



State Rehabilitation Council Quarterly Meeting
Tuesday, April 25, 2023
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Mountain Time)

Location: Springhill Suites, 424 E Parkcenter Blvd, Boise, ID 83706

MEETING MINUTES

Committee Meetings and Reports

Chairperson Janice Carson thanked council members for their engagement in the committee meetings.

Program Effectiveness Committee Report

Tim Blonsky volunteered to be the Co-Chair of the Program Effectiveness Committee.

Matt Markve, IDVR Program Evaluation Analyst, provided the committee summary report. Timelines for the State Plan and Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) were reviewed by the committee. The CSNA Focus Groups were conducted by Rachel Anderson, of SDSU Interwork Institute. The CSNA surveys are completed as well. The CSNA draft will be distributed no later than September 2023, which will help complete the strategy for the state plan in October 2023.

The committee had discussion around the umbrella combined state plan, WIOA Advisory work. The timelines will align with the IDVR Combined State Plan.

Executive Committee Report

Vice Chairperson Darin Lindig referred council members to the current membership list. Janice Carson and Ron Oberleitner have fulfilled their terms, creating two new vacancies within the council.

Within the group representation, there is not a minimum within the group but there are term limits. Consideration of by-law amendment was discussed potentially allowing council members to have less than a 3-year gap between terms.

Mental Health is one of the disability groups not currently being represented within the council. Identifying a youth or student for council representation is another area of focus for the committee. There were some prospective business and industry partners identified as potential representation.

Annual report development will revert to in-house development, maintaining the current format.

Planning & Public Policy Committee

Teresa Pitt, IDVR Planning and Evaluation manager distributed new draft policies, competitive integrated employment, post-employment, and informed choice last October 2022, providing opportunity for feedback from the committee members. The goal was to implement the new policies along with some enhancements to the Field Services Policy by July 1, 2023, however the publication of policies has been delayed at this time due to other constraints. Public Comment will be conducted this fall, allowing for publication of the policies by January 2024, allowing additional time for members to review the drafts and provide feedback.

The council meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Janice Carson.

Welcome and Introductions

Members Present: Janice Carson, Darin Lindig, Nancy Grant, Darin Lindig, Jami Davis, Pam Harris, Mark Reinhardt, Tim Blonsky, Dave “Max” Maxwell, James Pegram, Stephanie Taylor-Thompson, Diana Colgrove, Jane Donnellan

Guests: Teresa Pitt (IDVR Planning and Evaluation Manager); MiKayla Monaghan (IDVR Business Services Manager); Rhonda McFarland (IDVR Financial Manager); and Darrell Quist (IDVR Field Services Chief)

Absent: Randi Cole, Ramona Medicine Horse, Nathan Ogden, David White, Sarah Tueller, Ron Oberleitner

Approval of Minutes

MOTION

Tim Blonsky made a motion to approve the January 24, 2023, Meeting Minutes. **Mark Reinhardt** seconded the motion, which were approved unanimously with no abstentions.

SRC Elections

MOTION

Chairperson, Janice Carson nominated Darin Lindig for the SRC Chair position, **Stephanie Taylor-Thompson** and **Tim Blonsky** seconded the motion. Darin Lindig accepted the nomination. The council voted unanimously to approve Darin Lindig as the SRC Chair.

MOTION

Vice Chairperson Darin Lindig nominated Tim Blonsky for the Vice Chair position. **James Pegram** seconded the motion. Tim Blonsky accepted the nomination for Vice Chair. The council voted unanimously to approve Tim Blonsky as Vice Chair.

Presentation - Autism and The Workplace: A Primer for Job Coaches

Council member, Mark Reinhardt presented a training template for job coaching individuals with neurodiversity. His presentation provided awareness of the challenges individuals face in employment and in everyday life as well as general preferences that may provide a positive job experience for an individual with autism who is receiving job coaching services.

Council members asked questions and had conversation around the roles and responsibilities of job coaches who work for community resource providers (CRP's).

Member Reports

Jami Davis, State Independent Living Council (SILC) shared that there is a work group starting related to direct care workforce that will be reviewing the evaluations study that was released recently as well as HCBS rules. Council member Mark Reinhardt is participating in the direct care work group.

Darin Lindig shared that HP is working with INL to provide cybersecurity training specific for neurodiverse individuals to develop job ready skills including social skills and conflict resolution.

There are a lot of HP sites that have disability resource groups. There are a number of countries that have more strict rules or laws around disability hiring.

