



State Rehabilitation Council Quarterly Meeting July 20, 2021 | Hybrid Zoom Meeting

Present: Council Chair Janice Carson, Council Vice Chair Darin Lindig, Jane Donnellan, Pam Harris, Ramona Medicine Horse, Dave “Max” Maxwell, Christine Meeuwsen, Ron Oberleitner, Nathan Ogden, James Pegram, Danielle “DR” Reff, Sarah Tueller, and David White.

Guests: Tim Blonsky, MiKayla Cobler, Andrew Gray, Alison Lowenthal, Kean Miller, and Teresa Pitt

Absent: Randi Cole, Mel Leviton, and Paul Tierney

Welcome

Council Chair Carson opened the meeting by welcoming Council Members. Members and guests were asked to introduce themselves and state their role on the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

Approval of Minutes – April 27, 2021 Members were given time to review the Minutes of Tuesday, April 27, 2021. Minor edits and a spelling correction were identified for amendment.

Motion:

James Pegram moved to approve the Minutes of Tuesday, April 27, 2021, as amended. **Danielle “DR” Reff** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Membership Flow Process and Application

Vice Chairman Lindig presented the Membership Flow Process (MFP) on behalf of the Membership Committee. This new process is intended to be a guideline for all SRC applicants to ensure they are properly educated on the role and expectations of serving as an SRC Member. Additionally, the MFP describes the application and approval process, as well as the procedure for removing a member from the SRC. The application form was also revised to ensure all applicable areas are identified.

New Member Vote

Vice Chairman Lindig and the Membership Committee recommended the addition of two members, Tim Blonsky representing Disability Groups and Stephanie Taylor-Silva representing Current or Former Applicants.

Motion:

James Pegram moved to approve the addition of Tim Blonsky as a member of the SRC. **Sarah Tueller** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Motion:

Danielle “DR” Reff moved to approve Stephanie Taylor-Silva as a member of the SRC. **Dave “Max” Maxwell** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Pre-ETS Presentation

Alison Lowenthal, Transition Coordinator with IDVR, presented updates regarding the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). She reminded Council Members of the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirement, which mandates states to spend at least 15% of allocated funds on Pre-ETS for students with disabilities. Since this requirement took effect in 2014, IDVR’s focus has been to develop programs for students with disabilities around the state. Eligible students must be enrolled in K-12 or post-secondary education and be aged 14-21. **Mrs. Lowenthal** clarified that IDVR is also trying to develop programs for youth with disabilities, which are for individuals up to the age of 24 who are no longer enrolled in education.

She then introduced newly developed chalk art presentation videos, which are located here: <https://vr.idaho.gov/students/>. The presentations were developed to describe the difference between VR services as a “pre-case” versus going through the eligibility process of VR. **Mrs. Lowenthal** encouraged everyone to share the videos with educators and parents. She also highlighted statistics on the number of Pre-ETS individuals working with VR over the last five years. This data includes the number of individuals that have applied for services, the number found eligible, and number of pre-cases.

Mrs. Lowenthal then reviewed several programs, starting with **ISU Academy Next**. This program offers high school students ages 14-21 the opportunity to learn job and college skills using web-quests and Minecraft. The Academy assists students in developing and practicing communication and time management skills that support

college and career readiness through the integration of technology. It also uses STEM Instruction to help prepare students for life after high school.

She then presented the details of **Work of Art**. This program allows students to create an original piece of art under the guidance of a professional teaching artist. Students determine the type of visual art to be produced, then work together using the client's materials or portfolio samples to commission the piece.

The third program **Mrs. Lowenthal** discussed was the **Paid Summer Work Experience**. This opportunity allows students to participate in work readiness training with a follow-on 5-week paid work-based learning experience.

The last program for presentation was **Boise State University's PREP Academy**. The Academy is for students with disabilities interested in attending a two- or four-year college after high school. The experience helps students understand how to be a successful college student with the assistance of BSU student mentors. STEM Instruction is used throughout the program to help prepare students for life after high school.

