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Idaho State Rehabilitation Council QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

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

Note: The Meeting was streamed through a 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
Danielle Larsen, Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) Representative
Donna Butler, Workforce Development Council Representative
Jami Davis, State Independent Living Council Representative
Janice Carson, Disability Groups Representative
Linda Thomas, Idaho Parents Unlimited
Lucas Rose, Business, Industry and Labor Representative
Mark Reinhardt, Former VR Recipient Representative
Nancy Grant, Disability Rights/Client Assistance Program Representative
Randi Cole, State Department of Education Representative
Stephanie Taylor-Thompson, Former VR Recipient Representative

Absent

Angie Tuft, Business, Industry and Labor Representative
Feather Holt, Tribal VR Representative
Jeff DeForest, Business, Labor and Industry 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 Fiscal Officer

Lauren Noble, IDVR Transition Manager

Matthew Markve, IDVR Planning and Evaluation Manager

MiKayla Monaghan, IDVR Stakeholder Relations Manager

Review of April 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The council reviewed the Meeting Minutes from the previous meeting held April 22, 2025.

MOTION: Jami Davis made a motion to approve the Minutes as written. Luke Rose seconded the motion, and the Minutes were approved without opposition.

Committee Meeting Reports – Executive Committee

Diana Colgrove, Membership Sub-Committee Chair, presented the following nominations for consideration for Council membership.

Kyanna Fahey was considered for membership as representative of disability groups. Kyanna is a student of secondary education.

MOTION: Mark Reinhardt made a motion to approve the nomination for consideration by the State Board of Education. Jami Davis seconded the motion, and the motion carried without opposition.

Logan Hunter-Rivas was considered for membership as a representative of disability groups.

MOTION: Mark Reinhardt made a motion to approve the nomination for consideration by the State Board of Education. Nancy Grant seconded the motion, and the motion carried without opposition.

Brandon Dopf was considered for membership as a representative of Former VR Recipients.

MOTION: Luke Rose made a motion to approve the nomination for consideration by the State Board of Education. Mark Reinhardt seconded the motion, and the motion carried without opposition.

Strategic Leadership Programmatic Reports

Stakeholder Relations Update

MiKayla Monaghan, IDVR Stakeholder Relations Manager, provided the updates.

IDVR Cohesive Branding

IDVR is updating its branding that is coded to represent the various programs. The new branding will be included within the Annual Report. The draft will be presented to the council at its October 2025 meeting.

Benefits Planning

New contracts were signed with benefits planners, which went into effect on July 1, 2025. Collaboration with the Department of Risk Management identified that a higher level of insurance would be needed for those providers providing benefits planning services. This reduced the number of vendors that are able to provide those services to VR participants.

A new Outcome Based Payment Model for one of the BP services was included in the changes.

Services will now be provided virtually on a statewide basis to make those services available to all VR participants regardless of their location.

Update on Legislative Intent Language

Working to get a template for reporting due in December put together. Will be coordinating with LSO to ensure the report meets the expectations of JFAC.

Update on Corrective Action Plan- CRP Manual & Contracts

IDVR leadership is working with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) with anticipation of getting the CRP Manual approved as it will be included within the language of the contracts. Once approval is received, the contracts will be implemented with existing providers. New CRP providers are not being considered at this time.

CRP Relations & Current Communication Plan

The Stakeholder Workgroup for Rate Setting has supported discussions leading to some areas that needed to be addressed in the CRP manual, such as working on new service delivery models for services determined by RSA that needed to be updated for compliance. Discussed communication plan to include various modes of communication with CRPs to ensure good working relationships and ongoing communication.

Business Services Program Data

- 5,243 Contacts
- 1,407 Businesses Served
- 2,973 Businesses Employing IDVR Participants

Business Services Program Year Highlights

- 36 Tours Arranged for IDVR & Workforce Partners
- 16 Business Spotlights for IDVR & Workforce Partners
- Collaboration with Pre-ETS for service delivery with employers
- DREAM sessions continued from initial pilot

Field Services Update

IDVR Field Services Chief, Darrell Quist, provided updates for field services for general cases.

