



Idaho State Rehabilitation Council QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Holiday Inn Airport Conference Center, Boise, Idaho
April 22, 2025 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Note: Meeting was streamed through virtual platform to allow for public viewing and council member participation.

The meeting was called to order, attendees and guests were welcomed and the agenda was reviewed.

A Quorum was established as all council members were present for voting.

Present

SRC Chairman, **Tim Blonsky**, Disability Groups Representative
SRC Vice-Chair, **Diana Colgrove**, Business, Labor and Industry Representative
Amber Maxwell, Disability Groups Representative
Angie Tuft, Business, Industry and Labor Representative
Danielle Larsen, Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) Representative
Donna Butler, Workforce Development Council Representative
Feather Holt, Tribal VR Representative
Jami Davis, State Independent Living Council Representative
Janice Carson, Disability Groups Representative
Jeff DeForest, Business, Labor and Industry Representative
Linda Thomas, Idaho Parents Unlimited
Lucas Rose, Business, Industry and Labor Representative
Mark Reinhardt, Former VR Recipient Representative
Max Maxwell, Disability Groups Representative
Nancy Grant, Disability Rights/Client Assistance Program Representative
Randi Cole, State Department of Education Representative
Stephanie Taylor-Thompson, Former VR Recipient Representative

Ex Officio Members

Judy B. Taylor, IDVR Interim Administrator
Kara Whitehouse, VR Counselor Representative

Guests

Darrell Quist, IDVR Field Services Chief

Eric Bjork, IDVR Chief Financial Officer

Lauren Noble, IDVR Transition Manager

Matthew Markve, IDVR Planning and Evaluation Manager

MiKayla Monaghan, Stakeholder Relations Manager

Ryan Waddell, IDVR CRP Manager

Brook Dupree, Division of Financial Management, Analyst for IDVR

Review of the January 28, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The Meeting Minutes were reviewed by the council. A correction is needed to add Jami Davis as one who was present for the meeting.

Motion: Angie Tuft made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes with the correction. Diana Colgrove seconded the motion. The motions carried without opposition.

Committee Meeting Reports

Diana Colgrove, Chairperson of the Policies, Planning and Program Effectiveness Committee, provided a report to the council. The committee met on April 10, 2025, and at that time revised the structure of the committees and sub-committees to replace Co-Chair with Vice Chair, changing the responsibilities of the position to be the primary Chair when the Chair is not present.

The meeting notes and committee list were provided to council members. There was no business for council consideration presented at this time.

Chairman, Tim Blonsky thanked committee members for attending the meeting and stated that the Executive and Policy, Planning and Program Effectiveness Committees will continue to meet on separate dates from the SRC Quarterly Council Meeting.

CRP Rate Study Update

MiKayla Monaghan reported an update on the CRP Rate Study. Due to recent events including the Corrective Action Plan that was implemented by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the work group has taken a different approach and paused the work on the rate implementation at this time. The work group instead is reviewing the CRP Manual to ensure that the guidance is clear and understandable, most specifically for the frontline CRP staff that are held accountable for providing services to VR participants. The intent of the guidance is to communicate services such as job search assistance and job coaching by reviewing how the service is defined and ensuring that there is a common understanding all services provided are allowable and meet the criteria established by the federal funding agency.

They specifically reviewed the community-based work assessment section of the

manual because it was discovered when meeting with RSA that the way the service was set up was not allowable. The concern was that the VR participant cannot be financially compensated for the work they do during the assessment.

IDVR is working to create templates for report writing and invoicing CRPs to use as a tool. The group participants are encouraged to provide ideas for effective and efficient tools for CRPs to utilize.

One other focus is to ensure that the reports provide the essential information needed to determine that the service provision meets the justification needed.

There was discussion around the reports being written in plain language and a resource was provided to the group.

