

**AGENDA**  
**WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL**  
**November 10, 2022**  
**WebEx Meeting**  
**9:00 AM – 2:30 PM**

<https://dwdwi.webex.com/dwdwi/j.php?MTID=m53c4db4cc268bc0085e53013a3fccf64>

**To join by phone only, call 855-282-6330 access code 2592 845 6056**

A Statement of Mission

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council, working on behalf of Wisconsin residents with disabilities, will review, analyze, and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities in providing quality services to persons with disabilities.

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| 9:00 – 9:15   | Roll Call and Introductions<br>Announcements – 2023 Meeting Dates<br>Quorum Check<br>Approval of Minutes – August 2022  |
| 9:15 – 10:15  | Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Council Engagement Committee</li><li>• Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- State Plan Update</li></ul></li><li>• Policy Review and Administration Committee</li><li>• Services to Business Committee</li><li>• Annual Report Workgroup</li><li>• Executive Committee<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- WRC Resource Plan Discussion and Approval</li></ul></li></ul> |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report<br>Franky Newcomb, Danita Jackson  |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | Break   |
| 10:45 – 11:15 | Public Records and Open Meeting Laws Training<br>Jennifer Wakerhauser, DWD Chief Legal Counsel  |

11:15 – 11:45	Service Provider Transportation for Consumers Update Deanna Krell, Director DVR Bureau of Management Services
11:45 – 12:15	Break for Lunch
12:15 – 12:30	Public Comment
12:30 – 1:30	DVR Administrative Update Delora Newton, DVR Administrator
1:30 – 2:15	CSNA Tier 2 Discussion Meredith Dressel, DVR Deputy Administrator
2:15 – 2:30	Review of Open Items and Suggested Discussion Topics for Future Meeting
2:30	Adjourn

\*Public comment is limited to the time listed on the agenda. Comments can be sent at any time to: [DVRWIRehabCouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DVRWIRehabCouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov).

Comments sent to that e-mail box will be read to the full council at the next meeting.

**Minutes**  
**WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL**  
**August 11, 2022**  
**WebEx Meeting**  
**9:00 AM – 2:30 PM**

**WRC Member Attendees:** Steven Wheeler, Richard (Dick) Straub, Deb Henderson-Guenther, Julie Burish, Liz Kennedy, Ramsey Lee, Alan Kaltenberg, Lori Karcher, Norene Lueck, Alicia Reinhard, Joalyn Torgerson, Delora Newton, Gadeen Taylor-Duke, Natalia Graf, Kyle Kleist, Alexis Riggs, Jenny Felty, Debbie Lee, Megan Bisonette

**WRC Members Absent:** Edward Kastern

**DVR Staff:** Meredith Dressel, Allison Gordon, Anna Eggebrecht, Sarah Kuehn, Deanna Krell, Kathleen Enders, Andrzej Walz-Chojnacki, Kaylyn Schoone, Amy Grotzke

**Guests:** Becky Hebda, Ann Franz (WRC applicant), Danita Jackson (Disability Rights Wisconsin/Client Assistance Program - DRW/CAP), Franky Newcomb (DRW/CAP), Nicolas Kurutz (DRW/CAP), Ramsey Lee, Lawrence Brown, David Pinno.

### **Roll Call and Introductions**

#### **Announcements**

- 3 new members: Alexis Riggs, Jenny Felty, and Debbie Lee.
- The meeting has been shortened to end at 2:30.
- There will be a full 30-minute break for lunch (not a working lunch).
- Committees will vote on membership today. New members are expected to participate in at least one committee.

#### **Quorum Check**

- 13 members were present during roll call and a quorum is met.

#### **Approval of Minutes – May 2022**

- Alan moved to approve the minutes; Liz seconded. Minutes approved.

#### **Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals:**

##### **Council Engagement Committee – Deb Henderson-Guenther**

- A written process has been created for voting, eligibility for reappointment of members, outreach to members that have not attended meetings, and welcoming new members.
- Working to develop orientation for new members.
- Created a written template to ask other stakeholder groups to share information on WRC at their meetings, newsletters, etc.
- Communicated with the governor's appointment staff to review the process for appointing new members. The staff person emailed a response and Deb shared with the WRC. If the WRC approves a person applying, WRC can send a letter of recommendation for the applicant to submit with their online application. Must apply at least six weeks in advance of appointment.
- Developed Exit Interview Questionnaire for members.
- Developed questions to ask members at their one year anniversary.

- Kay was asked to develop a location/repository for WRC documents that can be accessed by all WRC members.
- Deb asked all members to share a phone number that can be shared with all members. If a member is not comfortable having their phone number shared with WRC members, please send Deb a private chat during the meeting today.
- Considering a mentor program for new members.
- Deb made a motion to appoint Ramsey Lee to remain on the Council Engagement Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Deb made a motion to appoint Debbie Lee to the Council Engagement Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Becky Hebda to the Council Engagement Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appointment Lori to the Council Engagement Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appointment Dick to the Council Engagement Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Dick asked who to contact for second term to WRC? Kay tracks the membership; she will reach out when a term is coming due.

#### **Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee – Julie Burish**

- Reviewed Work Incentive Benefits Analysis (WIBA) fee schedule and technical specifications and made recommendations to DVR staff. New fee schedule will go into effect October 1, 2022.
- Joint meeting with Policy Review and Administration Committee to review the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) recommendations. There are several priority areas for DVR to address. The Committees made recommendations to DVR on what areas to prioritize.
- Julie asked Kay to forward the CSNA report to the three new members.
- Created a draft WRC Resource Plan which will be reviewed later in the meeting.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Kyle Kleist to the Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Alexis Riggs to the Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee, seconded by Dick – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Becky Hebda to the Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee, seconded by Joalyn – Passed.

#### **Policy Review and Administration Committee – Deb Henderson-Guenther**

- Joint meeting with Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee on WIBA and CSNA (see notes above).
- Delora sent WRC Bylaws that include the descriptions of all the Committees to the new members.
- DVR Administrative Rules review and recommendations.
  - Order of Selection (OOS) - created policy on providing retention services only for consumers on a waitlist.
  - Confidentiality - update for current policy and procedures.
  - Hearing and Appeals – changed numbers of days from one year to 180 days to appeal a decision made by DVR.
- Reviewed the DVR Training Grant process. Identified that consumers on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) do not have to provide a consumer contribution for the Training Grant calculation. DVR has changed their policy to correct this.
- DVR Staff have received training on exceptions and the Assistive Technology (AT) fee schedule.

- Asked DVR to reassess how they fund Comprehensive Training Programs (Think College). DVR has 13 consumers enrolled in this type of training.
- DVR is encouraging staff to support Career Pathway opportunities for consumers, when appropriate.
- SSI/SSDI consumers are not required to contribute to services in their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) according to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). DVR has asked RSA if fee schedules can apply to consumers receiving SSI/SSDI. DVR is waiting for clarification from RSA.
- Reviewing Rapid Engagement strategies when serving consumers. California DVR has embraced Rapid Engagement practices around eligibility/OOS.
- Transportation for consumers is an ongoing issue. DVR service providers can provide this service if they are transportation provider for DVR. They are not allowed to provide transportation if providing other services to consumers if they are not a transportation provider. DVR will readdress this issue in 2024 when the new service agreements are due.
- Create an ad-hoc committee for WRC members to address Administrative Law Judge process for appeals. Deb will send an email asking for interest.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Becky Hebda to the Policy Review and Administration Committee, seconded by Deb – Passed.

#### **Services to Business Committee – Julie Burish**

- Committee has not met recently and currently there is no chair.
- Julie will set up a meeting with current members to assign a chair.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Ramsey Lee to the Services for Business Committee, seconded by Joalyn – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Becky Hebda to the Services for Business Committee, seconded by Joalyn – Passed.
- Deb made a motion to appoint Jenny Felty to the Services for Business Committee, seconded by Lori – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Megan Bisonette to the Services for Business Committee, seconded by Deb – Passed.

#### **Annual Report Workgroup**

- Only meets when the WRC report is created.
- WRC Report must be filed with RSA by December 31. The DVR Communications and Policy Advisor assists with creation of the Report. The group will meet in August or September.

#### **Executive Committee**

- Create the agenda for the WRC meetings looking at a list of priorities for the WRC to address.
- Review the work of all other Committees.
- Shortened the WRC meeting and reorganized the agenda items.
- Finalized the WRC Resource Plan

#### **WRC Resource Plan Approval - Julie Burish and Deb Henderson-Guenther**

- Julie reviewed the Resource Plan included in meeting packets.
- Deb corrected a typo (DRV changed to DVR).
- Julie recommended the addition of fees for speakers or presenters if WRC wants to hire speakers for a WRC retreat.
- Deb suggested the Plan clarify it is referring to a Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Attorney and not a Disability Rights of Wisconsin (DRW) Attorney when seeking attorney time at appropriate meetings.

- Dick suggested a Glossary of Terms be added. Deb will create one, it will be made available to all members during future WRC meetings.
- Add that DVR will research a repository for WRC only documents.
- Liz made a motion to approve the WRC Resource Plan as amended, seconded by Deb – Passed.
- The next step will be to review the Plan with DVR staff at the WRC Executive Committee.