IDVR will prioritize those individuals who are most significantly disabled as directed by State Legislative Intent Language. This has always been a requirement. In Idaho, there are three categories, Most Significant Disabilities (MSD), Significant Disabilities (SD) and Disabilities (D).

Waiting list data was shared with the Council. MSD is the largest group being served and also on the waiting list. When individuals from the waiting list start being served, it will be based on the date of their application.

The Order of Selection waitlist continues to grow as people continue to apply for services.

There is a plan for communication with those on the waiting list. Applicants on the waitlist will be contacted via email or physical mailings where they will be asked if they are still interested in receiving services.

There have not been any appeals from anyone on the waiting list as of this date.

A differentiated service model will be implemented at the beginning of the next calendar year. The agency has struggled over the past decade to hire qualified rehabilitation counselors. There was an underfill strategy that provided assistance to help counselors reach the required credentials and qualifications. That program was not a path forward. A new model was developed allowing a team approach to serve VR participants. Case management activities will be conducted by a team of people similar to healthcare professionals' medical services models.

There are tasks with VR that a qualified professional must do and other activities the agency can have others complete that do not have the requirement.

There was a question as to whether there are other states that are doing something similar. It was confirmed that although the Idaho model may look different, there are various states that are doing a similar practice.

There was a question as to what success looks like for participants that fall into the

MSD category, whether in services or whether on the waitlist or delayed caseload. A presentation of what the services look like was requested. There was a question as to the manner in which staff are being prepared and trained, within the differentiated model work for the MSD individuals. Council members were encouraged to ask for specific statistics and the leadership team will provide that information. Services are specific to each individual case and vary significantly based on their vocational objective.

Participants would be served by various team members based on what is needed. They would be assigned to a caseload that would be served by the team. For example, counseling and guidance is provided by the counselor, and plan development is also provided by the counselor. Services that were identified such as issuing the Authorization as well as follow-up as to whether they received the services, a different team member would be conducting those activities. The counselor directs the work in supporting the participant.

Typically, the agency determines when and how the waitlist will be managed. RSA has provided some guidance, due to the agency's current special conditions.

Outcome data was shared with the Council. Collaboration with Vaybrant will be focused on fiscal forecasting to determine how those on the wait list will be served. Other state models are being reviewed as decisions on waitlist management are being considered.

There are successes happening within IDVR. IDVR Success Stories were shared.

Planning and Evaluation Update

Heidi Smith has been hired as the IDVR Business Analyst for Quality Assurance and Compliance. She will be responsible for a higher level of quality assurance and compliance monitoring. Planning and Evaluation (P&E) will be more involved in CRP monitoring as well as VR services, which will ensure that the agency is providing services allowed under the federal grant meeting the A=Drain standards. A deeper look at how Pre-ETS team members are providing services will be included within the strategy.

Janice Carson shared a program that the University is developing and suggested collaboration among agencies.

PreETS Update

IDVR Transition Manager, Lauren Noble provided the update.

- Students Served SFY 25 – 2,422 (8,230 services provided)
- School Districts Served - 255

- 65 Successful Case Closures from Pre-ETS

Students will be receiving services based on need and after meeting with the Pre-ETS Team Members to discuss the purpose of Pre-ETS.

The floor for Pre-ETS spending is 15 percent (15%) of the state total net award, or the state total federal award funds matched, whichever is less. The state must meet the total requirement, however the actual amount contributed by each agency may vary as this is a shared burden between IDVR and ICBVI.

Legislative Intent Language related to Pre-ETS State Fiscal Year Ceiling states that of the monies appropriated from the Federal Grant Fund to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for the period July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, no more than seventeen percent (17%) may be utilized for pre-employment transition services, which totals approximately 3.6 million dollars.

