



**Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council**  
500 S. 84<sup>th</sup> St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4987

"A consumer-controlled council committed to ensuring quality rehabilitation services."

## **SRC Meeting Minutes**

Nebraska Department of Education  
500 South 84<sup>th</sup>, State Board Room, Lincoln, NE  
Tuesday, October 7th, 2025  
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The meeting minutes of the State Rehabilitation Council commenced at 10:02 am by Jana Egan.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ashley Altman, Jodi Bodnar, Gloria Eddins, Jana Egan, Jason Gieschen, Matthew Kaslon, Todd Ludwig, Paulette Monthei, Scott Parrill, Terri Ridder, Lindy Foley, Tobias Orr, Janel Sweley

### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Jordyn Brummund, Michael Bursaw, Sharon Elliot, Christine Gaspari, Lisa Kent-Scheer, Alvin Parker,

**NEBRASKA VR STAFF PRESENT:** Holly Enriquez, Angela Fujan, Michael Enriquez, Lupe Stevens, Alexa Krueger

**NEBRASKA VR STAFF ABSENT:** NONE

**VISITORS:** Margie Propp, Ben Sparks

#### I. Pledge of Allegiance (Jason)

Jason lead members in resighting the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### II. Approval of agenda (Chair)

Jana called for a motion to approve the agenda. Gloria moved to approve the agenda. Matt seconded the motion.

III. Approval of prior meeting minutes (Chair)

Jana called for a motion to approve the May 6, 2025, meeting minutes. Paulette made a motion to approve. Todd seconded the motion. There were no objections.

Jana called for a motion to approve the August 5, 2025, meeting minutes. Tobias asked to have the word “chair” be removed and replace with “members” in the NSILC report.

Paulette asked for an amendment in a statement she made to read as follows:

Paulette shared her son is currently in VR’s Pre Employment Transition Program. She mentioned that presenters should be well-versed in the types of reasonable accommodations that their services offer so participants know that their needs will be met.

Jana called for a motion to approve the amended August 5, 2025, meeting minutes. Paulette moved to approve the amended meeting minutes. Tobias seconded the motion.

All Council members were asked to approve the May 6, 2025, agenda. Motion was carried by unanimous consent.

All Council members were asked to approve the August 5, 2025, agenda. Motion was carried by unanimous consent.

IV. Robert’s Rules, meeting etiquette, and short break hourly (Chair)

Jana mentioned the Council follows Robert’s Rules and uses meeting etiquette.

V. Introductions (Chair)

All Council members introduced themselves.

VI. Council membership

A. Potential members: None

B. New Members: None

C. 2025 Terms ending:

- First term ending: None
- Second term ending: None
- Recruitment reminder: Individuals with a disability needed to maintain the 51% Council majority.

Lindy informed the Council she shared information with the State Board of Education during its September meeting about ongoing efforts to recruit new SRC members. This allows the

State Board members to consider individuals they know who might be interested in serving on the Council and also spreads awareness of the SRC.

Angela said VR has a process to contact previous VR clients who have successfully closed cases to ask if they are interested in becoming SRC members.

## VII. Action

Follow-up to action items from last meeting:

- Follow-up to action items from last meeting: Election of Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Chairs (Angela)

Angela told the Council they will be holding an election of officers. She also explained each Chair's duties to the Council.

- SRC Chair: Responsible for Chairing all Council meetings.
- The Vice Chair: Responsible for running Council meetings in the event of the Chair's absence.
- Council Committee Chairs: Responsible for reporting to the Council after committee breakout groups.

Angela informed the Council Jana would like to run for SRC chair. Matt also expressed interest in running for Chair.

Gloria nominated herself for SRC Vice Chair. No one else expressed an interest in running for this position. Gloria was elected SRC Vice Chair.

All SRC voting members present cast their votes for Jana or Matt. After tallying the votes, Jana was nominated for the 2026 SRC open Chair position.

- Set 2026 meetings (Chair)

Members discussed the upcoming 2026 meetings. It was decided the 2026 meetings would be held February 3<sup>rd</sup> (via Zoom), May 5<sup>th</sup> (in-person), August 4<sup>th</sup> (via Zoom), and October 6<sup>th</sup> (in-person).

- State Plan topics assignment to committees (Lindy)

Lindy stated she feels the SRC can help play a critical role in helping to achieve the State Plan's goals. She then shared the 4 goals in the WIOA State Plan with Council members

Goal #1: Increase effective communication and engagement with clients, businesses, SRC, and staff members

Goal #2: Increase youth with disabilities' awareness of Nebraska VR Services

Goal #3: Improve processes to ensure unserved and underserved populations have access to Nebraska VR services.