#### **Public Comment\***

- Ramsey Lee thanked the WRC for allowing him to continue to stay on WRC Committees. Thanked the Council Engagement Committee for developing the Exit Survey; it was very helpful. It's been an honor and privilege to be part of WRC. The WRC does a wonderful job with the resources it has been given. One observation, there seems to be a disconnect between DVR offices and the need to provide services in a consistent way. Can't forget about the consumers because the main goal of DVR in Wisconsin should be to assist consumers in their job search. Ramsey introduced Lawrence Brown, a DVR consumer who would be a good future WRC member.
- Lawrence Brown shared that he is a current consumer of DVR and would like to be on the WRC to help people with disabilities that would like to get back in the workplace. He has difficulties with his counselor and would like to help others that struggle. He has also received help from CAP.
  - Julie shared the process to apply for the WRC online. Deb will forward the link.
- Becky Hebda provided feedback on the difficulty of the public to have access to documents that are reviewed at the WRC. She encouraged the WRC to create a way for the information to be accessible to anyone that is interested. WIBA fee schedule and tech specs are going into effect as of October 1, and Service Providers have not been provided any information on the changes.
  - Delora reviewed that the agenda is posted on the Department of Administration (DOA) website, DVR does not control of how they format those documents. All documents are available for the public to view during the meeting. DVR is working to identify a webpage location that will allow the public to access WRC documents on the day of the meeting.
- Deb read a public comment from David Pinno. He verbally provided his testimony later in the meeting. Those notes are captured in the afternoon public comments section of the meeting.

#### **CSNA Recommendations Discussion – Outreach Plan TJ Jerke, DVR Communications and Policy Advisor.**

- Meredith provided an overview of the CSNA process.
- TJ shared the status of outreach and engagement efforts the Division is doing to increase referrals for DVR services. He is using the DVR Dashboard to gather data. Also looking at census data and other resources to use as a baseline for outreach efforts.
- The DVR Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan will also impact the direction of outreach efforts.
- Deb shared what WDAs are and where they are located.
  - <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/about/county-detail-wda-map.pdf> She is hoping that in the future, the WRC could be part of an advertisement so we can share what we do.
- Julie asked for clarification on where the outreach is targeted.
  - TJ shared that the data is one piece of the outreach plan for DVR. DVR welcomes WRC input into the plan as we move forward. There may be value in putting out Public Service Announcements (PSA) as well. DVR needs to explore that option.
- Julie asked if DVR is getting an outside consultant to develop the outreach plan?
  - Delora shared that she and Meredith had a discussion with a consultant who has worked with other State VR agencies. He is employed as a consultant through one of the RSA Technical Assistance Centers. He is willing and available to help and would be a free resource for us to use.

- Dick noticed that WDA sizes vary dramatically across the state. There may be real barriers to staff accessing DVR services based on the size of the WDA. This link shows all the office locations. <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/about/staff-directory.pdf>
  - Delora clarified that we do have offices placed strategically across the state based on the population of that area of that State. Our VRC's can travel to meet with consumers if that is needed. We also have the virtual option to meet as well.
  - Natalia shared where the offices are in WDA 6, DVR does cover all the counties in each WDA.
  - Gadeen shared that she currently covers counties in WDA 7 that do not have office locations. She travels to them weekly/biweekly. She also covers three counties that currently have VRC vacancies.
  - TJ shared that we have a great opportunity to do outreach in the rural parts of the state. We can customize the outreach efforts based on the needs of a specific area of the State.
- Deb asked for a timeline to develop and implement an outreach plan.
  - TJ does not have a specific timeline developed at this point. We want to be strategic in using our resources well and effectively to keep the process moving forward.
  - Deb asked for update on the plan at the November meeting.
    - TJ said that is doable.
- Julie asked for a distinction between the DEI plan and general outreach plan. What are the major goals?
  - Meredith and Deanna clarified that there will be overlap of the DEI Plan and the general outreach plan. TJ is focusing on general outreach using the information from the DEI Plan. They will complement each other.
  - Julie would like a breakdown of the outreach plan and how it will be accomplished at the November meeting.
  - Natalia feels it is a three-level approach: employers, consumers, and service providers.

#### **Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report Franky Newcomb, Danita Jackson, Steven Wheeler, Nicholas Kurutz**

- Staff update: Steven is on paternity leave and announced he will be leaving DRW in September. Nicholas Kurutz will be the supervising attorney for the CAP program at DRW in Steven's absence. Steven will complete his full term on the WRC regardless of his employment change.
- Examples of recent CAP cases for DVR were shared.
- Julie asked if DRW has noticed any trends in DVR cases?
  - Franky shared that they are working on providing real data to the CAP report. Hope to have that for the next WRC meeting.
    - Julie asked that the data be broken down by WDA and include trend information.

#### **Break for Lunch**

#### **CSNA Recommendations Discussion – Diversity, Equity, an Inclusion (DEI) - Deanna Krell, DVR Bureau of Management Services Director**

- Deanna provided an update on DEI Planning.
- Deb asked if the DEI training is mandatory for DVR staff and is tracked?
  - Deanna shared that DVR has software called Cornerstone where trainings are located and recorded for each staff person. Some of the trainings we offer are mandatory. DVR does have a Training Officer that creates, manages, and tracks training for all staff in Cornerstone.
  - Deb shared that statewide consistency in training is important, she encouraged DVR to make the DEI trainings mandatory.

- Gadeen shared that she is part of the Employee Resource Group (ERG) and indicated that all DEI training will be mandatory for all levels of DVR staff.
- Deanna shared that diversity is more than just race/ethnicity, there have been trainings on the LTBTQ+ community as well.
- Kyle shared there is not a lot of diversity in western Wisconsin which can cause issues when trying to hire diverse staff.
- Amy, WDA 9 Director located in western Wisconsin, shared that her staff have a book club where they read and reviewed, "Waking up White." It was very impactful for her staff. Also brought in local LGBTQ individuals to educate and train her staff. She also has been engaged with individuals from the Ho-Chunk tribe to provide summer programming for their youth in 2023.
- Julie asked if there is a disability component to the DVR staff diversity training?
  - Deanna shared that DVR has always focused on disability training for our staff. We will continue to provide that training in addition to the DEI trainings.
  - Meredith shared that DWD includes disability in their DEI planning and training efforts.
  - Deb shared that the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) also includes disability in their DEI efforts.

#### **DVR Administrative Update Delora Newton, DVR Administrator**

- Julie asked if DVR is struggling to hire staff because of the amount we can pay?
  - Delora shared that there are fewer individuals that are graduating with the Vocational Counseling degree, so the candidate pool is smaller and hiring takes more time.
  - The rate of pay that the state offers is often lower than the public sector, but the state offers a benefits package that is often better than what the private sector offers.
- Deb asked that WRC members interested in becoming mentors for new members to contact her.

#### **Public Comment\***

- David Pinno submitted a written comment that Deb read at the public comment period in the morning. He Repeated his request that DVR pay routine vehicle maintenance costs.
- Becky Hebda shared that from a Service Provider perspective, 100 miles is a long distance to travel before being reimbursed. She asked DVR to reconsider reducing the mile requirement for Providers.
- Ramsey Lee shared that DVR should fund vehicle modifications. Websites need to be accessible for screen readers.

#### **Review of Open Items and Suggested Discussion Topics for Future Meeting**

- Overview and update of DVR Outreach Plan at the November 10 meeting.
- TJ will set up a meeting for the WRC Annual Report workgroup.
- Julie asked the WRC members for input on the format of this meeting including the shorted timeframe. Members like the changes.
- CSNA Tier 2 discussion to be on the November 10 meeting agenda.
- An in-person meeting option for 2023 will be discussed at the WRC Executive Committee. Ideally one in-person should be held annually. May of 2023 will be officer elections, so may work best.
- DEI Plan update at the November 10 meeting.
- Review the WRC Resource Plan at the November 10 meeting.
- Transportation to be reviewed at Policy Review and Administration Committee.
  - DVR raised the mileage reimbursement rate paid to consumers from \$0.35 to \$0.51. Modified vehicle mileage reimbursement is \$0.685 because those vehicles generally get less miles per gallon.



## **Adjourn**

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Comments sent to that e-mail box will be read to the full council at the next meeting.

## **Proposed WI Rehabilitation Council (WRC) Resource Plan for WRC Review and Approval**

The WRC is required by federal law to prepare and implement a resource plan that identifies the resources (including funding, staff and personnel and in-kind contributions) necessary to carry out the functions of the council. Currently, WRC does not have a resource plan. This draft resource plan is being presented to the full council for review, discussion and approval. Upon approval of the council, it will be submitted to DVR for their review, feedback and approval. The final resource plan will then be implemented.

