



State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509

State Rehabilitation Council Meeting

ZOOM Meeting

February 9, 2021

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: Lonnie Berger, Crystal Booker, Jerry Bryan, Michael Bursaw, Lindy Foley, Chris Gaspari, Gayle Hahn, Ashley Wulf (substitute for Cody McEvoy), Tobias Orr, Diane Owen-Downs

MEMBERS ABSENT: Theresa Hayes, Deanna Henke, Susan Madsen, John McNally, Michael Tufte

VR STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Chapin, Angela Fujan, Brigid Griffin, Sandy Hamm, Ashley Hernandez, Mary Matusiak, Victoria Rasmussen

VISITORS: Margie Propp

The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 11:09 a.m. public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education website.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Michael Bursaw asked for public comment from members.

No public comment was shared.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Crystal Booker 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.**

MINUTES APPROVAL

Gayle Hahn moved, and Chris Gaspari seconded a motion to approve the December 8, 2020 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

FOLLOW UP OF LAST MEETINGS ACTION ITEMS

Council Membership

Michael Bursaw reported the council is in need of new members. Angela Fujan shared if members have any recommendations to let her know and she can provide them an application. Sarah Chapin

shared she could make a post about membership on the VR Facebook page. Members discussed the need to include at least 50% of membership to be individuals living with disabilities. Tobias Orr suggested asking VR counselors to reach out to successful closed cases for membership. Sarah noted they could reach out to the VR counselors for former client outreach through Constant Contact. Victoria Rasmussen discussed reaching out to the business award winners and following up with them if they are interested in joining the SRC as there have been some excellent businesses represented. Lindy Foley shared it would also be beneficial to bring on council membership to those who have disagreed with VR to bring a challenge for improvement and different voices for a well-rounded council. Crystal Booker shared she has HR partners focusing on diversity and inclusion that would be beneficial to SRC.

MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR

Michael Bursaw asked if any feedback was brought to council members. Lindy Foley shared that Nebraska VR has been very involved in the Olmstead Plan. Lindy shared a few months ago Health and Human Services released a report looking for public comment in which a former VR client expressed concerns sharing herself and other VR staff have tried to reach out to him and schedule a meeting and are continuing to work on assisting them and continuing to address any other potential challenges as they are discovered.

No additional feedback was shared.

MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS

Members were asked for feedback on the written reports provided from ATP, NSILC, NYLC and the Client Assistance Program.

Michael Bursaw reviewed the written report provided by Dea Henke for NSILC. Chris Gaspari shared NSILC is also involved in the monthly trainings opportunities available which she can send to council members.

Tobias Orr asked for member questions on the ATP report, no questions were asked.

Brigid Griffin shared a summary regarding the NYLC written report. Brigid discussed speakers the group has been having and their preparation for upcoming presentation.

Jerry Bryan reported there were no new CAP issues since the last council meeting.

Ashley Wulf shared the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is working with Channel 3 News on an ASL sign book. Lindy shared that the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, VR and CAP meet quarterly to touch base and work in collaboration.

No additional feedback was provided.

SENATORS OUTREACH FEEDBACK

Michael Bursaw discussed this morning's speakers were excellent, stating their enthusiasm shone. Michael stated this type of format could be beneficial to continue to use in the future. Crystal Booker asked how the senators were invited, asking if it was all via email. Sarah Chapin shared a Constant Contact email was sent as an invitation and was used to monitor which offices opened the emails. Michael Bursaw noted the only additional outreach he would suggest is sending a personal letter via mail asking them to look for the email to register. Chris Gaspari discussed visiting senators providing thank you cards in-person with registration information for the event. Crystal Booker suggested council members reaching out personally to their representative and others to get as much participation as possible. Mary Matusiak discussed the personal email outreach and its benefit in keeping Constant Contact messages out of junk email folders. Michael asked if it were possible to share the list of senators' locations, email address etc. so members could forward on to senators. Sandy Hamm shared they have email addresses for all senators minus two senators who opted out of receiving Constant Contact emails. Michael discussed the options of in-person contact when it is possible again, members discussed the better connection and support of outreach in-

person. Mary Matusiak agreed with meeting in-person when possible in February and possibly a summer virtual event. Mary discussed individuals are more likely to open an attachment versus a link, Sarah discussed the limitations of Constant Contact only allowing links.