Strategic Leadership Team Updates

Business Services Update

MiKayla Monaghan, Stakeholder Relations Manager, presented the business services updates to the council to include:

- The Dream Series – The focus is on recruiting access matters, one session per month is being conducted, which has included collaboration with other agencies in presentations including the Assistive Technology Project. Virtual training sessions are offered.
- A 5-session training series for National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month is scheduled for October of this year to be held weekly on Wednesdays. A communication portal will be developed to encourage attendees to ask questions.
- Collaborative sessions with the ICBV team related to the Pathways to Partnerships Grant to talk with educators, students and parents about the benefits of competitive integrated employment.
- A session for the employers on what they should know about hiring individuals with disabilities as they consider summer employment hiring that will focus on the requirements of child labor laws. The goal is to have ongoing training for employers on this topic.
- Internal training on resumes, interviewing and job search.
- Data updates: in the current fiscal year the business services team have had some type of engagement with 1,047 businesses of those, 819 employers having received a service beyond basic communication. 3,300 total contacts have been entered into the system and of those contacts, 2,068 have been communication or contacts about upcoming events, 230 services have fallen under actual service provision.
- They have set some goals for the upcoming year and plan on continued

collaboration with PreETS such as career fairs, reality towns, etc.

The chair recognized the hard work of the team and offered compliments. Another council member asked that clearer information about locations and types of venues is included in the business outreach.

Field Services Updates

Darrell Quist explained that IDVR is working with Vaybrant Consulting and has engaged significantly with the guidance that RSA has provided to set the strategy for updating policies and procedures. The provision of services is being analyzed to re-orient the strategy to ensure that services are allowable under the grant and meet those standards.

Determining what is necessary, appropriate and reasonable for the service provision, which requires team members to slow down and make the case for why the service is reasonable and necessary. This will be a new strategy for how counselors interact with the participants. VR services are continuing to be provided to those who have a Plan for Employment. It is anticipated that the analysis will be conducted, which will provide the compacity to start opening categories and start serving customers.

PreETS Update

Lauren Noble, Transition Manager, shared updates about the PreETS successes over the past few months.

- A collaborative Career Exploration Fair event in Coeur d'Alene was held between IDVR and the Coeur d'Alene school district where 49 students and 21 businesses participated in a workshop format where students attended breakout sessions and visited with vendors in an exhibit booth set up.
- Highlighting collaboration between school districts is the main focus at this time coordinating services rather than just being relied on as a funding source.
- Development of programs will be delivered by PreETS team members including Reality Town events, which include collaboration with various school districts.
- There have been a significant number of changes where staff provided services are being provided directly to students. This changes the way that services are provided, which reduces the amount of spending.
- Engagement has increased with universities and colleges in the areas of internships, apprenticeships and helping with self-advocacy, and job search type activities.
- There are 33.25 positions assigned to PreETS, 17 of those positions are field team members. Starting July 1, there will be some structural changes on the IDVR side where a new position called program specialists who will be on site at schools throughout the state.
- There is a current vacancy for a PreETS supervisor, which Lauren has been doing. As of July 1, the three current supervisors for the state will be managing

the staff statewide.

- 12.1 percent of the grant has been expended, including allowable services and salary costs.
- 1600 students have been served so far this year
- A webinar with students and parents was provided in collaboration between the Idaho Competitive Integrated Employment center and the IDVR Business Service Specialists team. Increasing interaction between parents and students is the priority for the upcoming year. An annual progress check-in will include meeting with students to get feedback and recommendations which will be communicated with parents and students to increase awareness of IDVR and what types of events they are attending.
- The Pathways to Partnership grant is helping to increase outcomes for students by tracking which students have obtained employment after receiving PreETS. Students may not always need additional assistance after high school, which can be a positive result of PreETS.
- The ceiling for PreETS spending for next year needs to be established. The legislature has set the limit at 17% for the current year.

A reminder about collaboration and inclusion of the tribal students was provided and encouraged when scheduling events.

Budget and Financial Update

Eric Bjork, IDVR Chief Financial Officer, shared and reviewed the IDVR Quarterly Budget to Actual Report by Fund dated 3-31-25 and the SRC Expenditures Detail by Quarter for Federal Fiscal Year 2025.