### **Resources:**

WRC could benefit from:

1. An annual half day in person retreat to focus on council enrichment and education to improve council performance.
2. An annual half day, in person meeting of WRC committees to set priorities and objectives for each fiscal/program year. This meeting would coincide with the above-mentioned retreat and will be in lieu of regularly scheduled committee meeting (therefore, will not constitute an additional meeting for committee members). The retreat would occur in the morning and the committees would meet in the afternoon.
3. Assistance in creating a mechanism (beyond what is currently included in the CSNA) and a budget that would allow the council to solicit feedback from:
  - a. Consumers
  - b. Service Providers
  - c. Employers
4. Assistance in creating WRC specific policies and procedure that would complement current WRC By-Laws.
5. Assistance in creating a WRC new member orientation manual along with in-person training.
6. Funding for council members to attend the CSAVR/NCSRC national conferences.
7. Funding for council members to attend the WI Employment First Conference and the Self-Determination conferences as a means to network with consumers and families regarding DVR.
8. Funding to present and/or holding consumer listening sessions at the WI Employment First and Self-Determination conferences
9. Having a WRC specific document repository (WRC SharePoint) to collect information, training, and resource materials to be easily accessible and utilized by WRC members

### **Staffing:**

WRC could benefit from having a dedicated staff person who is responsible for:

- a. Scheduling meetings/trainings, lodging, food and travel logistics as needed.
- b. Taking meeting minutes (DVR Policy Analysts or other designee).
- c. Running reports as requested by WRC.
- d. Track participation/manage all internal/external WRC workgroups/participants.
- e. Facilitate obtaining documentation/reports as requested by WRC.
- f. Overseeing the WRC budget/resource plan, in conjunction with the WRC executive committee.
- g. Ensuring that there is an up to date WRC contact list and resource page.
- h. Act as a gate keeper for all public records requests made to WRC members. Ensure that public record is maintained and destroyed per DWD records retention policy.
- i. Liaison to Governor's appointment office in conjunction with the WRC chair and/or the Council Engagement Committee Chair.
- j. Preparing printed materials, PowerPoint slides, etc., as needed for in-person meetings.
- k. Preparing and assisting the WRC when public hearings are needed.
- l. Assisting the WRC annual report workgroup in creating the annual report to the Rehabilitation Services Administration and stakeholders.
- m. Creating and maintaining a WRC specific document repository that can be easily accessed by all council members

**Budget for the following activities:**

1. In-person meetings i.e., lodging, food, travel, speaker/presenter fees and any accommodations required by the council member.
2. Printed materials and postage as applicable.
3. Any record costs.
5. Design and creation of the WRC annual report (at Council's direction).
6. DWD Attorney time as needed to ensure that council members have the knowledge necessary to be in compliance with open meetings laws, public records laws, and other regulations and laws that impact the council.
7. CSAVR/NCSRC conference fees, lodging, food, and travel costs for 1-2 council members to attend in person and conference fees for all council members who desire to attend these conferences virtually.
8. Conference fees, lodging, food and travel costs for all WRC members who desire to attend the WI. Employment First Conference and WI. Self-Determination Conference.

9. Budget for the above conferences: \$11,000 annually.
10. Any fees associated with presenting and/or holding listening sessions at the WI Employment First and Self-Determination Conferences.
11. Printed copies of the resource entitled the "State Rehabilitation Council/Vocation Rehabilitation Partnership Under WIOA" and/or the "State Rehabilitation Council Chairpersons, Members and Administrators Manual" for all WRC member who would like to have them.
12. Funding for costs associated with seeking feedback from consumers, service providers and employees as determined by the WRC.
13. Cost associated with creating and maintaining a WRC specific document repository

**Please note that the dedicated staff position description has 20% of that person's time dedicated to the WRC. See current duties outlined below:**

- Act as Liaison between the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council's (WRC) Executive Committee members and the DVR Senior Leadership Team.
- Serve as WRC's primary DVR contact with the Governor's Appointments Office regarding Council appointments.
- In consultation with the DVR Administrator, work with the WRC Chair and Chairs of WRC Committees to create, post and distribute meeting agendas.
- Facilitate the creation of documents and reports requested by WRC and its committees
- Maintain WRC membership lists. Notify the DVR Web Master and DVR IT Coordinator regarding necessary updates to the email distribution list and WRC webpages.
- Distribute meeting materials electronically to WRC members and DVR staff.
- Initiate the necessary arrangements to secure physical meeting locations or the electronic meeting platform if the meeting will be held virtually. If meetings are held in person, secure a block of rooms for WRC members and staff if overnight stays will be necessary. Order food for in-person meetings following state meeting guidelines.
- Attend full WRC meetings. Take the lead in electronically displaying meeting documents and trouble-shooting IT or meeting location logistics if necessary.

When meetings occur in person, transport materials and make them available for members and guests attending the meeting. Work with on-site facility staff to address any facility issues that arise during the meeting.

- Attend and take minutes for the Council Engagement Committee and the Services to Business Committee. Serve as back-up minute taker for the Annual Report Workgroup, the Performance Measure and Quality Assurance Committee, and the Policy Review and Administration Committee.
- Ensure that all records related to WRC meetings are well-organized, up-to-date and kept in a central location for easy DVR staff access.
- Analyze, research and prepare reports to meet external information needs of the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council.
- Attend virtual meetings of the National Council on State Rehabilitation Conference

**WISCONSIN**



**DWD**

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**Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council  
(WRC)**

**Jennifer Wakerhauser**  
Chief Legal Counsel  
Department of Workforce Development

# Open Meetings



# The Wisconsin Open Meetings Law

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- Wis. Department of Justice – Office of Open Government, May 2019
- <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/office-open-government/Resources/OML-GUIDE.pdf>





# Open Meetings Law

## Wis. Stat. § 19.81

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- “In recognition of the fact that a representative government of the American type is dependent upon an informed electorate, it is declared to be the policy of this state that **the public is entitled to the *fullest and most complete information* regarding the affairs of government as is compatible with the conduct of governmental business.**”



# The WRC is a “governmental body”

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- All WRC meetings

- Must be preceded by public notice, and
- Must be held in a public place that is open and reasonably accessible to all members of the public.



# Remote meeting guidance

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- You must follow notice requirements under state law.
- Notice must include all information needed for remote access, including dial-in information, links and passcodes.
- If the meeting is via videoconference or internet-based, strongly consider providing a telephone option.
- Facilitate reasonable access for people who cannot attend remotely.
- The meeting chair should ask all members to identify themselves before speaking and not to speak over one another.
- When possible, record the meeting and promptly make the recording publicly available on social media or a website.



A “meeting” occurs whenever:

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- Members **convene** for the **purpose** of conducting governmental business; and
- The **number** of members present is sufficient to determine the body's course of action

*State et al. rel. Newspapers v. Showers*, 135 Wis. 2d 77 (1987)



# What is a Walking Quorum?

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- **Answer:** A quorum is the minimum number of a governmental body's membership necessary to act. One governmental body may define what constitutes a quorum differently than another governmental body. For example, a quorum for a seven member town council may be a simple majority of four members while a quorum for a neighboring town's seven member council may be a super majority of five members.
- <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/office-open-government/ask-the-oog/what-walking-quorum>



# WRC Bylaws Define Quorum

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- Article IV – Offices
- **F. Quorum** A majority of the Council Members attending the meeting, excluding ex officio members, shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Council. If less than a majority of the Council members are represented at any said meeting, the Council cannot act in any matter within the jurisdiction of the Council in the absence of a quorum. If a quorum is present, the affirmative vote of the majority of the Council members represented at the meeting shall be the act of all the Council members.
- <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/partners/wrc/wrc-bylaws.htm>



# Meetings presumed open

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- Meetings begin in open session
  - Citizens right to attend and observe
  - Allow recording, filming, or photographing the meeting



# Meetings presumed open (cont.)

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- By motion, may go into closed session
  - Votes of each member must be recorded
  - Chair must announce the statutory exemption authorizing closed session and the nature of the business to be considered





# Public Records



# The Wisconsin Public Records Law

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- Wis. Department of Justice – Office of Open Government, October 2019
- <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/office-open-government/open-government-law-and-compliance-guides>



# Public Records Law

## Wis. Stat. § 19.31

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- The public records law “shall be construed in every instance with **a presumption of complete public access, consistent with the conduct of government business.** The denial of public access generally is contrary to the public interest, and only in an exceptional case may access be denied.”



# The WRC must produce records upon request

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- “Record” is “[a]ny material on which written, drawn, printed, spoken, visual or electromagnetic information or electronically generated or stored data is recorded or preserved, regardless of physical form or characteristics, which **has been created or is being kept by** an authority.”

Wis. Stat. § 19.32(2)



# Not a “record”

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- Drafts, notes, and preliminary documents
- Published material available for sale or at library
- Purely personal property
- Material with limited access rights, such as copyrights or patents

# Emails, text messages, and documents on private accounts

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- May be “records”
- Content determines whether it is a “record”, not the medium, format or location
- **Personal materials on the same private accounts are not subject to disclosure**



# Sufficient request

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- May be in writing or oral
- “Magic words” not required
- Must be reasonably specific as to time and subject matter
- Must reasonably describe the information or records requested



# Response

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- As soon as practicable, without delay:
  - Provide records
  - Deny or partial denial
  - Respond that there are no records





# If the WRC receives a request:

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- DWD will assist with the response
- Do not delay – forward the request to DWD Legal: [OpenRecords@dwd.wisconsin.gov](mailto:OpenRecords@dwd.wisconsin.gov)
- Committee members will likely need to search for responsive records



# Questions?

**Jennifer Wakerhauser**

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[www.dwd.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dwd.wisconsin.gov)



STATE OF WISCONSIN



Department of Workforce Development

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**Vocational Rehabilitation**

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# DVR Quarterly Update

DELORA NEWTON  
DVR Administrator

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council | November 10, 2022 | WebEx

# Follow-up Items from August Meeting

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- Update on DVR Outreach Plan - *Postponed*
- CSNA Tier 2 Discussion – *On today's agenda*
- Update on DVR DEI Plan - *Postponed*
- Review the WRC Resource Plan – *In Committee Report*
- DVR progress on possible ability for Service Providers to provide transportation for consumers in private vehicles – *On today's agenda*



# Program Year (PY) 2022 Outcomes

- For cases closed **07/01/2022 – 10/12/2022:**

<b>PY 2022 Closures</b>	<b>All Cases</b>	<b>All SE Cases</b>	<b>All Non-SE Cases</b>
<b>Total Successful Closures</b>	937	220	717
<b>Median Total Wages per Week</b>	\$288	\$153	\$363
<b>Average Wage Per Hour</b>	\$17.21	\$11.98	\$18.04
<b>Average Hours Worked per Week</b>	25	15	28
<b>Private Insurance</b>	342	55	287