In conclusion, she shared details of upcoming developments, including Nampa Career & Technology Education - Small Engine Repair, Culinary, and Welding, a Nampa Self-Advocacy class, and Lewiston Bootcamp.

Discussion

Ron Oberleitner inquired if there was any thought of putting together a program for students to practice interviewing with an employer. **Mrs. Lowenthal** clarified it is a major component of the ISU Academy Next program, and additionally, interview practice is also part of the Summer Work Experience.

Mr. Oberleitner commented that he believes employer volunteers would be happy to assist with interview practice in-person or virtually if the need ever arose.

Mrs. Lowenthal thanked him and noted she would connect with him in the future.

Vice Chairman Lindig questioned how Mrs. Lowenthal connected with businesses and how they can get involved with the Work Experiences. She then explained the process of going out to bid and following purchasing guidelines. **Sarah Tueller** commented that it has been a challenge to get family buy in for students to attend these programs.

Annual Report

Jane Donnellan reviewed the 2020 Annual Report and explained its intent, requirements, regulations, and emphasized its collaborative nature between IDVR & the SRC. She informed the Council it is due to the Governor by the end of the year and suggested a draft be presented at the October meeting for the SRC to review. She requested input for the report, and received the following ideas from SRC Council Members:

- Showcase employer satisfaction with VR services
- Identify number of employers that have hired VR customers
- Highlight Pre-ETS
- Add a “How Can I Help” section
- Integrate a QR Code to increase digital accessibility
- Insert links to “Success Story” videos
- Specify the Rate of Return or Return on Investment
- Insert quotes from customer feedback
- Hire a marketing company to help format and finish the report

Ms. Donnellan then inquired if any SRC members would like to assist the Annual Report Committee, to which **Danielle “DR” Reff** offered her assistance and expertise.

Member Update and Activities Report

Sarah Tueller – Parent Training & Information Center

- Sarah explained that she is preparing for the transition institute in November at BSU. She also informed the Council of her work redesigning the Building a Bridge workbook and expressed her excitement for the Work of Art program.

Danielle Reff – Former Applicant or Recipient Representative

- Danielle had previously inquired on participating in a Paralegal program, and was approved. She is currently on Lesson 6 of 19 and 1.5 months into the program.

Christine Meeuwsen – Client Assistance Program

- Christine summarized updates from CAP; to include work on an educational video about the CAP program, an expected increase in caseloads, and CAP participation in RSA monitoring and discussions. The program also made contributions to public policy and submitted public comments for Extended Employment Services rulemaking.

David White – VR Counselor

- David commented on the slow return to normalcy, he noted there have been more intakes, increased customer connections, and connections with additional schools. He communicated the Nampa office is fully staffed for the first time in a long while and remarked on how well the new staff are performing.

Pam Harris – Community Rehabilitation Program

- Pam informed the Council she is currently working on providing services for the Summer Work Program, with an increased focus on work readiness training and work-based learning experiences. She mentioned taking a team to Alaska in September and remarked that she would visit three different community rehab programs while there.

Darin Lindig – Business, Industry, and Labor

- Darin shared a story about how an individual with autism self-advocated and educated during the interview process. He also shared that May 20, 2021 was Global Accessibility Awareness Day. Hewlett-Packard sent out some tips on how email content could be more accessible, and included tips on making meetings more inclusive.

Ron Oberleitner – Business, Industry, and Labor

- Ron shared employment challenges that his son Robbie, who has Autism, is facing since COVID-19. He further explained that in the last quarter, 50-80 percent of people with Autism are currently unemployed. To summarize, he wondered if VR counselors have the resources to help individuals with Autism gain employment and suggested surveying counselors to see if they have the tools to help neuro-diverse individuals gain or keep employment.

