

Minutes
WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL
August 10, 2023
9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

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.

WRC Members Present: Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Alan Kaltenberg, Liz Kennedy, Jenny Felty, Kyle Kleist, Natalia Graf, Dick Straub, Megan Bisonette, Michael Jackson, Delora Newton, Kathy Meisner, Jacci Borchardt, Lindsey Kreitzman

WRC Members Absent: Ann Franz, Alicia Reinhard, Dr. Debbie Lee, Gadeen Taylor-Duke, Alexis Riggs, Jolene Wanek, Lori Karcher, Norene Lueck

DVR Staff: Mikyla Mobley, Kay Schoone, Sarah Kuehn, Anna Eggebrecht, Deanna Krell, Jenna Fogarty, Jennifer Bscherer, Meredith Dressel, Patti Johnson

Guests: Ramsey Lee

Roll Call and Introductions – Round robin introductions.

Announcements – Break at 10:30 and Public Comment at 12:15.

Quorum Check – Required Quorum does not include vacant seats. Delora, Gadeen, and Natalia are non-voting member because they are DVR staff. Need 10 to reach Quorum, we met that.

Approval of Minutes – May 2023

Motion to approve minutes – Jenny Felty, Alan Kaltenberg – second. Passed.

Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals:
Council Engagement Committee

- Currently do not have a chair and haven't met recently. Liz will connect with Kay to set up another meeting.
- If members are interested in joining or chairing this committee, please let Dick know.

Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee

- At most recent meeting, committee heard overview of the Competitive Integrated Employment Plan and a Pre-ETS overview.
- Recommendations to the DVR State Plan and DVR's response were discussed.
- DVR and WRC made good compromises to make the state plan recommendations.
- Deanna will walk through the State Plan and WRC collaboration during that agenda item.

Policy Review and Administration Committee

- The three committee members are not in attendance today, Kay provided an update.
- Currently no chair.
- Reviewed Rapid Engagement and Corrective Lens Guidance at the last meeting.

Services to Business Committee

- Patti Johnson provided a presentation on DVR Business Services.

Executive Committee

- Updated State Plan recommendations.
- Bylaw changes on today's agenda
- Set the agenda for this meeting.
- Training for Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) this month. Following the training, WRC members will have a conversation with the ALJ's to provide an opportunity to make introductions and get their feedback on the training.
 - ALJ Training attendees: Dick Straub, Lindsey Kreitzman, Jenny Felty, Kyle Kleist, Jolene Wanek, and Kathy Meisner. Jen Espinoza Forlenza will attend as a CAP representative.

Bylaws Change Discussion and Vote

- This language change allows previous WRC members to serve on WRC Committees. Their committee appointment will end after two years of committee service or after the individual is no longer a member of the full council. This provides continuity for the committees.
- The proposed amendment reads:
 - Article XI - Meeting Management and other Council Operations
 - The Council shall use the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order for meeting procedures. For avoidance of doubt, this includes use of the provision that committees of the council can include outgoing council members who may serve in an advisory capacity to those committees. Unless the full council votes to assign a different length of committee service for a specific committee or committee member, each committee appointment shall conclude after two

years of committee service or two years after the individual is no longer a member of the full council, whichever occurs first.

- Motion to approve the bylaw change – Liz Kennedy, second Kyle Kleist – passed.

