Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council
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"A consumer-controlled council committed to ensuring quality rehabilitation services."

SRC Meeting Minutes

Nebraska Department of Education
500 South 84th, State Board Room, Lincoln, NE
Tuesday, May 6th, 2026
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The meeting minutes of the State Rehabilitation Council commenced at 10:00 a.m. by Gloria Eddins.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jodi Bodnar, Gloria Eddins, Jason Gieschen, Todd Ludwig, Paulette Monthei, Scott Parrill, Lindy Foley, Tobias Orr

MEMBERS ABSENT: Michael Bursaw, Jana Egan, Christine Gaspari, Matt Kaslon

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

NEBRASKA VR STAFF ABSENT: None

VISITORS: Margie Propp, Ben Sparks, Michael Brummer, Christopher Chambers, Mark Garcia, Jennifer Miller

I. Pledge of Allegiance (Jason)

Jason lead the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Approval of agenda (Chair-Jana)

Gloria called for a motion to approve the agenda. Paulette moved to approve the agenda. Jason seconded the motion. There were no objections, motion carried by unanimous consent.

III. Approval of prior meeting minutes (Chair)
Gloria called for a motion to approve the February 3, 2026, meeting minutes. Paulette made a motion to approve. Todd seconded the motion. There were no objections, motion carried by unanimous consent.

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

Gloria mentioned the Council follows Robert's Rules and uses meeting etiquette.

V. Introductions/Roll Call (Chair)

All Council members introduced themselves.

VI. Council membership (Chair)

A. Potential members: Mark Garcia (Tribal VR), Chris Chambers (NDE-Special Education), and Jennifer Miller (PTI). NCDHH & NWFDB representatives TBD.
B. New Members: None
C. 2026 SRC Terms ending: (Angela)
   - First term ending: Jana Egan (7/26)
   - Second term ending: None
   - Recruitment reminder: Individuals with a disability to maintain the 51% council majority
   - Election of Officers in August

VII. Action

A. TO DO: Identification of Executive Committee Member for Fall CSAVR October 31 - November 4, 2026, Frisco, Texas (Angela)

   The SRC Chair and Vice Chair are unable to attend the conference. Angela explained the Executive Committee Chairs would be considered next and if interested in attending, they may email her directly.

   Angela mentioned the Transition Committee needs a Chair. Paulette volunteered to be the Chair.

B. Follow-up to action items from last meeting:

   - Disability Employment and Inclusion Awards Format Update (Michael)

     Michael informed the Council that the Business Services Committee met to discuss changing the format of the Disability Employment and Inclusion Awards in October. He reported that they had several productive discussions and are exploring different ways to increase local media coverage when presenting these awards to businesses. Michael also noted that they discussed the possibility of businesses coming to Lincoln to take photos with the Governor at the State Capitol.

     As the format for these awards continues to evolve, determining and coordinating all the logistics may be difficult to accomplish this year. This additional time will allow for further brainstorming and planning for the 2027 Awards Ceremony format.

Sarah explained that, currently, staff record videos of award recipients while interviewing them. Afterward, the videos are submitted to her for editing. She noted that they would like these videos to be much shorter in length and in-line with a national campaign. In addition, they would like to move away from showing the videos during the ceremony and instead post them on social media.

Michael and Sarah also discussed the challenges staff face in managing the video production aspect of the current format. They expressed interest in focusing on 30-second message format. The goal is to capture more media attention and expand distribution across various platforms. Ultimately, the main objective of reformatting the Awards Ceremony is to advance VR's mission by reaching a broader audience.

Michael shared that DHHS collaborated with the Developmental Disabilities program on an event that was showcased in local media and received strong coverage. As a result, it resonated with a significant number of people within the community.

It was noted that presenting these awards locally and keeping the presentations less scripted could be beneficial.

Sarah added that once award winners are selected, she would prepare a local media release and coordinate with staff, Business Account Managers, and local media outlets. She emphasized that if local media produce the videos, the impact would be significantly greater than if Nebraska VR produced them internally.

The Council further discussed the possibility of holding a press conference in conjunction with a proclamation at the Capitol, giving award winners the opportunity to attend a live event.

- Update on WIOA State Plan - Assigning goals to SRC Committees for breakout discussions (Lindy)

  Lindy moved this agenda to include in her Director's Report.

VIII. Discussion

A. Feedback on February Senator Outreach Activity (Angela)

Sarah noted there is room for improvement in outreach to Senators. She suggested in-person engagement may be more effective. There is the opportunity to rethink how this activity is conducted in the future.

B. Member Feedback on Written Reports (5-10 minutes each):

1. ATP (Tobias Orr)

   Tobias shared that three staff members have left ATP. Of the three, two retired and one accepted another position. ATP's open Equipment Manager position has been filled, and the remaining open positions will be posted soon.

2. CAP (Jodi Bodnar)

   Jodi shared a former VR client contacted CAP after case closure and expressed dissatisfaction with communication, understanding of available VR services, and the nature of assistance provided during placement services. CAP provided information about the client's rights, options following case closure and the process for reapplying for VR services if the client chooses to return in the future. One recommendation for ongoing support included considering supervisory involvement, or follow-up discussion when a client expresses dissatisfaction prior to case closure.

3. Deaf & Hard of Hearing (Open)

   Michael shared that the board recently completed interviews for NCDHH's open Executive Director Position. Next Monday, May 11, 2026, the board will move forward with the next found of candidates. He also shared that two NCDHH employees have left to pursue other opportunities.