Pre-ETS Required is direct staff time including preparing and arranging, travel and documentation, supplies necessary for services, auxiliary & aids, purchased services from a vendor and time spent by team members for providing services to students. This is similar to billable hours and is tracked within the case management system.

Pre-ETS Required services do not include personally prescribed devices for potentially eligible students. Those services can only be provided under a planned service within a general case. This also includes anytime an Authorization is issued for a service to a vendor.

Pre-ETS Coordination – (4 specific activities) IEP attendance, Person Centered Planning meetings, working with employers, local workforce development boards, and one-stop centers to set up potential WBLE options, and working with schools and partners to coordinate and ensure the provision of Pre-ETS services. These are more broad and less specific types of services where there is not one individual in mind for the service.

Pre-ETS Authorized (9 specific activities) are those services approved by the Transition Manager in order to ensure that funds are available to serve the student. This “funding bucket” can be “turned off”, if funding is not available. Attending conferences or meetings specifically intended to improve outcomes to those individuals with the most significant disabilities to improve independent living, post-secondary goals or employment is an example. If individuals are going to participate in that type of activity it can be coded Authorized or Administrative based on the funding that is available at that time.

The primary areas are Required and Coordination, which are services directly provided to students. IDVR must ensure that only services that are allowable under the federal

grant are being captured. In State Fiscal Year 2024, 40% of the funds that were being used to purchase services were not allowable under the federal grant.

The VR Program has to provide Pre-ETS during Order of Selection. The tap is not turned off as it is on the general side of the program. There are services that cannot be provided with direct services such as tuition or vehicle modification.

Approximately one half of the PreETS expenses will be provided in-house, which is predicted to be \$1.5 million. The intent is not to have every service provided in-house but more of a balance of vendor provided services and direct services from IDVR personnel.

The ceiling of 17% for SFY 2026 requires a difficult strategy moving forward. The target is \$3.3 million in order to comply with the legislative intent.

What does PreETS mean to the Students who participate?

Quotes from students related to the impacts from last year were shared with council members. These were not solicited quotes from IDVR but rather submitted by the students.

Next steps after PreETS in State Fiscal Year 2025

Everything being done is provided to help students be successful after they have completed their secondary education. Students who apply for services will be placed on a waitlist.

Many of the services provided historically within the expenditures were not done in accordance with allowable expenses under the federal grant.

Currently in the process of establishing a PreETS purchased rate. A proposed rate was shared. Individualized services will continue to remain and as we move forward, we will maintain that engagement and move forward in an appropriate manner.

There are many ways to provide workplace learning including job shadowing, volunteering, internships, and career competitions such as FHA. We should not be providing only one type of work experience for students.

WBLE job coaching will continue to be provided by CRPs. It will be provided as a separate service.

17% is the objective for Fiscal Year 2026.

PreETS successes were shared which included:

- Summer ISDB Workshop
- Career Blast with Department of Labor

- Idaho Center for Independence
- Lewis & Clark State College
- WBLE Options for Foster students

WBLE Options for Foster Students in collaboration with the Department of Labor will be established this year.

Workday Wednesday are informational interviews, which occurred in the months of June through August. A variety of employers provide an overview of their business to help students identify potential job shadows. Approximately 62 students participated this year.

Budget and Financial Update

IDVR Fiscal Officer, Eric Bjork presented the SRC Expenditures Detail Quarterly Comparison Report and the IDVR Quarterly Budget to Actual comparison from last fiscal year to this fiscal year. State Fiscal Year 2025 (SFY25) year has not yet closed and the numbers within this report are not the final numbers.

A fiscal update was provided by Judy B. Taylor, IDVR Interim Administrator for State and Federal Fiscal Year 2025. The culmination of austerity measures was when the agency went into Order of Selection (OOS). Under general services, signed Plans were honored as required and signed PreETS contracts had to be honored. The funds provided by the legislature allowed the agency to meet its financial obligations. The austerity measures were necessary and appropriate.