Goal #4: Improve quality outcomes for clients receiving supported employment or customized employment.

Lindy proposed Council members could discuss these goals in greater detail during committee breakout groups at future SRC meetings.

Members agreed to this idea.

Lindy said she feels this will allow Council members to take a deeper look into VR and will show them how meaningful their work as Council members is.

A link to the WIOA portion in Nebraska's Combined State Plan has been provided below. Nebraska VR's section begins on page 204.

#### Combined State Plan For Nebraska's Workforce System

## VIII. Discussion

### A. Member Feedback on Written Reports (10 minutes each):

#### 1. ATP (Tobias Orr)

Tobias shared ATP will be holding a booth at Project Connect at Pinnacle Bank Arena on October 8, 2025. He explained this project helps the homeless community.

The Enrichment Foundation Grant application was submitted for FY26 in August. ATP is waiting for a decision on the grant award.

Tobias shared a DHHS Program update. He reported 120 projects were authorized, and more referrals keep coming in.

He also gave an ATP Education program update for Fiscal Year (7/1/2024 – 6/30/2025). There were 1054 items loaned. 1605 items showcased, demonstrated, or provided training on, and there were 186 Education requests. He also stated the ATIA Learning Center assessed 145 individuals and provided hundreds of high-quality trainings.

Tobias shared an update on the iCanConnect Program. He reminded the Council this program provides free telecommunication equipment and training to low-income individuals with significant hearing and vision loss. There are 2 active cases in Nebraska.

He stated ATP is working on automating their referral process to accept VR referrals automatically. He is hoping this will help increase the number of referrals made to ATP. This will hopefully be rolled out by winter of 2025.

## 2. CAP (Jodi Bodnar)

Jodi shared an update about CAP's Outreach and Interagency Coordination Plan. She explained a new outreach letter with QR code was developed to make requesting information easier.

She shared the Respect and Dignity Committee will be looking to merge with a larger committee – The VR Leadership Committee – to work together on shared goals.

Jodi told the Council NDRN's CAP Training and Technical Assistance grant will not continue in FY26. They have filed an appeal and have received private funding through December 2025. She added that NDRN is "actively exploring long-term solutions to sustain CAP T/TA services in the future," referencing NDRN's October 2025 update.

Jodi shared CAP is looking to strengthen its documentation and data systems. By updating more data systems, this will allow CAP to gather more information on clients and strengthen reporting. CAP is expanding its data collection to better inform primary stakeholders – including Nebraska VR, Tribal VR, NCBVI, Independence Rising, and the League of Human Dignity.

She shared one case closure summary with the Council. She explained CAP was able resolve this client complaint and the lowest level of dispute possible.

Jodi explained the VR client contacted CAP and expressed they wanted to work with a new VR Counselor either within the same Service Office, or at a different location. She referenced VR's case closure transfer policy and related processes, noting the importance of ensuring transfers are appropriate and the resolution pathways are discussed.

She explained she did a lot of mediating with the Office Director to better explain the client's needs. From there she was able to make potential suggestions that would help the case.

The client was reassigned to a different counselor. They were able to review the client's IPE and establish consistent supports to help the client stay on track. Examples she included were reminders and check-ins. She explained this allowed the client to feel seen and heard. The client expressed satisfaction.

### 3. Deaf & Hard of Hearing (Ashley Altman)

Ashley told the Council there will be an Interpreter Workforce meeting on October 15, 2025.

She said Nebraska facing a shortage of interpreters statewide. There are currently 60 active interpreters statewide, which is not nearly enough.

Ashely shared the NCDHH has nearly finalized the Family Resource Guide with local and national resourced.

They have partnered with Disability rights Nebraska on a library and ADA case to secure interpreter accommodations for public events.

She said the NCDHH applied for grant funding to host workshop. They are looking for both national and public presenters.

Ashley sated they are also working hard to make sure deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing communities have access to mental health.

The NCDHH is working to ensure their website is fully ADA compliant. They will be releasing their new website down the road.

They have also asked to receive feedback on their new logo from the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This feedback will help improve accessibility for low-vision users.

### 4. NSILC (Christine Gaspari)

Tobias shared no major changes have occurred this last quarter. The are still looking for new members and working closely with the state to get back into compliance.