Eric recently transferred to IDVR from the State Controller's Office for the State of Idaho and has a vast amount of experience with LUMA, which he has been able to share with the consultants who have been hired to review Authorizations and Payments to assist with IDVR's federal compliance requirements.

JFAC approved the supplemental appropriation of \$1.7 million for unallowed expenses and \$2.7 million for FFY25 match. The \$1.7 million will help with the cash flow issue by paying for unallowed expenses that IDVR was not able to draw federal funds for reimbursement. The cash flow issue happened when the agency went into special conditions, which created new processes. Corrections to the system have been made to better manage the cash flow issues.

The allowability of past services have been scrutinized by RSA, the federal funding stakeholder. As a result we've learned that some services, such as report writing, we're being reimbursed outside of what RSA would consider justified conditions (in this case it was that the time spent in report writing was ancillary to the service and not proportionate to the benefit expected to the grant) as a result we have removed report writing as reimbursable and rolled it into the service itself as a requirement.

Chairman Tim Blonsky stated that Idaho VR and SRC have not attended any federal conferences. It could be beneficial for the incoming administrator to attend the CSAVR conference. Judy explained that travel has been strictly locked down to ensure that any expenditures could be eliminated as the agency was asking the legislature for supplemental budgets. She further explained that there is a possibility that IDVR will need to request another supplemental budget next year. IDVR did not pay CSAVR due to the high cost.

It was suggested that IDVR ask about whether online components could be offered to reduce agency expenditures for pertinent training and sessions provided by CSAVR and RSA.

A training plan was suggested so that reports could be reviewed to track those costs.

Spending Strategy Review and Discussion

Judy Taylor, IDVR Interim Administrator, presented statistics comparing March 2024 to March 2025 as of current date.

March 2024

635 Applications
439 Eligibility Determinations*
404 New Individual Plans for Employment
3,079 participants with an active plan
0 individuals on a waitlist

March 2025

324 Applications
122 Eligibility Determinations*
140 New Individual Plans for Employment
2,424 participants in an active plan
2,304 eligible individuals on a waitlist

*Applicants are put on the waitlist once they are determined eligible.

The financial picture for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 26 (July 1 through June 30) was explained. RSA runs on a federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30).

The intent language that was included in the state fiscal year state budget was shared with the council.

Budget and Expenditure

Everything that was requested was funded. The Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's budget is included and is passed through directly to them.

There is no budget request for SFY 26. A maintenance budget, which means everything received in 2025, will again be received in 2026 including inflationary needs, which includes salaries, health insurance and state support from other agencies. The increase is automatic, which puts the agency in a stable financial position moving forward.

The more challenging news is \$7.5 million in old obligations were brought into the

current fiscal year against a \$11 million award. It is projected that \$3.5 million of unallowable expenses will be needed, which is a significant decrease. IDVR is not spending at the same rate. Applicants will remain on the waitlist until funding is available. There is no concern of continued ongoing challenges going into the new fiscal year.

\$3.5 million is new unallowable expenses that was not included in the \$7.5 million. The legislature provided "intent language", which are instructions that must be followed as a condition of the supplemental funds.

Of the funds appropriated, not more than 17% may be utilized for Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS), which was determined based on feedback from community providers.

When the previous years' expenses related to PreETS increased, the traditional/general services were not adjusted, which is what put IDVR in the current situation of Special Conditions and budget shortfall.

In the next year, the council was encouraged to provide a recommendation for the incoming Administrator to consider.

The 15% minimum will be met through staff provided services for the current year, which will leave 2% of actual expenses for the PreETS program besides the payroll dollars. By early fall, the council will have an idea of whether 17% was sufficient or if another recommendation would be provided.

The PreETS program specialists will reduce the current expenses as they will be performing those tasks that don't require the master's level to provide. Master level counselors will be providing the counseling while the specialist will be working directly with schools and districts in the local communities. There are currently 6 vacant positions that are specified for PreETS provision.

CRP Work Experiences were determined as unallowable costs and is currently being provided as staff provided services.

Council Member Janice Carson explained that many of the services such as Tools for Life and the Pathways to Partnership Grant also contribute to the services being provided to students with disabilities in Idaho.

The breakdown of the waitlist by disability category was requested. Matt Markve stated that there is a high level of reliability, the trends have been approximately 33% across the board. At this time there has been no activity on the waitlist and it is believed that the data remains the same until such time that the agency begins to serve the most significant disabled.

Service Prioritization

If the number of individuals eligible for services provided by IDVR exceed funding, the funding will be prioritized based on those with the most significant disability, which aligns with the amended State Plan. The Corrective Action Plan also aligns with that strategy.

Service Provider Report

IDVR will provide two reports identifying contracts with community rehabilitation providers to the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee and the Budget and Policy Analysis Division of Legislative Services Offices; one by December 15, 2025 and by June 15, 2026. These reports will show the regions served by each provider and the date in which IDVR entered into a service provision agreement with the provider.

In the report, RSA requires contracts with community rehabilitation providers. This is in full alignment with the state and federal expectations.

Contracts will be in effect with providers by July 1, 2025. Council members can request any information that does not contain proprietary information.

RSA has also stated that part of the “Special Conditions”, is to move away from the previous model to a more efficient method and is part of the intent language as well.

The definitions of the disability categories are established by the federal government, however a specialized team of two counselors who have vast experience in VR have been assigned to complete the eligibilities for all applications statewide. Council members were directed to [IDAPA 47.0101](#).

IDVR Team Member Survey Results

Mikayla Monaghan, IDVR Stakeholder Relations Manager, reported that results varied anywhere from 60% to 15%, with an average recommendation of 23%.

Presentation

Wendi Secrist, Director of the Workforce Development Council presented the following information:

Established in 2017, the Council is made up of 37 Governor appointed members from throughout the state:

- 17 Idaho employers
- 10 Government Agencies
- 7 workforce representatives

- A member from each chamber of the legislature, and a representative of the Governor
- 51% of the Workforce Development Council has to include employers.

Motto: We make sure Idaho works!

Council Goals:

- ✓ Increase public awareness of and access to career education & training opportunities
- ✓ Improve the effectiveness, quality and coordination of programs and services designed to maintain a highly skilled workforce
- ✓ Provide for the most efficient use of federal, state and local workforce development resources

Responsibilities

- WIOA
- Workforce Development Training Fund
- Idaho Launch

WIOA Governance

The State Plan outlines Planning, Policies, Oversight, Accountability, Coordination for:

Title I – Youth

Title I – Adult

Title I – Dislocated Worker

Title II – Adult Education

Title III – Wagner-Peyser

Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation

Title IV – Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

OAA V – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

The council policy has changed regarding the youth policy. 75% of their funding has to be spent on out-of-school youth. In the past, they have done 100%, however with the challenges within IDVR and the monthly initiative around foster youth, it provided an opportunity if they opened up the youth program to be able to support in-school youth, it would take off some of the pressure and match funding to work together to serve more customers.

Disability awareness and accessibility issues when someone is trying to access services are part of the strategy of the goal.

Where is the lowest participation? Youth!

Career Pathways and Sector Partnerships, where people should be guided to that will lead to employment. The Launch program has been a big boost to accomplishing this

objective.

Workforce Grant Opportunities

\$5 million a year comes into the fund to increase the economic mobility through training.

- Increase the economic mobility of Idahoans through training that leads to wage gains and retention
- Provide timely assistance to businesses, while shifting focus to a broader talent pipeline development strategy that serve multiple employers
- Support growth of the economy by assisting employers with job creation and integration of technology through skill development
- Encourage replication of best practices in talent pipeline development
- Provide a return on investment to Idahoans as evidenced through increased wages, job creation, capital investment, retention of Idaho's workforce, credential attainment and/or customer satisfaction
- Promote innovation in talent development

Industry Sector Grant

Three employers work together to address talent pool needs:

- Designed to engage employers in developing new training solutions that address Idaho's workforce issues and fill skills gaps.
- Applications are accepted from business entities representing a consortium of at least three industry partners with similar talent development needs.
- Training should provide transferable skills gains for all individuals participating in the program. Training should lead to wage gains and/or promotional opportunities for incumbent employees of the consortium partners.

