

**Policy Academy
 Meeting Minutes**

September 8, 2015
 9:00 am – 12:00pm
 AV sites

Phone conference available upon request



Present: Sandy Ellsworth, Pang Xiong, Tim Trokan, Kara Matheson, Caralee Morrison, Gadeen Taylor-Drake, Amy Grotzke for Erin Barstad, Terri Cottrell, Susan Kratz, Deb Henderson Guenther, Linda Vegoe, JoAnna Richard, John Haugh, Meredith Dressel, Kathleen Enders, Sarah Lincoln, Cayte Anderson, John Lui, Tim Tansey
 Absent: Enid Glenn, Patty Noland, Chao Xiong, Rebecca Tyler

MEMBERS:	WDA 1	– Sandy Ellsworth, VRC (term expires December 2015)
	WDA 2	– Pang Xiong, VRC (term expires June 2017)
	WDA 3	– Timothy Trokan, VRC (term expires December 2015)
	WDA 4	– Jaime Brown (term expires June 2016)
	WDA 5	– Caralee Morrison, VRC (term expires December 2015)
	WDA 6	– Patty Noland, VRC (term expires December 2016)
	WDA 7	– Gadeen Taylor-Duke, VRC (term expires June 2017)
	WDA 8	– Chao Xiong, VRC (term expires June 2016)
	WDA 9	– Erin Barstad, CCC (term expires June 2016)
	WDA 10	– Rebecca Tyler, CCC (term expires December 2016)
	WDA 11	– Teri Cottrell, CCC (term expires December 2015)
	Promise Grant	-- Susan Kratz VRC (term expires December 2016)
	CAP	– Deb Henderson-Guenther
	WRC	– Linda Vegoe
CO	– Enid Glenn, JoAnna Richard, John Haugh and Meredith Dressel	
Policy Analysts– Stakeholders	– Kathleen Enders & Sarah Lincoln -- Cayte Anderson and John Lui, SVRI; and Tim Tansey, UW-Madison	
	Facilitator – Sandy Ellsworth	
	Note Taker – Deb Henderson Guenther	

DVR Administration Update – JoAnna Richard

Joanna gave an update on the 4 year state plan which is a combined plan with Title 1 (Youth based programs), Title II (Adult Literacy Program/Education), and Title III (Wagner-Peyser).

DVR is under Title IV. It is considered to be a draft document at this time and includes agreements with partner agencies. It is being prepared to be reviewed by DVR Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC). Once comments are received from both SLT and WRC, DVR will post it as a public document. In November or December, the VR portion of the plan will be subsumed by the other 3 Titles and will be made available for comment from the public.

LAB audit

The auditors visited two WDA's 3 and 10. The auditors had questions regarding how Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE's) are developed, how does a counselor or other staff member know how much to spend, how is eligibility and order of selection determined and is that consistent across the state?

The auditors plan to visit WDA 2, 5, 7 and 9 in the near future.

Trends

Since January, eligibility determinations and plans have been completed consistently within the timelines established. Applications have seen a slight decrease.

Update-Pulse of the WDA's

JoAnna wanted to know how each of the WDA's is doing with all of the balloons they are having to keep inflated and airborne. (Refers to the previous PA meeting presentation related to how many items/issues are currently at play in DVR)

WDA 1: Staff have embraced WIOA and morale is good. They work together to cover the workload when there are vacancies. There are some concerns about being able to deliver in regards to Promise. There is also some anxiety regarding the new performance measures. There is currently 1 provider with a waitlist in WDA 1.

WDA 2: Staff morale is good. They encourage each other, remind each other to take care of themselves and to go with the flow. When fully staffed, staff's stress level is decreased. With the increase in transition aged youth on their caseloads, staff felt that the caseload management presentation was very helpful. There are several providers with waitlists, especially for supported employment services.