### 5. Ombudsman (report only)

See attached report.

### 6. Youth Leadership Council (report only)

Lupe informed the Council Kathy Lloyd retired from the Youth Leadership Council Facilitator position. This position is currently open, and Nebraska VR is accepting applications statewide. This position will be closed by the end of day on October 9, 2025. If anyone is interested in applying or knows anyone interested in applying, they can visit the Nebraska State Jobs Website.

B. Member Feedback on VR (Chair)

Jodie shared she will reach out to the Winnebago Tribe to see if anyone is interested in becoming a member of the SRC.

C. Director Report (Lindy Foley)

Lindy informed the Council she and VR Assistant Directors, Cathy Calloway, and Holly Enriquez are currently in the process of conducting Team Tours. She explained they go on Team Tours twice each year to visit all the Nebraska VR offices throughout the state.

A wide variety of topics are discussed. These tours also provide an opportunity to talk about successes as well as look an opportunity to look towards the future.

Lindy provided updates for the Council on a Federal and State level.

Federal: On a federal level, Lindy states VR is in a good place financially to support staff payroll. Should there be a government shut-down, VR is a position that can use carryover funds if needed. Due to proposed budget cuts, VR might see a bit of a dip in funding. She stated this is likely due to other state VR programs relinquishing funds and not spending their full grant awards.

Lindy noted she has also seen proposals to eliminate funding for supported employment grants.

Lindy stated this might not be a bad thing and could be a welcome change as Nebraska VR has historically spent more than the supported employment grants and there is something to be considered with managing multiple federal grant awards.

Lindy shared Nebraska VR was positioned this year to apply for reallocation. The agency was awarded approximately \$2.4 million as a result.

State: Lindy informed the Council what is going on at the State level. She reminded the Council for every \$1 VR receives in state funds; they receive \$3.69 in federal funds. Lindy said they may have heard the Governor talk about ways to identify additional efficiencies. She also told the Council they may hear more discussions happening down the road about efficiencies. She told the Council if state funding is decreased, the

amount of federal funds will also be reduced as a result of the match requirement.

During upcoming SRC meetings she said she might call upon the Executive Committee to help brainstorm ways to get out the message about the positive impact of VR.

During team discussions, there have been conversations around value propositions with VR program income. One example of this is receiving social security reimbursement for Nebraska VR cases.

Lindy told the Council for National Disability Month; the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) has been releasing 100 stories in 100 days. Nebraska VR has submitted 5 stories to this marketing campaign.

There was a recent publication from The Harkin Institute titled, "The importance of Federally Funding Vocational Rehabilitation Programs." This publication highlighted US Labor market worker shortages and the importance of assisting individuals with disabilities engage in the workforce. Some of the data in the publication underscored the disparity in unemployment rates between individuals with disabilities and those without and also findings from a national survey indicating an alarming number of individuals with disabilities who previously worked and are no longer looking for work.

Lindy said she is asking field offices to start thinking outside the box to understand why people with disabilities are choosing not to work.

Current requirements to receive disability benefits are changing, and this could provide a great opportunity for VR to help individuals find employment.

IX. Working Lunch: Committee meetings and reports:

A. Client Services Committee (Lisa Kent-Scheer)

They could not vote for a new Chair due to committee member absences. They stated they will vote for a new Chair by email.

B. Employer Services Committee (Todd Ludwig)

The Committee shared they are excited about the October Disability, Employment, and Inclusion event taking place after the meeting. They nominated Scott to be the new Employer Services Committee Chair.

C. Transition Services Committee (Gloria Eddins)

This Committee shared Ashley is this the new Transition Services Committee Chair.

They stated they spent their time talking about Nebraska VR clientele who are between the ages of 18-21 and how VR could best to serve that population's needs.

D. Executive Committee (Christine Gaspari)

Angela shared the Executive Committee met awhile back to discuss sending someone from the committee to attend the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils. Due to schedule conflicts, the SRC will not be sending a representative from the executive committee this year.

X. October Disability, Employment, and Inclusion Awards Event schedule (Employment Committee)

Sarah gave a brief discussion about the event schedule and stated they will follow the same format as years past.

XI. Public Comment/Announcements

Tobias stated he is a part of the Olmstead Housing Work Group. He said there will be a hearing at the Capital on October 24, 2025, at 10:00 am. He extended an invitation for all Council members to attend.

Jana call for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Gloria made a motion to adjourn. Matt seconded. The SRC Council meeting adjourned at 2:28 pm.