A hire slowdown was implemented. Justification from management has been provided prior to recruiting new employees. The consensus of all the leaders was used to make decisions. The planning and work that the leadership team has done has been remarkable. What we are doing to serve our current participants is allowing the agency to provide services in an allowable and reimbursable format, which took tremendous efforts while servicing the Corrective Action Plan and many masters. There are various invested stakeholders, which is managed by IDVR Stakeholder Relations Manager, MiKayla Monaghan. Although Austerity was necessary, it was not fun.

On July 1, 2025 a new State Fiscal Year began (SFY). October 1st will be the start of the new Federal Fiscal Year (FFY). When Judy took on the role of Interim Administrator, the agency's obligations had exceeded its budget.

The FFY 2026 award allows us to access grant funding for FFY26. Modifying and formalizing services in an allowable manner, which has included training to IDVR team members.

RSA wanted team members to be trained based on new policies and procedures

approved by RSA, which has been done. New policies have been written; staff training is in place. Real time monitoring is in place. We will never be in a situation where we don't know the numbers.

We have a commitment to being able to start serving individuals on the waitlist within the Most Significant Disabilities by the end of the calendar year. This is ahead of schedule from what was estimated. After staff training, monitoring has shown that we are at 90% compliance in all categories in meeting the new standards. This will be done in a strategic manner by application date, one day at a time serving those individuals regardless of their location.

Virtual services will be offered when available to ensure that participants are receiving services, managing staff resources to serve individuals regardless of their residential location.

State Fiscal Year 2026 – 15% of the federal award is the floor. For State Fiscal Year 26 (FFY26) there is a ceiling in place, which will provide a lot of good data. Rules could change based on what happens on the federal level. New intent language could be included within the budget for the next fiscal year. Legislators are willing and wanting to hear from council members and engaged citizens will have an impact on how those decisions are made.

It would be powerful for this council to come up with a vision of what percentage of limited resources are devoted to the student transition program.

Ms. Taylor emphasized that recommendation from the council will be important for fiscal year 2027, which will be voted on during the legislative session of 2026. If the numbers are confusing, there is a difference between the State and Federal fiscal years. Internal monitoring with new standards will continue.

IDVR team members were recognized by the Chair for the work that has been done, which has improved over last year.

Jami Davis asked for clarification of why the state fiscal year is not closed. Mr. Bjork reported that IDVR is working with the Division of Financial Management to complete the process.

It was also noted that under Trustee and Benefits (T&B) \$3.2 million was left over from fiscal year 2025. A question was asked: After the supplemental request of \$4.5 million, is VR reverting 2.5 million back to the state? Ms. Taylor replied that what is important to note is that the numbers are reflective as of June 30, 2025. IDVR has yet to close the books, which will affect the numbers. The year-to-date closed year report will be presented at the next meeting.

SRC member asked how the agency will organize payments for services rendered and coordinate that with the state's accounting system using the data you have for disability categories that you have for operating under OOS. Ms. Taylor answered that there are 2 major systems, Aware (the case management system) where the authorizations and documentation are housed and the state financial system. We are conservative financially so when we obligate our funds with an Authorization, which is tracked by the Aware system. The financial data is switched over to LUMA when the invoice is paid. We have two team members who previously transferred from the State Controller's Office (SCO) and have intense knowledge of the LUMA system.

It was further clarified that decisions will have to be made to prioritize PreETS programs based on current situations. This current year's expenditures will be at 17%.

Labor Market Presentation

Jan Roeser Labor Economist, Communications & Research for the Idaho Department of Labor presented on the Labor Market.

The Department of Labor has regional economists placed in various locations throughout the state.

The unemployment rate data was shared. There is a labor shortage, which provides opportunities for those individuals with disabilities.

The labor force for the State of Idaho has increased over the past five years. The labor force participation has decreased within that time period. 10,000 people from the Baby Boomer generation are retiring on a daily basis and they are retiring early.

