different countries have different hiring programs, and they have varied structures. They are targeting with specific physical and digital attitudinal access throughout the company.

Mr. Lindig talked about the language of the customer and the term vocational rehabilitation. His company has hosted some tech talks where they asked what vocational rehabilitation means and there were varied responses with most of those responses indicating that they did not know what the words meant.

David White spent some time at the Transition Institute, which is being held at this time. The institute is an opportunity where Pre-ETS counselors are provided the opportunity to connect with the schools they serve and provide education about VR services.

Diana Colgrove owns various Sports Clips within the state. They hire individuals with disabilities. She also has a daughter with a disability. She has served on previous councils and is looking forward to serving on the council.

Mark Reinhardt is working on a PowerPoint presentation to provide CRP's information about working with individuals on the autism spectrum. Mark is about to finish school with an employment goal of journalism.

Christine Meewsen, Disability Rights Idaho, shared they are working on a transition app for students to complete as they transition to employment after school. The app will identify areas where help is needed, which will develop a plan for the student to present to the school and into the special education plan.

Pamela Harris reports that her company is currently providing distance job assistance services. Virtual job site tours are being set up to allow students to see what the job site might look like before considering employment at that location. Video resumes is another project that they are working on. An individual with a significant disability can be identified as a potential employee allowing the employer to see the individual's strengths.

Max Maxwell explained that there are 3 local counselors and one counselor in Pocatello. They are grant funded to help veterans with resume development and job seeking. Post-secondary education is also a big focus of the program. They are working to pair the veteran with a job that fits their abilities and strengths as well as interests. The PACT Act continues to provide benefits to veterans who have been exposed to chemicals that have created health issues.

Ron Oberleitner introduced his son and explained that he has had a couple of jobs with VR assistance. He does volunteer work and organizes a community dance in Emmett. Ron owns a telehealth technology company that allows doctors to see patients remotely.

Ron provided an update on projects that Autism Speaks is shifting to where they assist individuals with disabilities to go back to work. Stanford University puts on an annual neurodiversity conference with over 2,000 attendees. The focus is the values and strategies for individuals with autism

to become employed.

AGENCY UPDATES

Kean Miller is retiring from her position as of December 15, 2022. A new financial manager has been hired and Kean will be providing guidance and training through the transition period.

There are two line-item budget requests which would include three area business coordinators to provide training and technical assistance to employers. This would include providing information about work-based learning experiences.

The council will be provided with informational sheets relating to the budget requests from the legislature. The presentation to the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee will be approximately the third week of January.

The budget was submitted September 1st and clarification related to the requests is pending in addition to the governor's approval. The committees most likely won't be established until the middle of December.

The Office of Administrative Hearings has been established. They are looking for agencies to have some consistency. They will have trained fair hearing officers so that when one is needed there is someone available. A fair hearing is an option for consumers to take when they disagree with decisions made by the agency.

CRP SERVICES

Ryan Waddell, CRP Manager has been travelling the state to visit with community resource providers and has been hosting a quarterly meeting with the vendors. IDVR implemented a paid work evaluation contract for vendors who chose to participate effective September 1. This would ensure that individuals completing the evaluation would receive payment for their work during the evaluation.

The plan for serving rural areas is being addressed by expanding the accreditation requirements to include certification by the Association of Community Rehabilitation Education (ACRE).

Mr. Waddell and business services manager, MiKayla Monaghan are

developing a process to ensure that customers are “job ready” when the referral is made to the CRP.

The VR counselors that specifically provide services to students with disabilities are proving to be effective. Collaboration with school districts for work-based experiences have been instrumental in providing the opportunity to serve those students.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS)

The summer work experiences were very successful this year. Alison Lowenthal, Pre-ETS Manager, has collaborated with local education agencies allowing teachers and parents to develop opportunities for students. VR provided services to approximately 175 students including individualized work-based learning.

The BSU Boise Prep program continues to provide students who are interested in two-to-four-year college programs are paired with a student mentor to explore academic options. ISU has provided a program for several years that has both the on-campus and virtual components.

Bids for summer work experiences with CRP’s are focused on making adjustments to meeting the labor market demands, including wage costs for the students.

BUSINESS SERVICES AND APPRENTICESHIPS

Mikayla Monaghan, Business Services Manager, is meeting with businesses and conducting business spotlights, which are sessions that provide an opportunity for counselors to learn about the business needs of the company.

Goals for business outreach continue to be established throughout the state as well as working with the Division of Human Resources on alternative hiring processes through state employment.

In the areas of apprenticeships, there are currently five apprenticeship grants in the state of Idaho. There is a collaboration through a coalition that includes partner agencies such as the Department of Labor to develop some strategies for working with employers around the state to develop apprenticeships.

FIELD SERVICES

Darrell Quist, Field Services Chief, reported the number of customer applications have continued to increase. Outreach plans are being reimplemented and setting an expectation from various personnel within the agency.

There are currently four counselor vacancies. There is an assistant regional manager vacancy in a treasure valley region. The manager in eastern Idaho continues to manage both eastern regions of the state.

Seamless internships are in place which involves a signed commitment, which pays for books and provides a retention bonus upon completion. There is a plan in place for outreach to colleges and universities.

There has been some confusion within the school systems around when to provide services to a potentially eligible student vs a “traditional” vocational rehabilitation case. Guidance is being provided to educators on when to connect the student with VR.

Financial Report

Kean Miller, IDVR Financial Manager presented the quarterly report that compares to the expenditures from the same quarter from last year. There has been an increase in spending compared to last year. There is a request to combine two of the funds, 0288 Rehabilitation Revenue Fund with 0348 federal funds in order to put the revenue into the same account with the expenditures. This is necessary to correlate with the transfer to the LUMA system. If the request is approved by the legislature, then there would only be three funds.

Ms. Miller reminded the council that refunds from SSA on individuals with disabilities who have become employed contributes to the income and those dollars must be spend the same way as the federal grant money.

The basic 23 grant was implemented October 1st and will be distributed in portions. A portion of the basic 22 grant was reallocated to other VR programs. The match was made for the 22 grant by the September 30th deadline so that the funds can be carried over to the 23 grant. Only a portion of the 23 grant was accepted.

A maintenance of penalty will be assessed from the 21 grant because the

match was not met. The amount of the grant increased so the penalty has little impact overall. An overmatch for the 22 grant has been corrected by transferring trustee and benefits payments to the earlier grant to show an exact match. The agency took a \$3.3 million reduction in order to make federal match.

The full award on the 23 grant has not yet been received. It is distributed in increments. The 15% requirement for Pre-ETS was met in the 22 grant due to the changes made dedicating staff specifically for Pre-ETS, which is the first time this has happened since WIOA was implemented. Pre-ETS funds have already been expended from the 23 grant, which will should put the agency in a position to spend the required \$15.6 million.

Ms. Miller proposed a switch from a federal fiscal year to a state fiscal year for this report to match the budgeting timeline for easier comparison.

Planning and Evaluation

A change is being made to the financial participation for customers who have an income above 200 percent, to raise the poverty level to 300 percent effective November 1, 2022. Financial contribution is based on several factors including the cost of services, income and number of people in the household.

A corrective Action Plan response will be submitted to RSA following the two findings that have been corrected through a change in the policy and the hiring of a contracts manager.

The January meeting will be a virtual meeting.
Darin requested a micro-card that shows basic VR information that could be provided to legislators or potential customers.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.