WDA 3: Staff morale is good; leadership is great. Focus and support equals a great job. Work load challenges continue but there is a focus on customer service. A new VRC is starting today which will mean that WDA 3 will be fully staffed. Staff is excited about WIOA and have always had a strong transition focus. Staff are wondering if overtime is available. There are some vendors with waiting lists.

WDA 4: Staff is doing outreach to schools and visits each school 1 day per month. Staff would like specific information about WIOA and performance measures. There are vendor waitlists and turn over at these agencies is a concern. There are issues regarding long-term care services.

WDA 5: Morale would improve with pay increases. There are some staff vacancies and some positions have been vacant for a long period of time. Staff are experiencing some stress with the changes resulting from WIOA and interpreting those changes for stakeholders. Long-term/managed care is just being rolled out in WDA 5. Discussions regarding cost-sharing may be challenging to staff.

WDA 6: No report

WDA 7: Outreach to schools has been difficult due to staff vacancies and new staff starting. Staff are working hard to establish new teams. Staff have raised concerns regarding stagnating pay, staff shortages, and the STAR training. No provider issues.

WDA 8: No report

WDA 9: Staff are feeling stressed by the workload even though they are currently fully staffed. Staff are wondering about the possibility of receiving overtime pay, pay increases or developing telecommuting options. Staff feel the training grant is more complicated and not efficient. Change to the parental contribution terminology is confusing to consumers and staff. There is frequent turnover within the provider agencies which creates a need for staff to train the new staff. Staff are anxious about their new GAR goals. Outreach to schools is good and the staff seem ok with the STAR conversion.

WDA 10: No report

WDA 11: Staff are conducting outreach to schools via email and letters. Workload is ok as the staff relies on teaming to cover caseloads when staff are on leave or there is a vacancy. They use an honor jar at team meetings to boost morale. A new VRC is starting in 2 weeks and 1 CCC just returned from maternity leave. Their vendors do not have waitlists for any of their services.

Promise: Outreach to schools is fine. Workload is manageable as staff are able to have flexible schedules to meet the needs of the families they are working with. Morale is mixed. There are staff who are negative, mean-spirited and catty. Some staff don't feel supported by management. Some staff feel isolated and not part of a team. Staff feel that many providers don't know how to work with youth. There are waitlists for some providers which negates the concept of rapid engagement. Some of the providers have displayed unprofessional behaviors/practices. Most staff appear excited by WIOA and STAR.

The WDA's that mentioned that their providers have waitlists indicated that the waitlists are for job development, job coaching, supported employment and benefits analysis.

CAP Trends

Provider capacity is an issue especially for supported employment services. Linda is speaking to Rehabilitation for Wisconsin (RFW) members on Wednesday. She will pose the question as to whether or not limited provider capacity is an intentional practice. She understands that providers are not to have waitlists as part of their service agreement with DVR. RFW providers serve approximately 26% of DVR's consumer population.

CAP is receiving calls regarding the DVR training grant not being provided to the schools in a timely manner, car repairs and car purchases not being approved, and farmers not receiving the services recommended by the Easter Seals FARM Program.

Cayte commented that after hearing the issues regarding service capacity that folks consider out of the box/creative ideas with an eye on quality. Cayte suggested providing incentives to individual providers or small providers.

SLT commented that they heard that the staff would like pay increases, flexible schedules or telecommuting options. That additional communication is needed regarding the training grant, that the lack of service providers is a burden on directors and staff.

SLT wondered if service providers could be increased through hiring individuals instead of agencies to do job development and job coaching. There may be qualified individuals that are currently or were previously IRIS consultants. They also questioned whether every person needs a job developer or could they get the same service through Worknet?

WDA 5 and 6 will be doing a pilot which involves contracting with job service for job specialists who will provide one-on-one tutoring and job hunting services.

The DWD secretary hasn't announced who will be the new DVR administrator. The 2 vacant District Director positions will be filled shortly as interviews have been completed. Patti Johnson will be moving into the Policy Initiatives Advisor position vacated by Brian Solomon.

What is new in Rehabilitation Research?