Outcome Data Report

IDVR Business Analyst, Heidi Smith, shared more detailed data related to the waitlist breakdowns by service category. The percentages from 2024 reflected an even number of individuals within each category, however that has now shifted that Most Significant Disabilities (MSD) has increased over the other two categories. The Significant Disabilities group has not had a significant change, which shows that the eligibility determination process is not changing, Disabilities (D) category has decreased.

The number of participants receiving services has decreased and case closures have increased as of June 2025. Cost variations amongst the various disability categories will be provided during the October 2025 SRC meeting.

There was a question as to the reason for the number of case closures. It was reported that case activity can affect those numbers such as completion of vocational objectives however the data is reflective of previous years. IDVR Field Service Chief, Darrell Quist

explained that communications to individuals on the waitlist who have responded to outreach as to their level of continued interest in VR services can affect the case closure rate because those individuals on the waitlist have open cases although they are in delayed status. Counselors have been encouraged to close cases with inactivity in preparation for serving those on the waitlist.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Review

IDVR Stakeholder Relations Manager, MiKayla Monaghan, presented the Customer Satisfaction Survey results for State Fiscal year 2025. Forty-six percent (46%) of respondents received some type of service from Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs).

The overall satisfaction rating is 76% with the lower satisfaction ratings including comments indicating it was due to the agency being in order of selection. The satisfaction rate for participants without CRP services was 79% and with CRP services is 69%. Positive remarks were shared from the surveys.

SRC Member asked how are the participant's rights at closure best coordinated with extended employment services to enable the participant to remain employed while the CRP is providing services to ensure that they are ethically treating the participant with respect so they are treated well while learning the skills on the job?

The answer provided was that IDVR does not monitor CRP quality of services after case closure, it transfers to the long-term funding agency for that ongoing support.

It was requested that the quarterly comparisons be shared in the future.

There was a question as to what the negative comments included, which has historically been provided in previous reports. MiKayla explained that the majority of the negative comments were related to the agency being in Order of Selection.

PreETS Ceiling for 2025 Federal Fiscal Year Discussion

IDVR Transition Manager, Lauren Noble made the remark that establishing a target for spending that the agency is aiming for would be a more appropriate statement than referring to a ceiling.

Tim Blonksy asked what the consequences of exceeding the 17% that the legislature has established would be in the event that spending exceeded that percentage. Lauren assured the council that the strategy for the upcoming fiscal year will not allow expenditures to exceed the limit. The time and money being spent on PreETS is being closely monitored on a monthly basis. Once the target has been reached, the "bucket" of P-Authorized funds will be inactivated, which allows the flexibility to ensure that the legislative intent established budget is not exceeded.

Janice Carson asked when the SRC should make a recommendation on how to spend funds for students with PreETS funds. A recommendation would be needed by May 2026. The 17% intent language will end by June 30, 2026. There is a possibility that the legislature may continue to direct IDVR on how to manage the expenditures.

In helping to make an educated recommendation, it would be helpful to talk more in depth and model it for the Council. Operational costs should be taken into account when making those decisions.

Diana Colgrove made a suggestion that providing the Council with information as to what can be done within the 17% limitation and breaking it down to figure out what would be included with the various programs.

Luke Rose asked what percentage of the PreETS budget is dedicated towards payroll. Ms. Noble stated that in the last State Fiscal Year, \$3.1 million was expended from Trustee and Benefits (T&B/Purchased Services), \$700,000 was expended on payroll. There is a 48% projection of payroll expenses for the upcoming state fiscal year.

Amber Maxwell asked if the agency expects to hit the 15% for the federal grant. Ms. Noble stated that the issues that instituted the majority of services being staff-provided were related to unallowable expenses. Roughly 60% of the services provided last year were unallowable. The focus moving forward will be to provide services that are allowable under the federal grant.

Students cannot be denied services, however there are various ways to provide a service without purchasing services, which will continue if there are no funds available.

Mr. Blonsky emphasized that by January a Council recommendation needs to be made for legislative consideration.