Tim Blonsky – Idaho Business of Education/Disability Groups

- Tim described his recent efforts with the Workforce Development Council to develop an apprenticeship grant with the Department of Labor. He shared that there are over 1,200 occupations to be considered for apprenticeships and encouraged everyone to have a greater awareness of these opportunities.

Max Maxwell – Veteran Readiness & Employment/Disability Groups

- Max discussed the struggles of working through a nationwide staffing shortage, he shared that his office is also altering operations because it has been found to be more beneficial for customers to work with local contacts. Max also completed a self-employment panel recently, which included the local Chamber of Commerce and local business owners.

Nathan Ogden – Disability Groups

- Nathan explained that he was able to donate his vehicle to an individual that is now a schoolteacher, this has enabled the individual to drive back and forth from school every day. He also described his work to help design and build an accessible park in the Treasure Valley.

James Pegram – Workforce Development Council

- James shared that he had attended his first Workforce Development Council meeting. At Simplot, he has been working on developing the Diversity Equity and Inclusion initiative, the framework for employees to join these groups has been completed. He also commented that inclusiveness has been a focus during job recruitment.

Janice Carson – Disability Groups

- Janice commented that she has been ramping up for the Tools for Life conference in October.

Jane Donnellan – VR Administrator

- Jane informed Council Members that she had been approached by the Department of Labor about a four year grant to help strengthen apprenticeships statewide. The proposal contained a position specifically for VR and will use a Full Time Employee (FTE) for the position.

Ramona Medicine Horse – Idaho Native American Tribes

Ramona described that the program has been focusing on outreach. She remarked on the challenges encountered by their office closure, but clarified that

it has since reopened. She also iterated that due to COVID-19, individuals are still reluctant to go out and work.

RSA Monitoring

Jane Donnellan, Administrator at IDVR, and **Teresa Pitt**, Planning and Evaluation Manager at IDVR, provided the SRC an update on the RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration) monitoring. The purpose of the monitoring is to support state VR agencies in their effort to improve results for individuals with disabilities seeking high-quality competitive integrated employment. The last time IDVR was monitored was in 2010, and there have been multiple changes since, including the implementation of WIOA. They have redesigned the monitoring process to allow for a customized approach for each state and have worked with other VR agencies to strengthen the monitoring process. The intent behind this action is to develop a meaningful partnership and improve efficiency and efficacy.

After being notified of the upcoming monitoring in February, IDVR's Executive Leadership Team reviewed the documents requested by RSA and assigned a subject matter expert (SME) for each document. The SME was responsible for gathering documents for the team to review and approve. As questions were assigned to each SME, they formed a team to develop responses for ELT to review.

RSA Monitoring began on June 1, 2021 with monitoring sessions scheduled every Tuesday through August. In order to highlight IDVR's collaborative work, the SRC, Workforce Development Council and One-Stop Council have been invited to participate. Upon an exit meeting in August, RSA will provide a draft of their report, including any recommendations for corrective action. IDVR will have 15 days to respond to the draft report with plans to implement corrective action plans if any are required.

Discussion

Danielle "DR" Reff inquired if the monitoring was over, to which **Mrs. Pitt** clarified that it would continue until at least the second week of August. **Dave "Max" Maxwell** asked for clarification on what was being evaluated by the RSA Monitoring. **Mrs. Pitt** explained that program aspects and fiscal aspects will be the two primary focus areas. **Ms. Donnellan** noted that unlike previous monitoring events, RSA will not be looking into actual cases this time.