Innovation Grant

- Funds projects that address local workforce development needs. Projects may provide skills training to individuals and/or assist individuals with connecting to careers.
- The lead applicant must represent a community-based team with representation and support from business, education and other community partners as an ideal partnership.

Innovation grants are available for projects up to \$25,000 per region and can fund projects that address local workforce development needs. Projects may provide skills training to individuals and/or assist individuals with connecting to careers. Projects that include work-based learning as a major component can exceed the \$25,000 award limit.

Employer Grant

- Available to Idaho employers who are increasing their current workforce and/or retraining existing workers with skills necessary for specific economic opportunities or industrial expansion initiatives.
- The fund is designed to support an employer's innovation of its processes, products and services; and/or the development of new goods or services which will improve the employer's competitive position within the industry.
- The maximum amount of funds available to an employer is \$500,000 per grant or \$750,000 over a 10- year period.

Registered Apprenticeship

\$15m in grant funding through various agencies increasing from 276 to 2,453 since 2014.

Youth Apprenticeship is an easy add for development. IT and communication roles because there is a need within their communities. Nez Perce tribe has been engaged where they had 50 apprentices to grow development talent.

Outreach Projects – building programs and bringing awareness through various events.

Idaho Launch

Late 2020 Launch was established to fill recognized gaps. Short term training doesn't qualify for financial aid so this program helps to fill that gap. Over 20 million ARPA funds were put into the adult launch program. 75 million a year have gone into high school student programs.

Must be an Idaho resident, no income limit and pays for 80% of tuition and fees.

Student Launch is for graduating high school seniors and must attend an Idaho institution and they must complete a career pathway plan. They can pay up to \$8,000.

They have seen a wage growth of 22% within one year of training.

Increased fall enrollment was up statewide was the first impact that was seen. Students that were economically disadvantaged or had less than a 2.7 GPA is where increased enrollment was observed.

Teacher externship Program (Idaho STEM Action Center) for teachers or advisors has the opportunity to go to work where they are doing a real job and the employer will show them what the greater workforce needs are so that can be shared within the classroom.

All goals can only be achieved if the employer needs are assessed and this is done by

training individuals on talent pipeline management by focusing on the most in-demand jobs that they have over the next couple of years.

Integration of the Idaho STEM action Center into the Workforce Development Council is the upcoming focus.

Outcome Data Report

Matt Markve, IDVR Planning and Evaluation Manager presented the SRC Program Highlights PY 24 Quarter 3 Data. It needs to be updated to include Order of Selection and include disability categories within the waitlists.

- Applications have decreased by over 50% now that word is out about the agency's current Order of Selection status.
- Number of individuals who received services has also decreased, which is mostly due to Order of Selection and the reduced numbers of participants on current caseloads.
- The number of participants who achieved employment has increased.
- Median hourly wage has increased, it does not outpace the average Idaho wage due to larger than normal uptick in salary increases.
- The number of employers who have hired VR participants has increased, although there is a reduction in the number of employers. Order of Selection has an impact on this data. One particular employer hires the largest percentage of VR customers, which also impacts the data.
- Total funds expended have decreased.
- Training dollars spent on customers has increased

SRC members would like to know all of what data is collected and receive the information per regional area of the state.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys (CSS)

The positive results of the Customer Satisfaction Surveys (CSS) are shared with team members for encouragement and SLT are reviewing the negative comments to establish what areas of performance need to be addressed.

- It was stated that having data on outcomes with PreETS is critically important and there is curiosity related to how it looks on the national level.
- There was a remark that those participants who received CRP services appear to have obtained employment or have resigned from the program. It was asked how IDVR could better scrutinize the credentials of those that IDVR is contracting with to ensure better quality. It was also asked what level of communication can be improved to VR participants.
 - Matt Markve explained that it takes a small number to skew the data

and asked if the SRC would prefer to receive information from participants while they are actually receiving the service rather than after the services have been completed or discontinued.