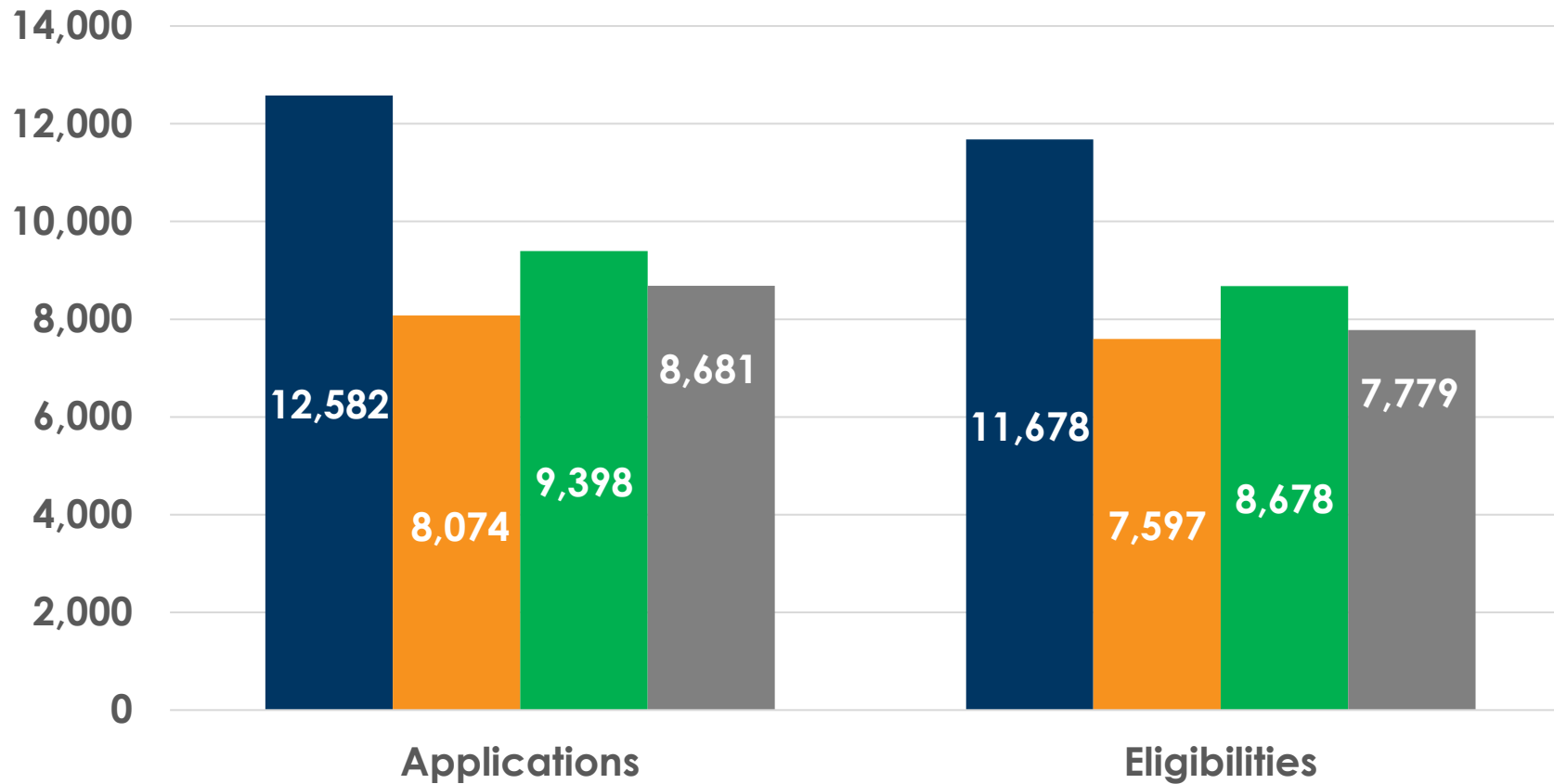
# WI VR Outcomes vs National VR Outcomes

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<b>Federal Program Year 2021</b>	<b>WI Rate</b>	<b>National Rate</b>
<b>Employment Rate Q2</b> (7/1/2020-6/30/2021)	54.0%	52.5%
<b>Employment Rate Q4</b> (1/1/2020-12/31/2020)	50.1%	48.0%
<b>Median Earnings</b> (7/1/2020- 6/30/2021)	\$3,302	\$4,776
<b>Credential Rate</b> (1/1/2020-12/31/2020)	34.5%	30.8%
<b>Measurable Skill Gains</b> (7/1/2021-6/30/2022)	56.4%	43.0%



# DVR COVID-19 Service Impacts



■ January 1-December 31, 2019  
■ January 1-December 31, 2021

■ January 1-December 31, 2020  
■ January 1-October 30, 2022

*\*Data current as of October 30, 2022*



# Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) DVR Budget

- Unspent FFY 2021 federal funds were carried over and have been spent during FFY 2022.
- FFY 2022 budget reflects final federal award including all reallocation.

<b>FFY</b>	<b>TOTAL Budget</b>	<b>TOTAL Spending</b>
<b>2020</b>	\$82,659,874	\$82,659,874
<b>2021</b>	\$82,673,781	\$82,673,781
<b>2022 to date</b>	\$84,248,223	\$59,121,878

*\*Data current as of October 27, 2022. Budget for 2022 includes all applicable state match. Budget fluctuation between years reflects changes in the availability of federal dollars. State GPR match funding has not changed during the reporting period.*





# Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

- FFY 2022 Annual Requirement: **\$9.9 million**
- FFY 2022 Purchase Orders Paid to Date: **\$8,952,907**
- FFY 2022 Staff Time Paid to Date: **\$1,142,666**

Pre-Employment Transition Service	FFY 2021	FFY 2022
Job Exploration Counseling	\$603,161	\$583,758
Work-Based Learning	\$7,380,673	\$6,586,145
Counseling on Opportunities for Transition	\$69,670	\$48,845
Workplace Readiness Training	\$1,790,197	\$1,573,306
Self Advocacy	\$134,753	\$160,853

*\*Data current as of October 21, 2022*



# Existing Business Employment & Wage Assessments

July 1, 2022 – September 30, 2022

	Referral for EWA	EWA Met Min. Wage	EWA Did Not Meet Min. Wage	Debt/Asset Ratio Requested	Debt/Asset Ratio Passed	Debt/Asset Ratio in Process	Exception Requested	Exception Approved
Farm	5	1	3	1	1	0	0	0
Non-Farm	8	1	3	3	0	2	0	0
Total	13	2	6	4	1	2	0	



# Existing Business Case Closures

**July 1, 2022 – September 30, 2022**

	<b>26 Closed Rehabilitated</b>	<b>28 Closed Not Rehabilitated (After IPE Initiated)</b>	<b>Average Total Cost Per Case</b>
<b>Farm</b>	0	0	
<b>Non-Farm</b>	3	0	\$18,555
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$18,555</b>



# Assistive Technology Fee Schedule Exception Requests

July 1, 2022 – September 30, 2022

	Exceptions Requested	Total Amount Requested	Exceptions Approved	Total Amount Approved
Farm	6	\$204,521	6	\$204,521
Non-Farm	4	\$74,805	4	\$64,805
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$279,326</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$269,326</b>



# Top Things Happening in DVR

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- Recruiting, hiring and training staff
- Progress on Career Pathways Advancement grant
- Acting upon CSNA Priorities
- Beginning preparations for FFY 2024-2027 State Plan
- Refining DEI Action Plan
- Conducting Stay Interviews
- November Native American Basic Cultural Competence Training



# DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

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## **Policy Academy**

- September meeting was canceled.
  - Administrative update provided via email
- November 8 Meeting



# DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

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## Quality Assurance

- The Fiscal QA Workgroup completed a review of Hourly Systematic Instruction service purchases
- A sub-group of the QA Team completed a Credentials and Measurable Skills Gains targeted case review
- The QA Team started an Eligibility and Order of Selection targeted case review



# DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

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## START

- Ongoing conversations regarding medical documentation for students with Emotional Behavioral Disabilities (EBD) and Other Health Impairment (OHI)
- Ideas for gathering guardianship signature for IPE for foster youth and out-of-home-care students
- Best practice for outreach to students with the start of a new academic year





# DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

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## AsTec

- Next quarter's focus will be on ensuring new team members are Assistive Technology guidance and technical specification subject matter experts.



# DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

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## **SenseAbility**

- Team met in August and October, developed a draft hearing aid checklist to augment previously issued Hearing Aid Purchasing guidance.
- Other agenda items: Over the counter hearing aids; working with DHS Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired on resources for blind consumers; guidelines for purchase of eyeglasses; completed review of an IT training vendor's training curriculum for serving blind consumers.



# DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

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## Workplace Wellness

- In-person meeting end of October
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Conducted “5 Buckets” Training for staff to learn about work life balance and bring back to WDA/CO
- Completed Statewide Fall Bingo Participation in October
- Explored how they can positively impact 5 areas of wellness for themselves and their teammates.



# DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

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## **Employee Resource Group**

- Held an in-person meeting 1 November.
- Members participated in DEI discussion.
- Requested additional RRG guidance to help define roles and identify activities of interest complement the DEI plan for the coming year.