4. NSILC (Christine Gaspari)

   Tobias shared NSILC is still in the process of getting organized. They are working closely with state accounting. He also shared they are still in need of more voting members.

5. Ombudsman (report only)

6. Youth Leadership Council (report only)

C. Member Feedback on VR (Chair)

   None.

D. Director Report (Lindy Foley)

   Lindy reported that 2026 has been a great and busy year. She, Cathy, and Holly have been on the Spring Team Tour, which has provided an opportunity to share updates with staff on changes that have taken place over the past six months. During these visits, they discussed a call to action and how it serves as a "north star" moving forward. Three key areas of focus included progress, themes, and successes.

One topic discussed with staff was the value proposition of VR, as well as the importance of sharing successful client outcomes. This has been especially important when considering the budget, as certain government programs have been reduced.

Lindy shared that Senator Spivey reached out to collaborate with Nebraska VR and expressed interest in improving services for at-risk youth in North Omaha. Nebraska VR testified in support of this bill alongside Senator Spivey.

Lindy informed the Council that Nebraska VR continues to address more complex cases than in past years. There has been an increase in clients with more significant disabilities, as well as more prevalent mental health needs. Additionally, Nebraska VR will focus on leveraging its business program. As an agency, it is important to strengthen messaging around careers and opportunities for advancement.

All offices are receiving consistent information and have had opportunities to ask questions. This year, offices have also been encouraged to share success stories. It is important to energize staff and hear all the great things that have been happening.

The Career Pathways Advancement Project 2.0 is a federal grant Nebraska VR applied for more than five years ago. The model for this grant involves contacting former clients to determine whether they are interested in advancing in their careers. After a client moves into a higher-level position, Nebraska VR works to fill the vacated role with another VR client (upskills/backfill model). Lindy explained that this grant is now coming to an end. Nebraska VR's goal is to apply the lessons learned from this initiative to improve services moving forward. While seven to eight positions associated with the grant are ending, the Project Director will remain in place to help integrate these lessons into ongoing operations. Lindy expressed excitement about incorporating career advancement as a regular part of Nebraska VR's service delivery.

Lindy also noted that apprenticeships have been a frequent topic of discussion. Nebraska VR is actively involved in apprenticeship initiatives, and a staff member will be working to inform offices about available opportunities.

Council members received an update on the WIOA State Plan. Lindy explained that VR is one of several required partners responsible for submitting the plan. VR is currently in the middle of a four-year state plan cycle and recently had the opportunity to submit modifications. The Department of Labor submitted the updated plan, and VR is now awaiting any feedback or questions from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). A public meeting was also held. Lindy stated that she will keep the Council informed of any updates from federal partners.

Lindy then shared the six common WIOA performance measures:

1. Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit

2. Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit
3. Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit
4. Credential Attainment
5. Measurable Skill Gains
6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Nebraska VR is held accountable for setting targets and measuring results. RSA provides the final evaluation and assigns a score. Score below 100 percent indicate areas that require improvement. Currently, VR has reported lower median wages, which may be attributed to serving a population with more significant needs. Lindy noted the importance of ensuring staff have the tools to explore a wide range of sectors and employment opportunities for clients.

Lindy updated members on the NDE Strategic Plan. She expressed pride in being part of the Nebraska Department of Education and shared that she meets weekly with the Commissioner as part of this effort. It is important to demonstrate how VR's work aligns with the broader NDE strategic goals and contributes to overall departmental outcomes.

Lindy announced that May 6 is Interpreter Appreciation Day and expressed appreciation for interpreters and the important role they play.

In closing, Lindy stated that the Council will be involved in discussions regarding WIOA goals at future meetings.

IX. Working Lunch: Committee meetings and reports:

A. Client Services Committee (Jodi Bodnar)

Jodi shared the committee reviewed the most recent Client Satisfaction Surveys and noted overall high client satisfaction rates. They also discussed the total of number of clients who chose to stop receiving services, which increased from 3 to 9 between Quarter 1 and Quarter 2; however, the reason for this change is unclear.

The committee noted that the most helpful services reported by clients were Career Exploration and Job Fit. There was also discussion about how the attrition, which increased slightly from 28% to 33%. In the future, staff may have the option to include additional reasons for clients exiting services to gather more detailed data.

The committee also discussed the value of encouragement, support, building relationship, and trust with clients. They also discussed when a client expresses interest to close their case, it may be beneficial not to close the case immediately.

B. Employer Services Committee (Scott Parrill)

They noted Michael showed the committee a dashboard he built for the Business Account Managers to help track services. They also discussed a survey being developed to improve communication with businesses.

C. Transition Services Committee (Open)

Lupe shared goals for increasing youth participation. They discussed the process of transitioning from Pre Employment Services to adult services. In addition, they noted that there still seems to be a disconnect with teachers' awareness of VR services, as well as instances of misinformation being shared. They feel that educators may not be aware that students can begin receiving services at age 14 and instead believe services are only available once students are in high school.

D. Executive Committee (Jana, Gloria, Jodi, Scott, Transition Chair, and Angela)

No breakout group.

X. Public Comment/Announcements

Gloria shared Disability Pride will be taking place on July 25th. If anyone is interested, they can email her with additional questions.

Gloria called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jason made a motion to adjourn. Jodi seconded. There were no objections made. Motion carried unanimous consent.