Nancy Grant represents the Client Assistant Program (CAP) She stated that they are starting to do outreach to community facilities that provide non-competitive employment. Nancy has served as an intake interviewer and has recently begun doing casework. It was mentioned that systemic issues that CAP is hearing from

customers would be helpful information to share with the council to identify issues that may need to be addressed by agency leaders, in future updates.

Pam Harris reports that referrals are starting to increase as she prepares for retirement. She recently had three employment specialists leave the company. She is currently focusing on Pre-ETS work experience program which is provided to students with disabilities in a variety of work environments. Work-based evaluations are provided to establish work readiness for customers. Her plan is to have someone take over the company and she will be reducing her hours.

Mark Reinhardt has 2 more classes before he graduates with an associate degree in arts. He will then focus on his bachelor's degree. He is not looking for work currently and primarily focusing on school and volunteering with SILC.

Tim Blonksy operates the apprenticeship program for youth. He reported that 230 apprenticeships have been provided by over approximately 57 employers. He met with the American institute for research and how Idaho has been successful in this area. They are hopeful that the program will continue when the grant ends. He will be providing a training on apprenticeships to CRP's, doing some consulting as well as developing personal development training.

James Pegram works for the Simplot Company and represents the Workforce Development Council, and their work has been focused on the Launch Program. They have been working on putting parameters in place so the governor's program can be successful.

They now have six resource groups, one focusing on progress on disability, with 48 members currently. Mr. Pegram is the executive sponsor of the group working along with two co-leaders one of which is in Idaho and one in Australia.

Stephanie Taylor – Thompson has been working with local and state representatives advocating and sharing her own personal experiences as well as the fellowships within prison ministry. Part of the programming they provide is directly related to employment readiness. The goal is to ensure that people within the prison system know about vocational rehabilitation, job readiness and apprenticeship programs.

Diana Colgrove provided her perspective about the benefits of the summer work programs. She shared about the challenges of an all-woman run business. She talked with the local store within her business about participating in a summer work-based learning program. Often, they will employ individuals for long term employment after they have completed the work program. She would encourage a Project Search for the other areas of the state that don't have this essential training program, which includes job preparedness and job search activities.

David “Max” Maxwell with the Dept of Veteran Readiness Employment Office, reports that they currently have four counselors, however the BSU position has recently been vacated. This position was designed to help veterans transition into a work setting and navigate services.

The PACT Act (Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022) has created some issues with recruitment. The federal government appropriated the needed FTE. They will soon have five counselors in Boise in addition to an employment specialist who will help assist the counselors in the office to be job ready with job search and interviewing skills. They are taking a bottom-up approach, conducting labor market surveys with employers in Idaho to make successful matches. Max has recently taken over the responsibilities of managing the vocational program as well as managing a caseload. They have had a very successful year with 96% of veterans served attaining successful gainful employment.

Janice Carson provided an update on the 2023 Tools for Life Conference. The conference is coordinated with multiple agencies including State Independent Living Council, Department of Health and Welfare, Developmental Disability, State Department of Education, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. It was the highest attendance in the history of this conference. The keynote speakers talked about disabilities and used her augmentative communication device to do the presentation. VR staff participated in “Reality Town”, where they take on a persona and develop a strategy to make life decisions. Their ideas contributed ideas that will help to enrich the conference in future planning.

Next year’s conference will be held in Pocatello, Idaho.

CSAVR Updates

Chairperson Janice Carson and **Tim Blonsky** shared some key points from their experiences at the NCSRC (National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, Inc.) and CSAVR (Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation) conferences.

IDVR is an NCSRC member of the national coalition. The NCSRC website provides training for SRC members, meeting schedules, etc.

The SRC’s functions include participation in the CSNA, customer satisfaction surveys preparation of the annual resource plan. Janice mentioned that IDVR is providing the SRC with the essential requirements that should be presented to the council regularly. Goals and priorities are established, a work plan is developed, activities occur which results in the data. Janice emphasized the importance of

SRC participation by providing feedback relating to policies, reports and data as they represent stakeholder groups.

Advocacy and education of state legislators is where the SRC can have the biggest impact in being supportive to the VR administration.

The group was reminded that the work the Idaho SRC does is important. The VR staff depends on the SRC. The national NCSRC Conference RSA Data group attended and remarked IDVR is incredible. Idaho was at the top of every statistical category.

Mr. Blonsky expressed that he feels it is important that Idaho have a stronger presence at the conference in the future. The next conference will be held in Savannah Georgia in October 2023.