# DVR Staff Trainings Update

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- August –
  - Study Halls on Training Grants and Work Incentive Benefits Services
- September –
  - All Staff Conference
  - Refresher courses on *Motivational Interviewing – MI Spirit and MI Beyond Ambivalence*
- October –
  - Study Halls on Confidentiality and Measurable Skills Gains
  - Comprehensive New Staff Training for 12 participants



# New Mediation Requests Aug 1 to Oct 7, 2022

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DVR received three mediation requests:

1. Request made for a variety of reasons. New counselor assigned to the case and progress is being made.
2. DVR and consumer reached agreement on services. Case temporarily on hold for medical reasons.
3. DVR recalculated the training grant and agreed to pay additional costs. Consumer also requested an appeal hearing. DVR seeking dismissal since mediation resolved the complaint.



# New Appeals Requests Aug. 1 to Oct. 10, 2022

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DVR received three appeal requests:

- Two cases appealing denial of education/training grant.
  - One consumer also sought mediation which was granted and issue resolved. DVR seeking dismissal of appeal.
- One consumer appealing denial of certain services.



# FFY 2024-2027 State Plan Process

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- October 2022: Kickoff Meeting with Partners
- November 2022 - May 2023: WRC provides input on goals/recommendations and DVR completes draft goals
- May 2023 – September 2023: Draft plan including strategies for goals, provide updates to WRC
- October 2023: Draft due for CWI WIOA and Compliance Work Group
- November 2023: Draft due to CWI
- December 2023: 30-day public comment period
- January 2024: Respond to comments
- February 2024: Route for Sign off and approval from agencies and Governor
- **March 15, 2024: SUBMIT to USDOL and ED**





# Updates to DVR Referral Form

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- Purpose – To make the form mobile friendly and conform to current accessibility standards.
- Phase 1 development concluded in October and is now in User Acceptance Training.
  - Does not include the option to save a referral and complete it later
  - Deployment planned in early to mid-November
- Phase 2 improves mobile friendliness and will allow a referral to be saved and completed later.
  - Deployment planned in late November



# 511 Interviews: PY 2022 Update

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**Total Interviews** Completed 10/24/22: 966

- Quarter 1: 447
- October: 519 and counting

Projected total for the year (July 1-June 30<sup>th</sup>): 3,300

## **Interview Information**

- Interviewers continue to reach out to schedule FY23 interviews with sites; will resume contacts in December to schedule additional spring events.
- Due to COVID-19, all interviews completed remotely via video call at employees work site.



# Project SEARCH Update

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- 28 of 30 Sites Operational in Fall 2022
  - Children's Hospital in Milwaukee and Froedtert West Bend on hiatus due to low recruitment numbers
  - DVR working with sites to help create a robust recruitment plan for the 2023-24 school year
- 215 interns enrolled in 2022-23 school year
- 177 interns successfully completed the 2021-22 school year



# NDEAM Update

- Governor Evers awarded 15 Exemplary Employer Awards to businesses across the state during National Disability Employment Awareness Month.
- DVR hosted in-person events at each to honor the employers and their employees.
- Also recognized Project SEARCH partner UW-Platteville.



# Updated WRC Website

## Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC)



### What is WRC?

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council or WRC (formerly State Rehabilitation Planning and Advisory Council) was officially established by executive order of the Governor in 1993.

Its purpose is to advise and assist the [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation \(DVR\)](#) with the preparation of applications, the State Plan, the Strategic Plan, and amendments to the Plans, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended).

WRC members are appointed to staggered three-year terms by the Governor of the State. The Administrator of DVR serves as an ex-officio member of the Council. Members of WRC consist of:

- Individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities; and
- Parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of people with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves; and
- Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services.

[WRC Mission & Vision Statement](#)

[WRC Members](#)

[WRC Committees](#)

[Public Meetings](#)

[WRC By-Laws](#)

[WRC Annual Report](#)

### Additional Information



# Questions?



# Contact Us



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DVR Administrator

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<b>Tier 1 Recommendations</b>	<b>Current/Planned Strategies</b>
<p>1. DVR will need to monitor the number of applications for services as they continue to engage in a hybrid model of work and the pandemic continues affect public health and mobility. Increasing awareness of the agency in the community will be an important focus in the coming months as will focused outreach methods through electronic platforms including social media;</p>	<p>a. Allison sends a weekly update on the applications and amount of in person activity in the WDAs</p> <p>b. BCS management has discussed with each WDA outreach plans to increase applications.</p> <p>c. Emphasize providing consumer/guardian preference of in-person, phone or virtual.</p> <p>d. We have seen an increase of referrals and applications this PY.</p> <p>e. Doing outreach events-discussing we are open for business.</p>
<p>2. DVR should develop and implement a marketing plan whose aim is to increase community awareness of the agency statewide; and</p>	<p>a. Delora has reached out to CSAVR and the NET to see how other states are interpreting CFR 200.421 when purchasing marketing services.</p> <p>b. Met with CSAVR Marketing Consultant to provide an update on what other states are doing with the challenges of the interpretation of CFR 200.</p> <p>c. Delora made recommendation to CSAVR to discuss RSA interpretation.</p> <p>d. Developing a communication and branding plan.</p>
<p>3. DVR is encouraged to focus on high wage, high demand and high skill jobs to increase the quality and diversity of employment outcomes for their consumers. The recently awarded Career Pathways Advancement grant from RSA should help the agency in this effort.</p>	<p>a. Completed Career Pathways training, apprenticeship training and have been putting the emphasis on assisting consumers increase their skills to improve outcomes.</p>



	<p>b. As part of WIOA, we will be looking at how many of consumers are participating in multiple WIOA programs</p>
	<p>c. Participating in grant mapping with DET to make sure our consumers can take advantage of programs outside of DVR.</p>
	<p>d. Met with DPI to discuss the CP mapping that they have done and share with staff.</p>
	<p>e. DVR held a mandatory IPE Comprehensive Assessment training which focused on helping consumers explore and identify careers with self-sustaining wages including career pathways. There will be additional IPE training occurring in July. Our internal IPE information page was also updated to include additional information and resources to assist staff with this.</p>
	<p>f. PY21 GARs includes a goal: IPEs developed to help consumer gain the skills and credentialing as appropriate for long term employment and economic self-sufficiency.</p>
	<p>g. Adding a measurement criteria to the tech specs to develop a baseline.</p>
<p>4. DVR is encouraged to continue to develop resources and training that promote financial literacy and empowerment for their consumers. It is recommended that DVR avail themselves of the resources available through the National Disability Institute at</p>	<p>a. DVR will be doing financial literacy mapping as part of the CPA grant. We will determine if community resources meet our needs. If there are gaps, we will determine if this is a service that needs to be developed.</p>

<p><a href="https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/">https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/</a> if they have not already done so;</p>	<p>b. Some WDAs have Financial Literacy provided via Pre-ETS programming.</p>
<p>5. Promote higher education and career pathways in IPEs, especially with youth.</p>	<p>a. Completed Career Pathways and apprenticeship staff training, and emphasize DVR assisting consumers to increase their skills to improve outcomes.</p>
	<p>b. As part of WIOA, we will be looking at how many of consumers are participating in multiple programs</p>
	<p>c. Participating in grant mapping with DET to make sure our consumers can take advantage of grants and programs outside of DVR.</p>
	<p>d. Met with DPI to discuss the CP mapping that they have done and share with staff.</p>
	<p>e. DVR held a mandatory IPE Comprehensive Assessment training which focused on helping consumers explore and identify careers with self-sustaining wages including career pathways. There will be additional IPE training occurring in July. Our internal IPE information page was also updated to include additional information and resources to assist staff with this.</p>
	<p>f. PY21 GARs includes a goal: IPEs developed to help consumer gain the skills and credentialing as appropriate for long term employment and economic self-sufficiency</p>
<p>6. DVR is encouraged to recruit bilingual Hispanic counselors when they have vacant positions. In addition to being able to speak to Spanish speaking consumers in their native language, Hispanic counselors can help build trust and relationships with the Hispanic community and increase DVR's ability to reach this population;</p>	<p>a. DVR has a specific number of allowed bilingual add-on that can provided. We recently had some staff leave that had this add-on; discussing needs of WDAs and how to move forward.</p>

<p>7. DVR is encouraged to establish or renew liaison and referral relationships with community programs serving minority populations in the State. Targeted outreach to these community service organizations can help increase the awareness of DVR and build trust among traditionally underserved populations;</p>	<p>a. MEAP outreach efforts occurring- specific to Milwaukee.</p> <p>b. Tribal agreements and partnership</p> <p>c. Hmong Chamber of Commerce.</p>
<p>8. DVR is encouraged to continue to provide training for staff and partners on diversity, equity and inclusion as they have done since the previous CSNA. There were seven staff that specifically indicated that these efforts made an impact on their perspectives and beliefs;</p>	<p>a. Our training plan includes continuation of DEI related trainings</p> <p>b. The CPA grant includes the development of training modules related to inclusion and diversity, equity and inclusion to be used by staff and stakeholders</p> <p>c. WDA 2 is participating in a training on TIC and anti-racism</p> <p>d. DEI consultant hired providing assessment of DVR and will assist DVR in developing an action plan.</p>
<p>9. The newly funded Wisconsin Career Advancement Initiative provides a unique opportunity for DVR and the other partners in the Workforce Development System in Wisconsin to enhance and increase the use of career pathways for participants currently and previously served by the WDS partners. This initiative provides an opportunity for DVR to identify strategies to ensure career pathways in high-demand and high paying jobs are routinely utilized in the IPE development process for all consumers in the future.</p>	<p>a. We are currently implementing the grant. UW will be providing evaluation services from the data and outcomes of the participants.</p> <p>b. The STEM and Career Pathways, and IPE training did discuss the importance of using partners in the IPE process.</p>