Fiscal Update

Kean Miller, Financial Manager at IDVR, provided a fiscal update and noted the Division is at the end of the State Fiscal Year. She pointed out that expenditures were down overall due to COVID-19 and discussed the following points:

SRC Budget expenditures: \$627.65 for virtual CSAVR training and some printing

Total Rehabilitation Revenue Fund expenditures: \$952,265

VR expenditures: \$18,546,485

She explained that IDVR attempts to meet match within the first year of the grant, because the program allows IDVR to carryover to a second year if it has met match. The Division uses general funds to meet match, the fund is currently 100% expended for SFY 2021. The Federal Grant Fund is \$13,488,575. The miscellaneous fund is \$149,944. **Mrs. Miller** remarked that IDVR has \$413,754 left to spend on the Basic 20 grant, but these funds have been earmarked for Pre-ETS expenditures since the Division has already spent the mandated 85% on VR services. In conclusion, she reminded Council Members of Fiscal's continued work on the Basic 21 grant. **Council Chair Carson** inquired if Fiscal had entered discussion regarding a no cost extension for the grant. **Ms. Donnellan** affirmed and elaborated that letters of request had been sent to IDVR's delegation, but a response had not yet been received.

Annual Performance Update

Teresa Pitt and **Andrew Grey**, Program Analyst at IDVR, provided updates on IDVR's annual performance. **Mrs. Pitt** wanted to demonstrate the impact of COVID-19 on the amount of people served. She cited that all the following data points had gone up when comparing Program Year 2019 Quarter 4 to Program Year 2020 Quarter 4; the number of individuals served, the number of individuals that had achieved successful employment, hourly wages, and number of employers. These data points, along with an increased customer satisfaction report, affirmed growth for IDVR. **Mrs. Pitt** also covered the **WIOA Primary Performance Indicators**, which are:

- Credential Attainment: Enrolled in recognized education/training program and attain credential (e.g. diploma, degree)
- Measurable Skills Gains: Measure of intermediate progress toward a credential or industry recognized benchmark (e.g. passage of knowledge-based exam, advancing in trade-related benchmark, advancing an academic year, includes a final MSG for the CA where applicable).

Mrs. Pitt and Mr. Grey explained the new “**Other Measures that Matter**” which are:

- Sustained Employment after Exit
 - VR participants employed at program exit and 2nd quarter, and 4th quarter after exit.
 - Value Statement: VR program participants should sustain employment after they exit the VR program. Our goal is that individuals with disabilities continue working.
- Profile: Quality Employment
 - Four quality indicators of employment across sub-populations of primary disability (visual, communication, physical, intellectual, and psychosocial), significance of disability, and students with disabilities
 - Employment/Earnings/Hours Worked/Benefits
 - Value Statement: The mission of the VR program is to maximize employment opportunities for all individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, and to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- Profile: VR Process Efficiency
 - Efficiency in determining eligibility (timeliness)
 - Efficiency in Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) development (timeliness)
 - Effectiveness across timeliness stratified cohorts (illustrates impact of delay)
 - Value Statement: Timely and effective customer service leads to high-quality competitive integrated employment outcomes for VR program participants. Being engaged with applicants and eligible individuals with disabilities and offering assistance to them during the eligibility and IPE development processes are attributes of positive customer service.
- Profile: VR Service Provision
 - Percent measure of engagement for each quarter and the full program year (Quarter 1, Quarter 2, Quarter 3, Quarter 4, Program Year). If a service is provided and documented within a quarter, that customer is counted as ‘engaged’ with the program for that quarter (and for that year). Consequently, yearly engagement will be significantly higher than quarterly engagement.
 - Value Statement: Active engagement and meaningful service provision will result in VR program participants achieving competitive integrated employment.

- Percent of Participants Enrolled in Education/Training Program Leading to a Recognized Credential to Employment (Percent Eligible to Earn Measurable Skills Gains (MSG))
 - Numerator = MSG Denominator (eligible to earn an MSG)
 - Denominator = Total VR participants served
 - Value Statement: If individuals with disabilities have opportunities to earn recognized credentials, they are more likely to achieve high-quality competitive integrated employment.
 - *this should be interpreted cautiously as extreme values on either end indicate efficiency/effectiveness issues
- Profiles: Pre-Employment Transition Services

To conclude, **Mrs. Pitt** offered to have a separate meeting with Council Members if they wished to discuss data in further detail.