Mr. Blonsky further stated that the by-laws can be amended to make it easier for someone to serve on the SRC who has already served. In comparison to other states, Idaho has a longer gap period between SRC member terms and this is something that can be amended in the By-Laws. The by-laws are required to be reviewed every three years. This will be an agenda item for the next SRC meeting. Another topic to be reviewed is how committee meetings are held in order to more efficiently utilize IDVR staff time.

If additional SRC members want to be approved to attend, that would need to be decided by the July 2023 meeting so that approval can be requested from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and included in the budget.

Agency Updates

Business Services

MiKayla Monaghan, IDVR Business Services Manager provided the SRC with updates relating to services provided to Idaho employers.

Business Spotlights are virtual meetings where a business is spotlighted to network with IDVR staff. Other partner agencies have been invited and have participated in these events including the Veterans Administration, Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Shoshone Bannock Tribe.

Regional business service plans include staff development and competency, quantity of business contacts, quality of business relationships that have been built. Business services data was shared, One Stop Business Services Leadership Team events updates were provided, as well as the One Stop regional business services team goals.

Business service updates relating the STEM Action Center Summer Teacher Externship Program, Winco Wins Program, a new VR Success Story and apprenticeship activity updates were also shared with council members.

Administrator Update

Jane Donnellan, IDVR Administrator provided an update on the 2023 legislative session line-item budget requests included three additional positions for business relations specialist positions as well the federal grant match. JFAC did not support the line-item requests.

Nonfederal match dollars are needed to capture the federal grant and currently do not receive enough funds to capture the grant. Additional funds were asked for to meet the match, which was capped by the Division of Financial Management. Additional funds will be requested for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025 to allow the agency to capture what is needed. Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 the grant is over \$20 million dollars, which makes it impossible to expend those funds even if the match money was allocated. Expenditures are routinely monitored to identify how much federal match can be utilized.

The third line item was specific to the Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CDHH), which is administered by IDVR. They rely on HR and Fiscal, they asked for additional dollars for operating funds.

The three business relations positions would require FTE's as well as the funding. The counseling staff cannot continue to do the number of federally required services to businesses in addition to serving individuals with disabilities. There is a specific skill set needed to perform those services. It was anticipated that the needs of employers would be met with the addition of those positions.

The importance of educating JFAC members to understand what the agency does as well as what is needed was explained to the council.

When millions of dollars are being reverted, this raises a question on a federal level. IDVR is looking at how we give back to the customer. WIOA compliance has been the focus, which has in turn paralyzed the functionality of staff, which is resulting in high staff turnover. There have been several items that have been addressed in relation to efficiencies. Development of Pre-ETS focused counselors is one of the strategies that have been implemented to improve efficiency.

IDVR has contracted with BSU to assist with a strategy of reorganization to better serve customers.

IDVR managers met in April 2023 to strategically develop a plan to implement changes with an objective of increasing staff satisfaction while at the same time better serving students, businesses and adult customers.

IDVR has developed a team of individuals from the field and central office to identify the core values of the agency based on staff input.

Financial Report

Rhonda McFarland, IDVR Financial Manager provided the financial report. The IDVR Quarterly Budget to Actual Report by Fund was reviewed. The data as of March 31, 2023 is compared to the same period last state fiscal year (SFY).

The expenditures to date and the balance of the appropriation are listed. The “all funds” line shows that 17.1 million has been spent, which is to 67% of the appropriation, which aligns with the timeline of the year. Comparing total expenditures from last year have increased from 15.1 to 17.1 percentage, which is a positive reflection.

Grants are based on the FFY which starts October – September 30th. The two grants FY22 and FY23 are the current grants funding expenditures. It compares the total award to expenditures. 21% of the grant is the match requirement, as of date the 22 grant has been fully matched to federal funds. The Pre-ETS requirement 15% expenditure has been met for the 22 grant. Once match is met at the end of the year, the carryover grant is expended. Fiscal forecasting indicates that if the 22 grant was completely expended, the 23 grant would not be expended in the required timeframe, which would lead to reverting funds. The 23 grant has an \$18 million placeholder. In July an estimation of how much can be spent and the funds can be reallocated to other VR agencies.

General fund 2.7 is left for SFY 23, which will be expended by June 30th. It is anticipated that the budget requirements will be met.

The state is implementing a new accounting system effective July 1st.

The SRC budget was reviewed. It was noted that 16% of the budget has been expended for the FFY.

CSAVR Conference Update

Teresa Pitt, IDVR Planning and Evaluation Manager presented the priorities that were shared at the CSAVR conference. Listening sessions with IDVR staff were held to help identify areas of reported inefficiencies to develop a process for

implementing improvements. Technology was identified as a need however it can take some time to launch based estimated costs associated with improvements.

The meeting was adjourned.