<b>Tier 2 Recommendations</b>	<b>Current/Planned Strategies</b>
<p>1. DVR is encouraged to conduct connectivity assessments for all consumers that are engaged in the comprehensive assessment process for plan development. When needed, DVR should purchase the necessary equipment and service to ensure their participants are able to effectively access and function in the digital world. This includes broadband Internet where available and laptops, cell phones and hotspots in cellular service plans. One possibility for adaption is the BPD Technology Assessment Checklist created by the Technology Committee for the association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors. The tool is available in the embedded file below. DVR should adapt the tool for their own needs if they decide to use it:</p>	<p>a. Developed a best practice guide regarding purchasing technology.</p>
	<p>b. DVR has service descriptions, best practice suggestions and a list of AT vendors to streamline AT services and goods.</p>
<p>2. Analyze data on the return rate of consumers and determine why they are coming back to DVR and identify and implement strategies to address these concerns.</p>	<p>a. Pre-Covid our QA analyst did do this for SEP consumers. However, due to the pandemic it may be worth relooking at why people are returning.</p>
<p>3. Whenever possible, parents, providers and DVR staff need to convey and set high expectations for consumers and help individuals with the most significant disabilities to strive for their highest potential;</p>	<p>a. DVR held a mandatory IPE Comprehensive Assessment training which focused on helping consumers explore and identify careers with self-sustaining wages including career pathways. There will be additional IPE training occurring in July. Our internal IPE information page was also updated to include additional information and resources to assist staff with this.</p>
	<p>b. PY21 GARs includes a goal: IPEs developed to help consumer gain the skills and credentialing as appropriate for long term employment and economic self-sufficiency</p>
	<p>c. New tech specs on benefits analysis to assist with exploring and help achieve this.</p>

	d. Tech Specs for Supported Employment require team discussion and agreement if consumer is placed in job that is less than 15 hours per week.
	e. DVR emphasizes use of Benefits Analysis services to address economic hesitations of consumers and families.
4. Identify resources to help reinvigorate training in supported and customized employment for service providers across the state. One possibility will be to request technical assistance and training from the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE) at <a href="https://tacqe.com/">https://tacqe.com/</a> ;	a. We have partnered with APSE to provide low cost and high quality training to our SP staff for supported employment.
	b. We provide customized employment training routinely to our SP.
	c. In the technical specifications effective July 1, DVR has increased the fees for those services which should allow providers to offer increased salaries for their employees delivering CE and SE services.
5. As resources allow, DVR should provide SE and CE training for providers and build in incentives for placement that includes quality indicators established by DVR such as higher wages, benefits, increased hours and opportunities for promotion;	a. DVR has had enhanced payments for identified benchmarks for earnings, benefits and hours in employment.
6. As the Job Centers of Wisconsin open their offices to serve individuals in-person throughout the state, DVR is encouraged to reinvigorate partnerships and programs that have been interrupted due to the pandemic; and	a. DVR is reconnecting with our local workforce partners.
7. Expand marketing efforts to businesses to raise awareness of DVR and the services the agency can provide to businesses throughout the state; and	a. Met with marketing consultant to discuss CFR 200 limitations.
	b. Received clarification at CSAVR on RSA's interpretation of CFR 200.
8. DVR is encouraged to explore the development of more customized training programs with employers as a way to ensure that individuals with	a. In recent times we have struggled with maintaining customized training programs with employers beyond one or two cohorts.

<p>disabilities are trained for high-demand occupations that result in employment when the training is completed.</p>	<p>b. We would like to work with sponsors of existing training programs with employers to see how DVR consumers can participate in those trainings and provide accommodations for participation.</p>
<p>9. The agency is encouraged to consider implementing rapid engagement pilot projects to address the rate of consumers that leave the agency due to lack of engagement. A recent study on rapid engagement or expedited enrollment outcomes in California determined that the sooner an applicant has an IPE developed, the more likely they are to be closed as successfully rehabilitated. The likelihood of success decreased the longer it took to develop an IPE.</p>	<p>a. QA Team is conducting a rapid engagement case review in May to identify opportunities for improvement.</p>
	<p>b. Danielle and Andrzej are replicating the California study using Wisconsin data with additional data elements and modified case criteria for timeliness and validity.</p>
	<p>c. Implemented docuSign and SVRI service.</p>
	<p>d. DVR has had a long standing 30 day contact standard for communication with consumers.</p>
	<p>e. DVR regularly reviews the service timeframes in the specifications for statewide services.</p>
<p>10. Continue to use BSCs to educate employers through training events and in partnership with other core Workforce partners;</p>	<p>a. BSCs are continuing to do outreach to employers with a goal of 235 per BSC.</p>
	<p>b. BSCs have been trained in Windmills.</p>
	<p>c. ERD trainings that are being developed through Career Pathways Grant</p>
	<p>d. Business Services Page-new and different resources available to staff. Both external and internal.</p>
	<p>e. Attending Regional Business Services teams.</p>
	<p>f. More coordinated effort with conferences for outreach/exhibits.</p>
<p>12. DVR should reinstate the regular service provider meetings that they used to have in each WDA. This was explicitly requested by 16 participants across groups;</p>	<p>a. Most areas have re-instated SP meeting and are relooking how these are administered.</p>

<b>Tier 3 Recommendations</b>	<b>Current/Planned Strategies</b>
1. Develop IPS services throughout the state;	<p>a. IPS is a partnership with DHS Mental Health Services, County Mental Health Services and DVR. Currently DVR is providing IPS services in 21 Counties and expansion discussion in several others.</p> <p>b. DVR is represented as a partner in a 5 year ODEP technical assistance grant to formalize and encourage new IPS sites in Wisconsin.</p>
2. Conduct a computer proficiency assessment as a part of the routine comprehensive assessment process and provide training as needed to ensure employability.	<p>a. This can be accomplished as part of the technology assessment recommended in Section One;</p>
3. There are affordable housing listings in Wisconsin at <a href="https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Wisconsin">https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Wisconsin</a> . In addition Wisconsin's Department of Administration has information about affordable housing programs in the state online at <a href="https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/AffordableHousingPrograms.aspx">https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/AffordableHousingPrograms.aspx</a> . These may be helpful resources for counselors across the state to share with consumers in need if they are not already doing so.	<p>a. Our DVR staff do the best they can to keep up to date on community resources.</p> <p>b. In WDA 2 and 5, the DET Career Connection program can assist DVR consumers with connecting with community resources such as housing.</p>
4. There are affordable housing listings in Wisconsin at <a href="https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Wisconsin">https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Wisconsin</a> . In addition Wisconsin's Department of Administration has information about affordable housing programs in the state online at <a href="https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/AffordableHousingPrograms.aspx">https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/AffordableHousingPrograms.aspx</a> . These may be helpful resources for counselors across the state to share with consumers in need if they are not already doing so.	<p>a. Our DVR staff do the best they can to keep up to date on community resources.</p> <p>b. In WDA 2 and 5, the DET Career Connection program can assist DVR consumers with connecting with community resources such as housing.</p>
5. DVR is encouraged to reach out to the Centers for Independent Living in (CILs) Wisconsin and encourage these CILs to develop and deliver pre-employment transition services if they do not do so currently;	<p>a. Some CILs are providing Pre-Ets.</p>

<p>6. DVR is encouraged to consult with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C) to identify resources on self-advocacy training for students with disabilities at <a href="https://transitionta.org/topics/pre-ets/self-advocacy/">https://transitionta.org/topics/pre-ets/self-advocacy/</a>;</p>	<p>a. Most of our summer programs have some components of self-advocacy in them.</p> <p>b. During COVID, DVR rolled out the Explore Work virtual training</p> <p>c. ILCs have a curriculum that can be used for self advocacy.</p> <p>d. We don't do much pure self advocacy trainings, but it is incorporated in work readiness training as you can't have one without the other.</p> <p>e. DPI has a very good program that is available to all students with disabilities in the public school system. We have them apply what they have learned from these other programs.</p> <p>f. 511 interviews include local resources for self-advocacy.</p>
<p>7. DVR is encouraged to consider developing a peer mentoring program for youth with disabilities in Wisconsin. One possibility is an online peer mentoring program available through PolicyWorks at <a href="https://disabilitypolicyworks.org/peer-mentoringworks-2/">https://disabilitypolicyworks.org/peer-mentoringworks-2/</a>. A key component of this mentoring program is the development of self-advocacy skills in youth and students with disabilities.</p>	<p>a. We have a pilot program in peer mentoring that is being implemented in WDA 5.</p>
<p>8. DVR should consider providing incentive pay rates to service providers if they develop jobs that meet DVR-established criteria for quality and high-wage employment;</p>	<p>a. DVR is currently reviewing and updating technical specifications and pay rates. There are already some incentives built in for establishing quality employment.</p>
<p>9. DVR should consider continuing to pay the pandemic-related rate increases to providers that develop jobs as long as there are restrictions in place caused by the pandemic;</p>	<p>a. DVR will not be continuing the pandemic-related rate increases. We are looking at a 10-20% increase for most services.</p>
<p>10. DVR is encouraged to provide training to CRPs and individual service providers as time and resources allow.</p>	<p>a. We currently do provide SP trainings as needed.</p>