DVR Administrative Update - Delora Newton, DVR Administrator

- Consumers that exit DVR status 28 can mean a few things. The consumer may not be engaged with DVR, decided to stop working with DVR, consumer job at exit did not match the IPE goal, or DVR could not link DVR services to the job they exited with.
- Numbers for new eligible consumers were typically between 11,000-12,000 annually prior to COVID. DVR eligibilities for Program Year 2022 are at 10,323 so the numbers are trending towards pre-COVID numbers. There was a slow-down of student referrals during COVID. Our counselors met with students virtually during COVID and are now back in the schools meeting with students and have the option to meet virtually.
- All state VR agencies are required to "Match" the federal dollars at 21.3% of total amount. DVR is also required to meet maintenance of effort which means DVR must expend the same amount of state dollars as it did two years previously. If a consumer who was receiving Social Security Income (SSI) funds is able to earn wages high enough to no longer qualify for those funds, DVR is reimbursed for the cost of delivering VR services for that consumer. These funds are called Social Security reimbursement dollars. Those funds are in addition to the state/fed dollars that are used for consumer services. This last year DVR was able to recoup \$6 million dollars. Those dollars can be used for things other than case service dollars. \$600,000 is passed through to the Independent Living Centers (ILC's) to provide their 5 core services. DVR uses part of the Social Security reimbursement funds to pay for some staff salaries.
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) spending per student on the average is \$2,962.
- Dick shared that the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and AgrAbility are doing a survey of farmers that do not pursue services from DVR. Those results will be available in 2024.
- Dick asked why non-farm self-employment cases are so low in compared to farm cases? Is DVR doing outreach to that population? Meredith clarified that the data WRC sees under existing business does not include those consumers that DVR is assisting in starting their own business.
- Motion to view the Farm Existing Business data bi-annually in the Administrative Update instead of quarterly - Alan Kaltenberg, second Liz Kennedy – passed.
 - Dick asked if the "Ag Group" (DVR Staff and AgrAbility/Easterseals staff) would continue to get the data quarterly or bi-annually? Delora clarified that DVR

would continue to provide farm existing business data quarterly to the Ag Group.

- Dick asked if DVR is getting pressure to lessen the amount of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training that DVR is providing?
 - Delora shared that the DWD Secretary's Office was asked to provide a legislative entity information about how much training DVR and other DWD divisions are doing around DEI. However, we have not gotten any direction to reduce the DEI training effort that DVR is currently providing. Delora said that the Evers Administration has been very supportive of DEI efforts. Jacci asked Delora to keep the WRC updated if there are any changes in DEI trainings offered.
- Dick asked if DVR has pilot program ideas if DVR underspends their federal grant allotment?
 - Delora shared that DVR has increased service provider payments, increased the training grant amount, and will begin providing a stipend (\$187.50/month) for maintenance costs to Project SEARCH consumers for their participation in the program starting this fall.
- Ramsey asked if each WDA has a staff person that leads the Career Pathway Grant initiative?
 - Delora shared that DVR has four contracted staff that assist all consumers statewide who are interested in enrolling in the Grant to take advantage of increased funding.
- Kyle shared that ILC's are required to provide transition services to youth as well. ILC's are open for referrals if needed.
- AsTec meeting update from Meredith as they met yesterday. In November DVR staff will be trained on the basics of Assistive Technology.
- Kathy asked what the difference is between CCS and IPS funding?
 - Sarah indicated that Kathleen Enders would need to answer that and provide a response.

Public Comment-None

Final State Plan Presentation - Deanna Krell, Director DVR Bureau of Management Services

- Update the APSE description to Association for People Supporting Employment First.
- Modified a goal discussing DEI for measurability purposes.
- Goal six DEI goal does focus on race and ethnicity. DVR did not highlight how we would address specific disability populations because working with all disabilities is the focus of our mission. There is a section in the plan that addresses how we train our staff to ensure they can serve a diverse population of consumers with various disabilities and co-morbidities.

CAP Report - Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Disability Rights Wisconsin

- Jen asked for feedback from the WRC members on what should be included in the CAP Report in the future.
- Jacci asked if there is data on the disparities of consumers they serve currently.
 - Jen said she can provide some of that data in the future.

Overview of Training Grant Services - Tania Hanford, DVR Program and Policy Analyst

- Dick asked how long can a consumer qualify for a training grant if it takes them longer to complete a degree than the standard timeframe?
 - DVR has a 150 percent rule so, for example, our consumers can take six years to complete a four-year degree. There may be financial aid issues if a student takes more than 150 percent of the time to complete the degree. There may be a rule change to FAFSA coming soon that may delete the 150 percent rule.
- Jen (CAP) shared that there is a rumor that the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process is being streamlined. Has DVR heard anything about that?
 - DVR is not aware of process changes to the FAFSA. We have heard there may be some calculation, terminology, length of coursework allowed changes. Those calculations will be shared through the Training Grant portal from the financial aid office. DVR works with the student to ensure they can get their Training Grant in a timely way if there are financial aid office delays.

Review Action Items and Identify Future Agenda Topics

- Dick asked for all acronyms be spelled out in presentations the first time they appear.
- Best wishes to Kay and her family on their new baby! Hope to see her in November.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn – Liz Kennedy, second Kyle – Passed.