



# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
301 CENTENNIAL MALL SOUTH • PO BOX 94987 • LINCOLN, NE 68509

**State Rehabilitation Council Meeting  
State Office Building VR Conference room  
Lincoln, NE  
February 13, 2018**

## **Draft Meeting Minutes**

*Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under “Master Calendar” at least 5 days prior to each meeting.*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Shari Bahensky, Michael Bursaw, Michael Chittenden, Christine Gaspari, Gayle Hahn, Tobias Orr, Diane Owen-Downs, Kipp Ransom, Michael Reed, Mark Schultz, David Scott, JD Simmons, Camie West

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Lisa Kent, John McNally, Jon Moeller, Vicki Newman, Sandy Peterson, Adriana Saunsoci, Cassidy Wall, Carly Weyers

**VR STAFF PRESENT:** Sarah Chapin, Lindy Foley, Angela Fujan, Brigid Griffin, Ashley Hernandez, Mary Matusiak, Paige Rose

*The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:06 a.m. public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.*

### **SRC NEW MEMBERS**

Kipp Ransom reported new members joined the council. New members Camie West and Michael Reed introduced themselves to the council.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Kipp Ransom discussed the lunch change for council meetings.

No public comment was given.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

David Scott moved and Chris Gaspari seconded the motion to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 10, 2017 MINUTES**

David Scott moved and Tobias Orr seconded a motion to approve the October 10, 2017 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

## **FOLLOW UP OF LAST MEETINGS ACTION ITEMS**

### **Senator Outreach**

David Scott and Michael Chittenden discussed the date change for senator outreach due to a scheduling error with the Capitol. Michael stated they confirmed there is a room reserved for March 13<sup>th</sup> from 7am until 10am and coffee and bagels will be provided for senators and aides. David stated they will invite the senators from 9-10am on March 13<sup>th</sup> and are wanting any council members to attend if they are able to mingle with aides and hand out the VR/SRC information handout. Council members were provided with a copy of the information flyer for review. This will be a mix and mingle coffee hour event for the SRC to share information to aides and senators. Sarah Chapin and Paige Rose stated they will work on an email invite for senators and their aides. Angela shared that for every \$1 appropriated to Nebraska VR from the State of Nebraska earns \$3.69 in federal funding for services to Nebraskans with disabilities. Members discussed that this event is to provide information on what Nebraska VR does and the work of the State Rehabilitation Council not to lobby for any bills. Members who attended the event last year discussed questions that were asked at the event last year stating the majority of questions were general VR agency and service questions from the handout. Sarah Chapin stated she can provide a handout regarding order of selection and create some talking points that can be utilized at the event.

### **Disability Employment and Inclusion Awards**

Sarah Chapin reviewed what has been done in the past years for Disability Awareness Month and the Entrepreneur of Distinction awards that have been held. Sarah shared last year two business leaders who have been great partners with VR were honored. Sarah shared this year they are teaming with the business account managers to create awards criteria. Mary Matusiak shared a handout with council members outlining the SRC Annual Recognitions for Businesses. Mary reviewed the determined award categories. Mary shared the outlined award categories. There will be an entrepreneur award presented to a Nebraska VR customer who successfully completed the self employment process and their business has been stable and flourishing for a minimum of one year. There will be two awards in the category of strategic partnership and disability employment inclusion, one recognizing a large business and the other recognizing a small business. There could also be an individual who is a champion for disability employment and inclusion which may not be awarded every year. Mary stated at the May meeting she will bring information with the criteria for selection of award winners. Mary shared they are working to make the nomination form have more specified questions and structure that will allow objective selection of winners. Mary stated the nomination form will also be available for review at the May meeting.

## **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR**

Kipp Ransom asked council members if any feedback was brought to council members. No member feedback was shared.

## **CAP REPORT**

A written CAP report was provided to members. Shari Bahensky summarized some of the key topics of the report from the past quarter. Shari noted that these cases were from the past quarter (October, November, December) which was prior to the initiation of order of selection. Shari reviewed the eight cases which occurred and their outcomes. A case discussed was regarding a

client not satisfied having two part time jobs versus full-time employment. David Scott asked if clients are given clear information regarding the type of employment they will be assisted with. Angela stated clients create a job plan with their VR counselors which does state the hours and type of employment clearly that has been agreed upon. Other cases involved concerns with counselor communication, concerns about upcoming order of selection, and timeliness of services all which were addressed and resolved. Shari discussed an additional client whom was being served by the Ombudsman which she looked into and provided some resources for but stated the client's main concern was resolved with the Ombudsman. Mark Schultz stated during this quarter there was less than 1% of clients requesting CAP assistance. Members discussed time frames of services and the importance of due diligence and open, regular communication with counselors keeping clients informed and engaged. Mark Schultz discussed the importance of rapid engagement and working to serve clients and engage with them while they maybe waiting for additional approvals.