<b>Tier 2 Recommendations</b>	<b>Current/Planned Strategies</b>
<p>1. DVR is encouraged to conduct connectivity assessments for all consumers that are engaged in the comprehensive assessment process for plan development. When needed, DVR should purchase the necessary equipment and service to ensure their participants are able to effectively access and function in the digital world. This includes broadband Internet where available and laptops, cell phones and hotspots in cellular service plans. One possibility for adaption is the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD) Technology Assessment Checklist created by the Technology Committee for the association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors. The tool is available in the embedded file below. DVR should adapt the tool for their own needs if they decide to use it:</p>	<p>a. Developed a best practice guide regarding purchasing technology.</p>
<p>2. Analyze data on the return rate of consumers and determine why they are coming back to DVR and identify and implement strategies to address these concerns.</p>	<p>b. DVR has service descriptions, best practice suggestions and a list of Assistive Technology vendors to streamline Assistive Technology services and goods.</p> <p>a. Pre-Covid our Quality Assurance Analyst did do this for Supported Employment Program consumers. However, due to the pandemic it may be worth relooking at why people are returning.</p>
<p>3. Whenever possible, parents, providers and DVR staff need to convey and set high expectations for consumers and help individuals with the most significant disabilities to strive for their highest potential;</p>	<p>a. DVR held a mandatory Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) Comprehensive Assessment training which focused on helping consumers explore and identify careers with self-sustaining wages including career pathways. Additional IPE training was held in July. Our internal IPE information page was also updated to include</p>

	<p>additional information and resources to assist staff with this.</p>
	<p>b. PY21 Goals and Accomplished Reviews (GARs) included a goal: IPEs developed to help consumer gain the skills and credentialing as appropriate for long term employment and economic self-sufficiency. This is also on PY22 GARs.</p>
	<p>c. New tech specs on benefits analysis to assist with exploring and help achieve this.</p>
	<p>d. Tech Specs for Supported Employment require team discussion and agreement if consumer is placed in job that is less than 15 hours per week.</p>
	<p>e. This is a goal in Competitive Integrated Employment plan with strategies.-511 outreach activities, local outreach to students and their parents.</p>
	<p>f. Discuss in Career Pathways Advancement (CPA) messaging</p>
	<p>g. DVR emphasizes use of Benefits Analysis services to address economic hesitations of consumers and families.</p>
<p>4. Identify resources to help reinvigorate training in supported and customized employment for service providers across the state. One possibility will be to request technical assistance and training from the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE) at <a href="https://tacqe.com/">https://tacqe.com/</a>;</p>	<p>a. We have partnered with Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) to provide low cost and high-quality training to our Service Provider staff for supported employment.</p>
	<p>b. We provide customized employment training routinely to our Service Providers.</p>
	<p>c. In the technical specifications effective July 1, DVR has increased the fees for those services which should allow providers to offer increased salaries for their employees delivering Customized</p>

	Employment (CE) and Supported Employment (SE) services.
5. As resources allow, DVR should provide Supported Employment (SE) and Customized Employment (CE) training for providers and build in incentives for placement that includes quality indicators established by DVR such as higher wages, benefits, increased hours and opportunities for promotion;	a. DVR has enhanced payments for identified benchmarks for increased earnings, jobs with benefits and increased hours in employment.
6. As the Job Centers of Wisconsin open their offices to serve individuals in-person throughout the state, DVR is encouraged to reinvigorate partnerships and programs that have been interrupted due to the pandemic; and	a. DVR has been reconnecting with our local workforce partners. We also had a panel at our all-staff conferences on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) title programs.
	b. Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS) Bureau Director and Deputy Bureau Director schedule monthly touch base w/Bureau Director of Job Service to improve communication and partnership.
7. Expand marketing efforts to businesses to raise awareness of DVR and the services the agency can provide to businesses throughout the state; and	a. Received clarification at Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) on Rehabilitation Services Administration's (RSAs) interpretation of CFR 200. (Code of Federal Regulations 200)
	b. Exploring hiring a marketing firm. Looking at existing contracts and what can be piggybacked
	c. Vermont re-branding efforts
8. DVR is encouraged to explore the development of more customized training programs with employers as a way to ensure that individuals with disabilities are trained for high-demand occupations that result in employment when the training is completed.	a. In recent times we have struggled with maintaining customized training programs with employers beyond one or two cohorts.
	b. We would like to work with sponsors of existing training programs with employers to see how DVR consumers can participate in those trainings and provide accommodations for participation.

<p>9. The agency is encouraged to consider implementing rapid engagement pilot projects to address the rate of consumers that leave the agency due to lack of engagement. A recent study on rapid engagement or expedited enrollment outcomes in California determined that the sooner an applicant has an IPE developed, the more likely they are to be closed as successfully rehabilitated. The likelihood of success decreased the longer it took to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).</p>	<p>a. Danielle and Andrzej are replicating the California study using Wisconsin data with additional data elements and modified case criteria for timeliness and validity.</p> <p>b. Quality Assurance (QA) Team is conducting a rapid engagement case review in May to identify opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>c. Implemented DocuSign and Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) service.</p> <p>d. DVR has had a long-standing 30-day contact standard for communication with consumers.</p> <p>e. DVR regularly reviews the service timeframes in the specifications for statewide services.</p>
<p>10. Continue to use Business Service Consultants (BSCs) to educate employers through training events and in partnership with other core Workforce partners;</p>	<p>a. BSCs are continuing to do outreach to employers with a goal of 235 per BSC.</p> <p>b. BSCs have been trained in Windmills.</p> <p>c. Equal Rights Division (ERD) trainings that are being developed through Career Pathways Grant</p> <p>d. Business Services Page-new and different resources available to staff. Both external and internal.</p> <p>e. Attending Regional Business Services teams.</p> <p>f. More coordinated effort with conferences for outreach/exhibits.</p>
<p>12. DVR should reinstate the regular service provider meetings that they used to have in each Workforce Development Area (WDA). This was explicitly requested by 16 participants across groups;</p>	<p>a. Most areas have re-instated Service Provider meeting and are relooking how these are administered and exploring a statewide Service Provider meeting.</p> <p>b. Bureau of Management Services (BMS)/Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS) staff are planning regularly offered statewide service provider training for 2023.</p>



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of Wisconsin, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council and the Interwork Institute at San Diego District University jointly conducted an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in the State of Wisconsin. A triennial needs assessment is required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is intended to help inform the Combined State Plan developed by the core partners in Wisconsin's Workforce Development System. The data was gathered, analyzed and grouped into the sections listed below. A summary of key findings in each section is contained here. The full results are found in the body of the report.

### Section One: Overall Performance of DVR

**The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods (data, surveys and interviews) related to this topic area:**

1. The pandemic resulted in decreasing applications and successful closures in Program Years 2019 and 2020, though not at the same rate the VR program has been impacted nationally during the same time frame;
2. DVR responded to the need to work remotely and deliver services by distance admirably. They ensured staff were provided with the technology to function virtually and worked hard to minimize the adverse impact on consumers;
3. Connectivity remains a challenge for some DVR consumers due to lack of broadband Internet service, which affects their ability to engage with the agency and prepare for and seek employment in a world increasingly dependent on high-speed access to digital information;
4. Positive impacts of the shift to remote work include savings in travel time and costs, increased staff satisfaction and increased online presence for DVR;
5. There is a need to increase the variety and quality of employment outcomes for DVR consumers;
6. There is a large rate of consumers that exit DVR for reasons related to lack of engagement; and
7. DVR needs to increase community awareness of the program.

**The following recommendations are made to DVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:**

1. DVR will need to monitor the number of applications for services as they continue to engage in a hybrid model of work and the pandemic continues affect public health and mobility. Increasing awareness of the agency in the community will be an important focus in the coming months as will focused outreach methods through electronic platforms including social media;
2. The agency is encouraged to consider implementing rapid engagement pilot projects to address the rate of consumers that leave the agency due to lack of engagement. A recent study on rapid engagement or expedited enrollment outcomes in California determined

that the sooner an applicant has an IPE developed, the more likely they are to be closed as successfully rehabilitated. The likelihood of success decreased the longer it took to develop an IPE. Table 63 contains these results:

Table 63  
*Rapid Engagement and Successful Closure*

Time from Application to Plan	Percent Closed Rehabilitated	Percent Closed other than Rehabilitated
One Day	47.50%	52.50%
2 to 30 days	40.90%	59.10%
31 to 60 days	37.40%	62.60%
61 to 90 days	35.90%	64.10%
91 to 150 days	31.60%	68.40%
151 or more days	28.30%	71.70%

3. DVR is encouraged to conduct connectivity assessments for all consumers that are engaged in the comprehensive assessment process for plan development. When needed, DVR should purchase the necessary equipment and service to ensure their participants are able to effectively access and function in the digital world. This includes broadband Internet where available and laptops, cell phones and hotspots in cellular service plans. One possibility for adaption is the BPD Technology Assessment Checklist created by the Technology Committee for the association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors. The tool is available in the embedded file below. DVR should adapt the tool for their own needs if they decide to use it:



BPD Tech  
Assessment Tool

4. DVR should develop and implement a marketing plan whose aim is to increase community awareness of the agency statewide; and
5. DVR is encouraged to focus on high wage, high demand and high skill jobs to increase the quality and diversity of employment outcomes for their consumers. The recently awarded Career Pathways Advancement grant from RSA should help the agency in this effort.