- The number of how many students are going into adult services is important data that council members would like to see.
- Not knowing what data is being collected makes it challenging for council members to know what to ask for.
 - It was acknowledged that the SRC should be involved in reviewing, analyzing and modifying the evaluation tool.

MiKayla Monaghan, Strategic Relations Manager shared that she shares the positive responses to individual team members and ensures that the data is reviewed to identify where improvements can be made within the program.

Final Recommendation on Spending Strategy

The council reviewed the responses from IDVR team members where an opportunity to provide feedback through a survey was provided to them based on the SRC's recommendation.

Comments from SRC members included:

- Having data is critical especially from other states, where information can be provided to legislators.
- It will be important to include data in the Annual Report.
- PreETS and General Adult VR Services are very different types of services, which makes the task more challenging.
- Having data that reflects how many PreETS participants are going into the general adult services would give more data points to work from to make recommendations.
 - Explanation was provided that there will be more data collected in the upcoming year
 - If students don't go onto adult services, it could reflect that the PreETS services were successful, qualitative data could be beneficial to understand what PreETS means for those who participate in the services.
- How can general adult services be broken down into specific services such as college tuition and CRP services? If a wide variety of the picture is provided, it would help to identify how to allocate resources.
 - Council members were reminded that any data collected can be provided depending on what they would like to review.
 - Some services have comparable benefits available, where other services do not. Looking at the number of people participating in post-secondary education programs may be more helpful than looking at

the amounts expended.

- Part of what makes it difficult is the current situation, which creates a level of fear. Perhaps waiting until VR is stable would help council members to determine how to make recommendations.

Council members were reminded that the expenses include staff provided service costs as well as the actual expenditure to vendors.

- It was stated that it would be beneficial to know what the various PreETS services cost the agency.

The general consensus of the council is that spending 17% towards PreETS is probably too low considering that it includes staff provided services.

Member Updates

Luke Rose shared that his son has saved enough money to buy his first vehicle, which he has been working towards. His son continues to receive services from a CRP.

Janice Carson stated that employment focused activities include the Assistive Technology (AT) ACT program provides AT consultations for adult services and loaned equipment so they can make an informed decision on how to use technology within their work environments. They have the Pathways to Partnership Grant through the State Department of Education, which established the IC Center (Idaho Competitive Integrated Employment). The IC Center focuses on youth leadership and engagement. Tools for Life Conference had 88 students in attendance. They brought in a YETI youth group that was federally funded, working with youth to build tools for leadership. Tools had session on IPE engagement, AT training and various other topics. A report will be shared with the SRC members.

There is a 3-part series coming up for students with a significant disability. Council members were encouraged to participate. There will also be an employment summit offered statewide.

Angie Tuft thanked the IDVR Strategic Leadership Team members for the great work they have been doing. She appreciates the responses to the requests that the SRC has submitted to them in expanding the data collection. IDVR would not be able to operate with their contributions and it is appreciated.

Kara Whitehouse reports that the field has been doing case file reviews looking at details to ensure ADRAN compliance and identifying where the money is being spent. It was a lot of work, but it was helpful. The consensus is that it feels that the agency is headed in the right direction with a bigger focus on counseling and guidance.

Danielle Larsen also thanked IDVR team members in collaboration with them for

compliance and listening to their questions.

Mark Reinhardt had an opportunity to do a science news piece, but schoolwork got in the way, and he had to decline. He is hopeful that he will do a story in the future.

Jamie Davis shared that House Bill 26 Able legislation was signed by the governor to implement the program in Idaho as of July 2, 2025. She will be travelling throughout the state doing ABLE presentations.

Nancy Grant, Disability Rights/CAP has been fighting for federal funding mandates. They are considering discontinuing the federal funding and there will be no Client Assistance Program (CAP). She will be able to CAP work starting tomorrow through September. They have not been able to take any cases so this will allow them to do so.

Amber Maxwell thanked everyone for their time.

Tim Blonsky

Idaho Labor Market update will be a part of the next update. DeepSignAI will be going to market in September.

Chairman Tim Blonsky adjourned the meeting at 3:58 p.m. without objection.