Success Stories and Business Engagement

MiKayla Cobler, Business Relations Coordinator at IDVR, shared two success story videos and a presentation on Business Engagement (BE). The videos can be found at <https://vr.idaho.gov/vr-success-stories/>. Her outline of the BE strategic plan and accomplishments includes the following goals:

- Goal 1
 - Develop BE (Business Engagement) minimum requirements and performance expectations for each IDVR job category identified.
 - Update job descriptions for all field staff to include BE in the core responsibilities
 - Develop regional plans to outline goals for BE at the regional level to allow for goals to be accomplished based on staff strengths in each respective region
- Goal 2
 - Increase staff understanding of how to deliver effective BE by ensuring they understand the purpose, intent, and requirements of BE activities.
 - Move Business Engagement Training from initial hiring training to after completion of the first 6 months of employment/probationary period

- Develop formal training outline for training for staff as they complete their probationary period
- Include ongoing BE training and education in staff development sections of regional plans
- Goal 3
 - Develop a communication plan for BE.
 - Complete TAT Training for Business Services with Workforce Partners
 - Participate in Business Services Teams at the regional level as those teams are developed
 - Create Internal Employer Information Pages
- Goal 4
 - Establish IDVR as a resource to business.
 - Develop an increased understanding and awareness of business services with our staff and partner staff
 - Provide marketing resources for their business as a potential employer to job seekers with disabilities
 - Share job announcements
 - Post business careers pages on the Jobs in Idaho page
- Goal 5
 - Develop strategy for completing BE activities with outside agencies and partners.
 - Work with ICBVI to complete Business Spotlight sessions together
 - Share contacts with Region 10 and other State Business Relations Coordinators to support businesses with multistate footprints
 - Continued efforts at the regional level with the One Stop Teams to complete BE activities together
 - Attend Business Spotlight events hosted in Oregon, Washington, and NET for businesses with Idaho or virtual work opportunities.
- Goal 6
 - Increase Agency BE Performance.
 - 2020 Statewide engagements of 683 with 522 different Businesses
 - Information and Support Services – 488 engagements
 - Workforce Recruitment Assistance – 33 engagements
 - Training Services – 41 engagements
 - Accessing Untapped Labor Pools – 64 engagements
 - Other - 57 engagements

- 2021 Statewide engagements of 460 with 327 Businesses at the halfway point of the year.
 - Information and Support Services - 268
 - Workforce Recruitment Assistance - 76
 - Training Services - 31
 - Accessing Untapped Labor Pools - 43
 - Other - 42

Discussion

Ms. Cobler explained the statewide approach which was developed to increase regional visits. The Business Relations Coordinator will be working closely with our Regional Management Teams and our Business Engagement Leadership Team to assure the individual needs of each region are met and that they have the support need to be successful. **Rob Oberleitner** inquired how the SRC Business and Industry representatives can help IDVR achieve or accelerate the business engagement processes. He also asked for clarification on the “Boost Team”. **Ms. Cobler** summarized that the Boost Team in Twin Falls is a group of WIOA partners. The partners perform BE and are mainly housed in the Department of Labor (DOL) to support the workforce needs in that area. **Tim Blonsky** questioned if the partners were workforce consultants that all DOLs have, to which **Ms. Cobler** agreed, but affirmed they specifically include WIOA partners. **Danielle “DR” Reff** asked when WIOA was passed, **Ms. Cobler** responded it was enacted in July of 2014. **Ms. Donnellan** thanked Ms. Cobler for the excellent effort she has made to benefit both IDVR customers and partner businesses.

Old and New Business

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 26th, 2021. SRC Meeting dates for the upcoming year will be Tuesday, January 25th, Tuesday, April 26th, Tuesday, July 26th, and Tuesday, October 25th. **Ms. Donnellan** also drew attention to the upcoming CSAVR Conference. She requested anyone interested in attending to please contact herself and Council Chair Carson. The Chair reminded members to complete the SRC survey and thanked them for being present and engaged with the SRC.

Adjourned

Prepared by Council Secretary, Emily Carlisle