**Section Two: The needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment**

**The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:**

1. Transportation, job skills and training were all identified as the most important rehabilitation needs for individuals with disabilities. Transportation was by far the most frequently mentioned need, especially in the rural areas;



2. Mental health impairments were frequently cited as a barrier to employment for DVR consumers;
3. The need to develop social skills and to dispel employer's misconceptions about the ability of individuals with disabilities to work were frequently cited as needs;
4. Individuals with the most significant disabilities are often fearful of losing SSA benefits and this continues to affect the jobs they pursue and the hours they strive to work;
5. There is a waitlist in many areas for extended services in supported employment and difficulty getting job coaches due to provider turnover during the pandemic;
6. Financial literacy was identified as a service need for DVR consumers and the inability to manage money, plan for the future, save and invest was cited as a reason that DVR consumers may lose jobs and return to DVR for services again;
7. Affordable housing was identified as an emerging need for individuals with disabilities; and
8. There is continued need for the development of supported and customized employment among providers in order to be able to help these individuals transition to competitive integrated employment from sheltered workshops.

**The following recommendations are made to DVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:**

1. Analyze data on the return rate of consumers and determine why they are coming back to DVR and identify and implement strategies to address these concerns;
2. DVR is encouraged to continue to develop resources and training that promote financial literacy and empowerment for their consumers. It is recommended that DVR avail themselves of the resources available through the National Disability Institute at <https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/> if they have not already done so;
3. Promote higher education and career pathways in IPEs, especially with youth;
4. Whenever possible, parents, providers and DVR staff need to convey and set high expectations for consumers and help individuals with the most significant disabilities to strive for their highest potential;
5. Identify resources to help reinvigorate training in supported and customized employment for service providers across the state. One possibility will be to request technical assistance and training from the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE) at <https://tacqe.com/>;
6. Develop IPS services throughout the state;
7. Conduct a computer proficiency assessment as a part of the routine comprehensive assessment process and provide training as needed to ensure employability. This can be accomplished as part of the technology assessment recommended in Section One;
8. There are affordable housing listings in Wisconsin at <https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Wisconsin>. In addition Wisconsin's Department of Administration has information about affordable housing programs in the state online at <https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/AffordableHousingPrograms.aspx>. These

may be helpful resources for counselors across the state to share with consumers in need if they are not already doing so.

**Section Three: The needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program**

**The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:**

1. Community and systemic racism was identified as a primary barrier to employment for minorities with disabilities;
2. Other rehabilitation needs for individuals with disabilities from diverse culture are similar to all individuals with disabilities in Wisconsin;
3. Most of the individuals that participated in this CSNA did not believe that DVR underserved any specific population of individuals based on race, disability type or geography. However, those that did identify potentially underserved groups cited individuals with disabilities living in rural areas, Hispanics and Asians;

**The following recommendations are made to DVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:**

1. DVR is encouraged to recruit bilingual Hispanic counselors when they have vacant positions. In addition to being able to speak to Spanish speaking consumers in their native language, Hispanic counselors can help build trust and relationships with the Hispanic community and increase DVR's ability to reach this population;
2. DVR is encouraged to establish or renew liaison and referral relationships with community programs serving minority populations in the State. Targeted outreach to these community service organizations can help increase the awareness of DVR and build trust among traditionally underserved populations;
3. DVR is encouraged to continue to provide training for staff and partners on diversity, equity and inclusion as they have done since the previous CSNA. There were seven staff that specifically indicated that these efforts made an impact on their perspectives and beliefs;
4. Wisconsin's Department of Health Services administers a minority health program with information online at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/minority-health/index.htm>. The list of programs includes some information about community programs that are potential referral sources or partnerships for DVR that could increase services to minority communities in the state. DVR is encouraged to review the list and connect with these programs if they have not already done so.

## **Section Four: The needs of youth and students with individuals with disabilities in transition**

**The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:**

1. The pandemic and resulting school closures had a significant impact on transition at all levels, especially on providers of pre-employment transition services. However, providers were able to shift to remote service provision and DVR was very supportive of the process;
2. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities in Wisconsin are similar to all individuals served by DVR except that the need for social skills and self-advocacy skills were cited more frequently and with a greater level of importance than adults;
3. All five of the pre-employment transition services were identified as important needs for students with disabilities, with work-based learning cited as the most important service that can help prepare youth and students for employment upon transition;
4. Interview participants stressed how important independent living skills development is for youth if they are to be successful in the world of work and achieve their highest potential;
5. The Project Search sites were praised by several interview participants as being helpful for transition-age youth and an important source of job training and soft and hard skill development; and
6. Section 511 requirements for youth and CC&I&R have impacted and disrupted the pipeline from secondary school to sheltered workshops. The interview participants stressed that service providers need the capacity to serve this population through supported or customized employment in order to promote competitive integrated employment for youth with disabilities.

**The following recommendations are made to DVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:**

1. DVR is encouraged to reach out to the Centers for Independent Living in (CILs) Wisconsin and encourage these CILs to develop and deliver pre-employment transition services if they do not do so currently;
2. As resources allow, DVR should provide SE and CE training for providers and build in incentives for placement that includes quality indicators established by DVR such as higher wages, benefits, increased hours and opportunities for promotion;
3. DVR is encouraged to consult with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C) to identify resources on self-advocacy training for students with disabilities at <https://transitionta.org/topics/pre-ets/self-advocacy/>;
4. DVR is encouraged to consider developing a peer mentoring program for youth with disabilities in Wisconsin. One possibility is an online peer mentoring program available through PolicyWorks at <https://disabilitypolicyworks.org/peer-mentoringworks-2/>. A key component of this mentoring program is the development of self-advocacy skills in youth and students with disabilities.

### **Section Five: The needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System**

**The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:**

1. The interview participants indicated that it is common for DVR to have their consumers register with the Job Centers of Wisconsin and this is borne out by the data on the number of DVR participants that access employment services (Title III) through the Centers. The relationship between DVR and the Job Centers was described as good, but the pandemic resulted in the Centers operating exclusively online, so access has been very limited during the last 18 months. The relationship remains primarily one of referral between DVR and the Centers;
2. The referral stream from the Job Centers to DVR was steady prior to the pandemic but has decreased significantly since the office closures from March 2020 to June 2021. DVR is hopeful that this referral source will pick back up in the future;
3. At its best prior to the pandemic, the Job Centers struggled to provide effective services to individuals who are blind, deaf, or have significant mental health impairments. These individuals were routinely simply referred to DVR without accessing the in-person services at the centers; and
4. The partnership with Adult Education and Family Literacy was noted as an area where DVR and WTCS could increase collaboration and share resources for training for DVR consumers.

**The following recommendations are made to DVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:**

1. As the Job Centers of Wisconsin open their offices to serve individuals in-person throughout the state, DVR is encouraged to reinvigorate partnerships and programs that have been interrupted due to the pandemic; and
2. The newly funded Wisconsin Career Advancement Initiative provides a unique opportunity for DVR and the other partners in the Workforce Development System in Wisconsin to enhance and increase the use of career pathways for participants currently and previously served by the WDS partners. This initiative provides an opportunity for DVR to identify strategies to ensure career pathways in high-demand and high paying jobs are routinely utilized in the IPE development process for all consumers in the future.

### **Section Six: The need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in Wisconsin**

**The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:**

1. There was a need for job coaches noted throughout the state by providers, DVR staff and partners. This service has been especially hit hard by turnover in providers due to COVID. Interview participants indicated that job coaches and other CRP staff are able to

make much more money in other jobs in the current economy, so they are leaving in large numbers and this severely impacts the capacity of providers to deliver services;

2. Several participants indicated a need to improve the quality of job placements provided by vendors. This was a recurring theme in multiple interviews. Placements were described as primarily entry-level and low paying;
3. CRP and provider staff were very appreciative of the rate increases DVR authorized during the pandemic, indicating that these increases helped many of them stay afloat during the pandemic;
4. The need for IPS services throughout the state was identified by interview participants, especially since individuals with mental health impairments continue to constitute a large percentage of those served by DVR; and
5. CRP and other providers articulated gratitude for the training that DVR has provided to them in the past and requested that this continue in the future as they have a lot of new staff.

**The following recommendations are made to DVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:**

1. DVR should consider providing incentive pay rates to service providers if they develop jobs that meet DVR-established criteria for quality and high-wage employment;
2. DVR should consider continuing to pay the pandemic-related rate increases to providers that develop jobs as long as there are restrictions in place caused by the pandemic;
3. DVR should reinstate the regular service provider meetings that they used to have in each WDA; and
4. DVR is encouraged to provide training to CRPs and individual service providers as time and resources allow.

**Section Seven: The needs of businesses and effectiveness in serving employers**

**The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:**

1. DVR continues to utilize their Business Services Consultants primarily to build relationships with employers by identifying their needs and helping to meet those needs. They generally do not do direct job placement for individual consumers, but leave that responsibility to CRPs or individual service providers that do job development and placement;
2. Most of the BSCs were reassigned to help process Unemployment insurance claims during the pandemic and had just returned to their previous positions as BSCs when this CSNA was conducted. The reassignment resulted in an interruption in the relationships built prior to the pandemic with businesses and Workforce Development partners;
3. Employers continue to need to be educated about the abilities of individuals with disabilities. Businesses were described as having a mixed response in terms of hiring individuals with disabilities. During the interviews for this CSNA, there was a dramatic shortage of workers and businesses were in dire need of employees. Consequently, many

businesses were open-minded and receptive to hiring individuals with disabilities that may have been reticent prior to the current environment; and

4. There is a need for DVR to increase the awareness of their program in the business community.

**The following recommendations are made to DVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:**

1. Continue to use BSCs to educate employers through training events and in partnership with other core Workforce partners;
2. Expand marketing efforts to businesses to raise awareness of DVR and the services the agency can provide to businesses throughout the state; and
3. DVR is encouraged to explore the development of more customized training programs with employers as a way to ensure that individuals with disabilities are trained for high-demand occupations that result in employment when the training is completed.