### **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS**

Members were provided with written reports from ATP and the Ombudsperson. Brigid Griffin stated there was not a NYLC report provided as there is not currently a facilitator, but there is a new hire starting next month to fill this position. Members did not share any additional feedback.

### **TWO-YEAR MODIFICATION PROCESS**

Mark Schultz discussed the reporting process specific to the WIOA Unified or Combined State Plan for program years 2018 and 2019. Mark reviewed the report with the council. Mark shared they reported the current staff numbers and projected staff for the next five years. Mark shared not much was changed from the previous report. Mark summarized there were no substantial changes besides the order of selection. Chris Gaspari stated as the council has reviewed most of this information at the last meeting, due to order of selection a link to reference the report if necessary would be all the council would require at this time, due to the recent council review. Members discussed the review process of the submitted report.

Chris Gaspari moved the council support the changes to the state plan as outlined by Mark, Gayle Hahn seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

### **DIRECTORS REPORT**

Mark Scultz delivered the VR Director's Report. Mark discussed RSA guidelines impacting pre-employment services on future VR adult services and outreach due to current interpretations. Mary Matusiak shared due to the order of selection there are huge challenges for students receiving pre-employment services when transitioning from school. Mark stated the focus of VR counselors will continue to be making sure the service is provided. Mark shared they were appreciative of partner supports when order of selection was publicly heard. Mark shared they laid out a 4-5 year budget on a "worst case scenario" outlook. They meet on a monthly basis to review revenues and expenditures and are currently right on budget. They will continue to monitor the budget and are hopeful to continue on budget to reinstate new staff in upcoming years. Mark discussed the positive that sequestration was not placed in the federal budget and that may provide some offset funds that will assist in current budget restraints. Mark shared there are potentially all positives in federal budget outlooks as no reductions were implemented. Mark discussed the Department of Education's reorganization which has some big changes for Nebraska VR. The NDE 2018 organization structure and protocol was viewed and discussed. Mark discussed the flow of operations from Commissioner Bloomstedt to Operations and Division Support Deputy Commissioner, Brian Halstead, whom will now work with data research evaluation, and disability determination and technology services. Deputy Commissioner, Mark Schultz will now oversee career & adult education, special education,

student support services and vocational rehabilitation. This change means Mark can no longer be both the Director of VR and serve this capacity of Deputy Commissioner. Mark announced, Lindy Foley will be the new VR Director. Mark shared he still intends to be active with the SRC after this reorganization is implemented. Mark stated the implementation will all be complete by July 1<sup>st</sup> but they are hoping Lindy's transition to Director will be official as of March 1<sup>st</sup>. Lindy stated they are looking to shift responsibilities of some staff and assign a new assistant director soon. Lindy shared she is looking forward to the cross colobartion this change will bring. Chris Gaspari requested a copy of the structure diagram be provided to council members with the minutes for review.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Angela summarized for new members the three council committees and their current membership. Members broke into subcommittees.

### **Employer Services**

Mary Matusiak reported the committee discussed the Disability Employment and Inclusion Awards categories in greater detail. Mary shared the committee decided to define large business as having 150+ employees or additional chains and then small business as less than 150 employees and no additional chains. Mary shared they will continue to work on the nomination form and award criteria for the next council meeting.

### **Transition Services**

JD Simmons reported the committee discussed the 15% requirement for pre-employment services. JD shared they discussed certificate programs and their continuation through order of selection. Mary Matusiak stated there are currently 5 certificate programs that are active throughout the state and they will continue running under the CPAP Grant. JD shared they discussed the summer grant programs which deadline was January 12<sup>th</sup>; stating 28 applications have been reviewed. JD shared there has been a program created for benefit awareness for individuals with disabilities, Easter Seals held one in Omaha which was very well attended. Brigid Griffin shared they have contracted with 3 agencies who will be holding these trainings twice a month at ESUs across the state. Brigid shared the message of these workshops is not to be afraid of work. Brigid shared these workshops are geared towards individuals age 14-21 through pre-employment services. JD stated the Project Search job fair will be held April 30<sup>th</sup> in Omaha.

### **Client Services**

Gayle Hahn reported the committee discussed the client satisfaction survey which is no longer being conducted by Easter Seals and will now be conducted by VR office assistants. Gayle shared new survey results were not yet available as they are conducted quarterly. Gayle stated the client satisfaction survey and last quarter results are available on the webpage.

## **NEXT MEETING**

May 8, 2018 – Nebraska VR Office, 3901 N 27<sup>th</sup> St. Lincoln, NE

## **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 12:55pm.

## **ACTION ITEMS:**

- Senator Outreach – March 13<sup>th</sup> 9:00am, NE State Capitol
- Disability Employment & Inclusion Awards criteria & nomination forms – Mary Matusiak