Jami Davis asked what the cost savings will be for staff provided services in the differentiated model that the agency will be implementing. Ms. Noble explained that vendor provided services are purchased services and personnel costs are expended regardless of the number of services provided. A portion of personnel paycheck is coded towards PreETS based on the number of hours services were provided.

Under the differentiated model, staff provided services will be provided based on credential attainment. Essentially, any services that can be provided by someone that don't require counseling credentials will be provided by others within the PreETS team.

Member Updates

Amber Maxwell had no member updates to share.

Luke Rose had no member updates to share.

Jami Davis stated that Idaho State Independent Living Council (SILC) has kicked off the 2027 to 2030 State Plan for independent living. The needs assessment is posted on the website. There are a couple of demographic questions and three open ended questions within the survey. The qualitative data will be reviewed.

ABLE Savings Accounts went into effect July 1, 2025. State Treasurer, Julie Ellsworth is in contract negotiations with one of the two national consortiums that Idaho will be joining. An Idaho program will be up and going by end of summer and will be posted on the SILC website.

SILC Director, Mel Leviton has accepted an advocacy award for the Idaho State Independent Living Council for their tireless efforts for organizing and energizing Americans with disabilities in support of independent living.

Donna Butler thanked the Council for the warm welcome. She will provide an update from the Workforce Development Council in the next meeting.

Mark Reinhardt will not be serving a 2nd term on the Council as he is moving on to other things. He stated that he has other means of contributing as a member of society.

Nancy Grant shared that on August 1st, Disability Rights will be working 100% remotely. There will be no physical locations. Online submissions will be available.

Linda Thomas stated that IPUL is doing a small Work of Art session July 28-29, 2025. There is a small fee for supply costs but there are scholarships available.

Randi Cole provided an update for the State Department of Education. The IDEA Grant (Special Education) and the RSA Pathways to Partnerships program, which are federal grants are moving forward as they await news about funding. They are planning the fall conference at this time, which is a collaborative event including various agencies including IDVR. Council members were invited to attend if interested in seeing the collaborative work happening.

Janice Carson shared that the Idaho Competitive Integrated Employment Center (ICIE), which is located at the Center on Disabilities and Human Development (CDHD) is operating the Pathways to Partnership Grant. They have statewide regionally-based coordinators and an associate director who are experts in secondary transition are doing an amazing job. There is a student level of supports in work that is happening within leadership, in addition to getting additional training and supports.

They have an LEA district charter level that is working within the community regionally to provide competitive integrated employment for students. Businesses, Labor, IL and

VR are present. They are building the systems level approach to provide supports within the community. The IL is helping with self-advocacy.

The Envision Summit is coming soon where the focus will be what it is like to work with individuals with most significant disabilities (MSD) in six locations throughout the state. A link will be shared with Council members. It will be a hands-on activity event envisioning what employment can look like. A colleague within Special Education at the University of Idaho, wrote an RSA grant to develop Eclipse, which is a model being used in college programs. There is a real focus on competitive integrated employment that correlates with the Pathways to Partnership Grant. Janice mentioned that they are writing a TPSID Grant to expand what they can do beyond the 18 to 21 Program but serve those in post-secondary education.

Kara Whitehouse reported that IDVR team members recently attended a two-day Corrective Action Plan (CAP) training, relating to the upcoming changes to policies and procedures upon approval from RSA. The changes are intentional and thoughtful. They are looking forward to the implementation of the revised policies and procedures.

Diana Colgrove attended the ABLE event in Coeur d' Alene. A lot of information was learned during the event. Project Search just celebrated the 15th class graduation, one of the attendees was from the first graduating class. One of the graduates has maintained employment for nine years. Diana's daughter will be participating in Project Search again.

Chairperson Tim Blonsky reminded Council members about the Hands around the Capitol event on July 25th. The Chair recognized the service of the IDVR Planning and Evaluation Manager and his service to the State Rehabilitation Council.

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned.