

Minutes
WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL
May 9, 2024
9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Central Transportation
2700 Week Street
Stevens Point, WI 54482

WebEx Virtual Attendance Option

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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: Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Kathy Meisner, Gadeen Taylor-Duke, Jolene Wanek, Dick Straub, Natalia Graf, Lindsey Kreitzman, Alan Kaltenberg, Kyle Kleist, Megan Bisonette, Alice Belcher, Rachel Fellers, Jennifer Felty, Lori Karcher,

Absent: Meredith Dressel, Alicia Reinhard, Norene Lueck, Dr. Debbie Lee, Liz Kennedy, Michael Jackson, Ann Franz, Jaci Borchardt

DVR Staff: Allison Gordon, Anna Eggebrecht, Deanna Krell, Tania Hanford, Kay Schoone, Patty Noland, Amy May

9:00 – 9:15 Roll Call and Introductions (*new member*)

- Meeting brought to order 9:07am.
- Roll call completed.

Announcements

- None noted

Quorum Check

- 12 WRC members so quorum met.

Approval of Minutes – February 2024

- Alan moves approve mins, Lindsey second, minutes approved.

9:15 – 9:45 Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals:

- Council Engagement Committee
 - Lori gave report out

- They have developed outreach plan for new member. This included a template for on-boarding new council members. This on-boarding development included putting systems in place to 'welcome' new member and manage deposit of resources for new and current member. The resource deposit includes a list of common terms and acronyms regularly used at meetings. Kay can connect you to this drive if you do not have the information.
- Currently filled 2 of the 3 DVR consumer vacant sits. There is still one seat open and a vacancy for Business and Industry rep.
- Three(3) counsel members term expire July 2024, 2 reapply for another term. Still have 1 vacancy for DVR consumer. Encourage individuals who could fit these seats to apply. Knowing appointment to position through governor's office can take time, still encourage members to join a meeting to learn about the counsel
- WIOA set rules for WRC. WRC was recently made aware that WRC should have the majority of their members as persons with disabilities. They reviewed this and estimated that would be 51% of WRC members. This is a concern as they believe they are not currently meet this goal. WRC cannot be 100% sure if they are meeting the goal because members are not required to disclose if they have a disability. The Council Engagement Committee is strongly encourages WRC members to refer individuals with disabilities to join the counsel. Connect with Jacci Borchardt if you have any referrals or ideas for outreach.
- Dick noted the chair ideally would be an individual with a disability, Dick doesn't identify as person with disability.
- Question as to if they is an age limit for members. Discussion around if members have to be 18 or older. Dick addressed a high school student could be helpful members to WRC, may need to ask governor's office for some guidance on this. Noted the time of the meetings is during the school day, this could be a conflict for school age individuals.
- Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee
 - Kyle gave report out. They met this past month, great discuss and review of CNSA survey questions.
 - Addressed committee meeting schedule is bi-monthly instead of monthly.
- Policy Review and Administration Committee
 - Cathy is chair. They just had a meeting recently, previous to that they hadn't meet for quite some time. At recent meeting, they reviewed DVR Existing Business Policy. Felt this was a good policy. Asked DVR about other items the committee needs to review, none at this time. The chair is going to reach out to committee members to see what other agenda items could be, also if additional meeting times are needed. The hope is to not cancel any follow up meetings.
 - Dick asked about past minutes from meetings of this committee. Kay addressed how they are on the share drive, if trouble finding them, contact Kay.
 - Jen Espinoza Forlenza (CAP) addressed how DVR is working on reviewing the Self-Employment Tool Kit, asked if there is a timeline for review. Anna responded that the Tool Kit is not at a stage where it is ready to be reviewed by the committee, if committee has thoughts or suggests send to Anna Eggebrecht or Sarah Kuehn.
- Services to Business Committee

- Jolene is the chair. She noted they are on schedule to meet monthly, but have been meeting more bimonthly do to schedule conflicts and low attendance. They plan to meet next month. Committee has be engaging in many conversations back and forth with Patti Johnson (BSC Section Chief), they are exploring continued connection and discussion.
- Executive Committee
 - Dick report out. The committee meets monthly. Most of the committee's time is planning for upcoming meetings, agenda items or topics.
 - One topic was attendance at our sub committee meetings. Really asking members to try and attend the subcommittee meetings regularly, if can't attend please let head of subcommittee know you will be absentee. It is a concern when a person doesn't attend multiple meetings in a row and hasn't let the chair know. Member attendance is important.
 - Dick represented WRC at the NCSRC and CSAVR meeting held this year. One concern is 7% reallocation of VR funds to the federal government from states that are not using their budget, this amount is still in the budget for the next year. He understands they are cost of living funds, if we can find a use for this 14% of funds, this could be an increase in budget. The federal government has concerns when states return funds. One concern is that the state match isn't being made. Another concern is many states are struggling to find individuals to fill positions. For PreETS spending, we are doing well. Number of states are falling short on this.
 - Discussion about future leadership of the committee, Dick has 1 year left and felt attending one of these meetings prior to taking the leadership role would be helpful for the next chair.
 - Discussion regarding individuals with disabilities assess to attend WRC meetings, a number of WRC members are paid through their jobs to attend meetings. For those this is not an option for, inquired if there is a stipend available to support individuals attending the WRC meetings. Deanna, DVR, will review regulations and state statues and get back to WRC. She noted there are many rules around fed/state funds support for WRC. WRC did a quick count and there were 4 people at this meeting who are not funding by their work to be here.
 - Discussion of states returning funds, it is often state agencies not having matching funds. Dick addressed that at the meeting they did not go deep into this concern.
- New Members Approval and/or Nomination.
 - Alice Belcher request to join Services to Business committee and the Policy Review and Admin committee. (Alan motioned, Jolene second, approved)
 - Rachel Fellers is new member, request to join Services to Business committee. (Alan motioned, Jolene second, approved)
 - Jen Felty requested to join Policy Review and Admin committee (Alan motioned, Lindsey second, approved)
 - Jen Espinoza Forlenza request to join the Policy Review and Admin committee and Performance Measures and Quality Assurance committee (Alan motioned, Lindsey second, approved)

- Request for Kay to send schedule of committee meetings so other WRC members could join committee to learn more about those committees. Request chair of committee contact info included in the schedule list.
- Schedules for the WRC Committees
 - **Services to Business Committee:** every second Thursday at 3:00pm
 - **Policy Review and Administration Committee:** every third Thursday at 10:00am.
 - **Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee:** Third Thursday of every other month, at 9:00am.
 - **Council Engagement Committee:** Third Tuesday of every other month at 10:00am.
 - **Executive Committee:** every fourth Monday at 10:30am
- Dick addressed open position that are appointed in middle of the term, ask governor's office if they can get a full 2 terms instead the portion of one term and full second term? Noted there is a one year gap required before you can be reappointed. DVR will review this and follow up. Noted there is also a delay with time of application and then governor's office actually approving appointment to the position. Addressed looking for replacements before the end of the current appointed member term. Individuals can continue to participate in committees even after their formal committee appointment ends.

9:45 – 10:15 CAP Report

Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Disability Rights Wisconsin

- Powerpoint attached to meeting invite.
- Statistics for both Quarter 1 and 2 for year 2024. Jen noted they have different types of cases. Some are information and referral only cases, these cases CAP only gives information to assist the consumer. They had 18 info and referral calls. They had 31 full cases.
- They get calls that are employment cases but not CAP eligible, didn't have statistics on these numbers.
- Problem area statistics of cases involved. These areas are pre-assigned based on funding CAP gets for support:
 - Employment based/discrimination (title 1) – 3 cases
 - Cases can have multiple issues fall under multiple categories. General example was a consumer who had a job offer, needed hearing aids to work on the job, request to employer to sync technology with their hearing aids in order to do the job. Based on this request, employer withdrew the offer. CAP worked through as a support role in this case.
 - Communication problems between consumer and counselor – 3 cases
 - Independent living center cases 2, 4 cases for info regarding Independent Living Centers
 - ILC cases can be complicated, CAP does have a role related to ILC and consumers rights; however, not all things ILC's do are covered by CAP's role. When these items come up that CAP doesn't cover, they give referrals.
 - IPE development implementation – 6 cases
 - General Example, when IPE is developed its intended to be a collaboration with both DVR and consumer, they have to agree. If a consumer got a job which halfway reaches their goal and wants DVR support for further pursuit toward there long term goal. DVR disagrees with

the goal or they disagree on implementation of services via DVR to reach that goal. That would be where CAP may step in.

- Conflict about services being provided -13
 - Question for example of conflict. General example, consumer had prior case with DVR, consumer has a job and DVR wants to close the case. The consumer has more advancement in their career they want DVR to assist with. Or the consumer has a specific item request (example: assistive tech) and DVR has denied it. Also, sometimes there are conflicts with DVR and consumer working together and moving forward. This is where CAP may be called in.
- WRC asked addition questions about complaints with ILC. CAP mentioned 2 areas that are concerns. Reviewing consumer rights paperwork for both DVR and ILC. This paperwork advises consumers on rights, ILC has more grievances compared to appeals. If consumer of ILC, they can file a grievance and there is a 2 parts process to this. They get their consumer rights. DVR has consumer appeal rights. When DVR denies a service, they send a letter, and this initiates due process. Consumer rights statements are very important for consumers to understand. CAP is reviewing these right statements to make sure they are as consumer friendly as possible
- Clarifying CAP's role for consumer services with ILC compared to items that are not under CAP's scope/programs housed by ILC's.
 - Example: consumer requested accessibility assessment. This would give disability, barriers, and recommendations as to what would assist consumer to be as independent as possible. But funding is through long term care supports. The consumer is concerned the accessibility assessment wasn't complete for their needs. CAP met with consumer to assist with secondary walk through and evaluation of the assessment. They try to resolve at lowest level possible, so it doesn't need to go to grievance. CAP is happy to answer questions they also do outreach and trainings, reach out to Jen Espinoza Forlenza for additional information.
- WRC voiced the example and review of examples was helpful to understand the process.

10:15 – 10:30

Break

10:30 – 11:00

Business Services Overview

Mallory Bryan, DVR WDA 6 Business Services Consultant

- Mallory- gave list of BSC contact for area. PowerPoint attached to invite meeting invite.
- Addressed connections with employers. Speaking their language and serving businesses.
- Addressed new indicator on effectiveness with serving employers as part of the WIOA act. This concentration is retention with the same employer. Statistic is evaluating if an individual is with the same employer after exiting program over 2nd and 4th quarter.
- Employers are looking for reliable employees, through BSC partnerships they help to support this.
- Further reviewed partnerships and business/partner forum event.
- Noted special initiatives.
- WRC asked about a business rep for this committee being a part of one of BSC partners (Ex: Kwik Trip, Search sight individuals, etc). This is something that was addressed with the BSC's but just recently, haven't had a chance to follow up yet.
- Addressed networking with attending and participating in conferences/etc.
- Touched on BSC impact – Connected with 2633 businesses across state and provided 7787plus services to these businesses.

- WRC asked if BSC assist with position for both SE and/or category 2 individuals? They support both.
- WRC asked about how BSC connect their leads to the VR consumer? Addressed how BSC reach out to counselors and services providers in the areas when they have leads or connects with businesses/job fairs/etc.
- WRC asked to expand on their role with specific consumer, DVR addressed how this is through collaboration with counselor, service provider, and partners. Most of the one-on-one support with the consumer is usually addressed by counselor/service provider.
- WRC asked about feedback from business about how to make job hiring, retention, and support process work better/easier? Addressed how this varies from business to business and regular communication with employers help to address these individual needs. WRC feed back they felt there is a lot of value with BSC being willing to be in-person onsite with employers.

11:00 – 12:00

DVR Administrative Update

Deanna Krell, DVR Bureau of Management Services Director

Allison Gordon, DVR Bureau of Consumer Services Director

- PowerPoint attached to invite.
- Overview of successful outcomes for PY 2023 as of 4/5/24. Noted difference between SE cases and all other non-SE cases.
- FFY DVR Budget – reviewed 2022 to date. Budget for this year will be same as 2023. DVR is spending their budget, DVR Wisconsin has never had to turn back funds. Their case load numbers are rising, if this trend continues, they will reach pre-pandemic numbers. They have also increased service costs.
- Pre-ETS services, DVR Wisconsin is doing well spending these funds. They are on track to achieve their goal and likely exceed this goal.
- Negotiated measures with RSA, review slides for number. MSG (measurable skills gain) is an academic, technical, occupational, or other form of progress made by a consumer in an education or training program that leads to a credential or employment. A credential is attained at the end of an approved education or training program that is included in the IPE (e.g., bachelor's degree, high school diploma, apprenticeship certificate, GED, etc.).
 - WRC asked if there is any estimate as to when we could expect these number may stop increasing as we continue to pull good numbers. DVR is watching quarter 2/quarter 4 numbers. Median earnings we could use to see some improvement, still we have many successful SE closures.
 - Asked about how they figure out goals with RSA from state to state, RSA reviews numbers and then use the statistical model to come up with goal numbers that seem reasonable. Then each state has an opportunity to negotiate those goals. Wisconsin is generally in the middle to high end with their numbers. The same employer for quarter 2/4 is not included with these numbers, This is a number addressed with Services to Employers metric, it is the first year they are doing this measure.
 - WRC asked about consequences for not meeting numbers, addressed how some numbers are across multiple titles, if one title fails, we all fail. DVR have seen 1 state fail a measure; RSA could put them on a performance improvement plan. Their can also be funding implications if VR fail the numbers. RSA is always seeking continues improvement, so economy impact can happen.
 - Review top items:

- New Disability Innovation Grant released: Creating a 21st Century Workforce of Youth and Adults with Disabilities Through the Transformation of Education, Career, and Competitive Integrated Employment Model Demonstration Project. Also known as the DIF fund, application are due July 8th. DVR has reached out to potential partners to join with DVR or who will apply on their own.
- 5 core areas you can pick, 6 is pick 2 of these or other. This is quite broad and VR already has the CPA grant (similar grant, they have 2 years left on this)
- WRC asked about cycle of grant/number of years, how are the funds to be applied. It is 5 years, it can be used to augment current programs or could be a completely new initiative.
- WRC asked which other agencies are considering apply for this or partnering with us. It depends on what topic DVR decides to focus on and they did talk with DPI, BPDD, they are not sure of what their part would be either. They did ask that VR let them know if they are considering it, which VR did.
- WRC noted the coalition for ILC's is also interested in the DIF grant.
- Policy Academy review
- START Team review
- AsTec review
- Sensibility review
- Wellness Team review
- Employee Resource Group review
- Highlight some DVR Staff training
 - February 2024: Depression/Anxiety from Dr. Kris Eiring
 - March 2024: Existing Business Policy moved to April
 - April 2024: Principles in De-Escalation and Tough Conversations; Existing Business Policy; AgrAbility in-person training
 - May 2024: AIVR/DVR Tribal AODA training; technical specification review; WIOA Wednesday – Value of Collaboration; Comprehensive New Staff Training
 - June 2024: Fundamental Counseling Skills – Case Management vs.
- Vocational Counseling Mediation and Appeal slides
 - 2 mediation request still active pending outcomes
 - 2 appeal request still have no decisions
 - 9 total appeals in FFY 2024
- Service Provider transportation update.
- Annal DVR Senior Leadership visits going June – Sept 2024

12:00 – 12:45 Lunch Break

12:45 – 1:00 Public Comment

- No public comment received.

1:00 – 1:45 AgrAbility Overview

Dick Straub, Professor Emeritus/Farmer

Jeff Kratochwill, Easter Seals FARM & Vocational Services Program Director

- PowerPoint Attached to invite.
- Review AgrAbility definition.
- Priorities for AgrAbility
- Reviewed Program Structure
- Explored eligibility for AgrAbility and Farmers Served with Demographics
- Reviewed the process for Farmers
- Addressed funding sources
- Reviewed Assistance Objective and Assistive Technology
- Reviewed Assistive Technology examples across Wisconsin.
- Discussed nice to see the specific success stories. Also addressed the use of multiple adaptations with low to higher cost. Nice to see number of options.

1:45 – 2:15 Disability Service Provider Network (DSPN) Presentation

Kathy Meisner, Director of Program Operations

- PowerPoint attached to invite
- Reviewed history and mission
- DSPN is a membership organization who pay annual dues. They also have Associate members (companies that could be benefits to their members)
- Reviewed DSPN Membership Makeup.
- Addressed Membership Benefits
- Reviewed WPWN Project
 - Reviewed training options
- Have Roadside Facilities Program
 - Discussed individuals using this a work experience compared to individuals who get hired on in positions.
- DSPN Annual conference Nov 6th and 7th in La Crosse.
 - Requested presentation about WRC
- Mentioned DSPN big support is advocacy.
- Discussion about rates with services providers and MCO's.

2:15 – 2:30 Review Action Items, Vote on Committee Membership Recommendations, and Identify Future Agenda Topics

- Future Topics
 - Presentation from providers/provider groups, would WRC like more presentation from provider groups? Yes
 - What sort of process redesign in DVR for more rapid engagement with consumers, WRC would like a report out.
 - CSNA survey results review
 - Dick noted from NCSRC and CSAVR meetings he attended; some states WRC were publicizing DVR to let the general public know what DVR does/serves.
 - Discussing Small business start ups seem to be more present in other states than Wisconsin as well.
 - Addressed outreach to build services provider capacity in state.

- Committee's may want to think about specific objectives the committee would like to work on. Also, if committees have ideas for WRC full meeting, share with the committee chairs to put on the agenda.
- Investigate how provider landscape has change over the last several years.

2:30 Adjourn (Jenny motion, Lori second, Adjourned at 2:12pm)

*Shout out to Kay for all her efforts with organizing the meeting! Thank you!

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

*Comments sent to that e-mail box will be read to the full council at the next meeting unless a specific subcommittee is listed. If a specific subcommittee is listed, comments will be sent directly to them and reviewed at their next committee meeting.