Cayte commented that the research indicates that rapid response/rapid engagement with consumers increases the chances of job attainment and retention.

Cayte shared that the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) had discontinued funding for the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Centers (TACE). RSA repurposed those monies into national technical assistance centers who would be the experts in different subject areas.

RSA announced 4 additional Request for Proposals for technical assistance centers in the areas of program evaluation and quality assurance, VR technical assistance center-WIOA, VR technical assistance center-targeted communities, and VR technical assistance center-youth.

Below are the links to the current RSA proposals:

Request for Proposals-Summer 2015
Dept. of Education; Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)

Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center-Program Evaluation & Quality Assurance (PEQA)

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/08/11/2015-19618/applications-for-new-awards-rehabilitation-training-technical-assistance-center-for-vocational>

Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center-WIOA

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/08/13/2015-20003/applications-for-new-awards-rehabilitation-training-vocational-rehabilitation-workforce-innovation>

Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center-Targeted Communities

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/08/14/2015-20013/applications-for-new-awards-rehabilitation-training-vocational-rehabilitation-technical-assistance>

Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center-Youth

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/07/30/2015-18712/applications-for-new-awards-rehabilitation-training-vocational-rehabilitation-technical-assistance>

Cayte commented that Wisconsin is a leader in relationship to their interagency agreements and technical assistance guides (TAG).

Cayte stated that bridging research into practices continues to be a challenge. For VR programs to receive intensive technical assistance training the VR program will need to apply and be accepted. General training will be available to all VR programs.

Cayte mentioned that there are a number of free online management and leadership training tools. She specifically mentioned www.Mindtools.com

Eligibility Pilot Discussion and Update

Meredith reported that DVR is looking to expand the eligibility/OOS unit in November or December. The goal is for the eligibility/OOS unit to be available to all WDA's by July 2016. The unit has received 902 referrals thus far. SVRI has determined over 500 eligibilities. The average time for the unit to determine eligibility/OOS is 23.8 days. There have been some minor training issues.

How Should DVR incorporate new data fields in IRIS and process?

Kathleen shared that there are 19 new data elements required under WIOA:

- Lack of work experience at Application
- Indicators of poor work history at Application
- Lack of educational or occupational skills attainment at Application
- Dislocation from high-wage and high-benefit employment at Application
- Limited English, Low Literacy, Cultural Barriers at Application
- Homelessness at Application
- Offender Status at Application
- Welfare Dependency at Application
- Single Parent at Application
- Basic Skills Deficient at Application
- Foster Care Youth Status at Application
- Displaced Homemaker at Application
- Low Income at Application

- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Status at Application
- Dislocated Worker at Application
- Long-Term Unemployed Status at Application
- Date of Last Paid Employment at Application
- Exhausted Part A Title IV of Social Security within 2 Years
- Primary Occupation at Application

Kathleen stated that she would email each PA member the data elements and ask them for suggestions on how DVR might get this information from consumers. She stated that DVR is interested in figuring out the best way to get accurate information at the time of application for these new required data elements in a way that makes sense with how DVR processes referrals and applications. Any suggestions are to be sent to Kathleen by mid to late October. She will compile and report out at the next Policy Academy Meeting.

WIOA proposed policy changes-Transportation Best Practice and Communication Suggestions

Sarah stated that Wisconsin DVR was going to have to change the way they have been providing services, especially transportation services including vehicle purchases. Sarah stated that DVR will create a resource/best practice tools for counselors. She requested that all PA members email her by mid-October to provide the following information:

1. What alternative solutions are being used in the field to address transportation barriers?
2. What financial literacy tools are being used to inform consumers about the financial costs of car ownership? Saving for a vehicle? Deciding not to purchase vehicle purchase?

Cayte mentioned that she will be presenting on this topic at the National Rehabilitation Association National Conference in October. She will send the PA members her presentation materials.

In December 4 PA member's terms are ending. New representatives will be needed for WDA 1, 3, 5, and 11. The new members should join the current members at the November meeting.

Checkout and Adjourn