CLIENT OF THE YEAR/MONTHLY CLIENT SPOTLIGHT?

Michael Bursaw discussed he would like to see a VR client added to the October awards ceremony to capture success and enthusiasm as in today's panel presenters. Mary Matusiak shared she really likes the idea of a client spotlight whether monthly or quarterly, discussing this is done occasionally in the VR newsletter. Mary discussed she has really focused on celebrating business partnerships in the October awards versus focusing on VR and its clients. Angela Fujan discussed that originally this award event highlighted a self-employment award winner and has grown to include business partners. Tobias Orr and Chris Gaspari shared discussion supporting keeping the focus on business partnership during the October awards. Sarah Chapin shared she hesitates to acknowledge VR staff in this capacity as they are honored in other capacities and notes VRs job is to highlight the client and their successes finding and maintaining employment. Diane Owen-Downs shared agreement regarding VR staff find reward in the success of clients and want to highlight clients not staff. Crystal Booker shared concern if doing a client spotlight asking is that the role of the SRC? Brigid Griffin shared caution in client spotlight as all client's successes are very personal and diverse stating one client's success may look very different than another. Tobias Orr shared he agrees with Crystal stating SRC's role is not to promote VR but to instead support and guide VR.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Members broke into committees for discussion.

Client Services Committee

Jerry Bryan reported the committee reviewed the year end Client Satisfaction Survey and looked at the first quarter data from October 2020 – January 2021. Jerry shared it looks like as of now 100% of respondents are still employed. Jerry shared out of 78 respondents only 3 respondents reported their current employment was not meeting their needs. Jerry reviewed highlights of the survey report which was shared with the SRC through email. Jerry shared overall numbers for the first quarter are excellent stating this is showing that VR is doing what they need to do in the time of COVID-19.

Employer Services Committee

Lonnie Berger shared the committee discussed employer roles serving on the SRC and how they can assist getting the word out regarding SRC membership recruitment. Lonnie reviewed the committee's discussion of senator outreach and the possibility of extending this throughout other opportunities, not just once a year. Crystal Booker discussed her membership of the Lincoln Circle which comes together once a month focusing on hiring with diversity and inclusion. Crystal reported she will be inviting Lindy Foley and Tobias Orr to discuss with Lincoln Circle hiring individuals with disabilities. Lonnie reviewed they discussed considering two industries which would be great to include would be trades and retail. Tobias shared it was suggested that members could bring a business representative as a guest to a meeting as these are public meetings.

Transition Services Committee

Brigid Griffin reported the committee was updated on transition services. Brigid discussed the summer proposals were due and 21 proposals were received, and she believes they will likely be able to extend 19 contracts sharing some will need state board approval to get contracts started April 1st. Brigid discussed there was great cross-representation reviewing the proposals. Brigid stated they are excited for the summer programs sharing there are some repeats and some new

programs. Brigid discussed Project SEARCH will be doing their national conference virtually this year making it much more affordable allowing all fourteen Nebraska instructors to attend as well as the opportunity for VR staff to attend the conference and benefit from it as well. The Transition Conference is coming up February 23rd; Brigid shared VR will be providing a panel presentation for the conference with staff and students which will be recorded this Friday and captioned.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Lindy Foley reported regarding order of selection discussing staff has been doing a tremendous job. Lindy stated VR has removed 4,133 cases from priority group one as of January from the wait list. Lindy shared priority group one has as of yesterday, 104 people, stating they are doing a weekly pull from that list from offices, sharing the goal is to fully open that group so there is no waitlist in Group 1. Lindy shared it is a very formal process to fully open priority group one which they hope to do within six weeks. Lindy shared she knows they can financially meet that need but are being cautious they have the needed staffing to accomplish the opening of group 1 successfully. Lindy shared they have been building back their staffing capacity and have hired over 20 staff, reviewing those hires, and shared they continue to have vacancies to fill. Lindy shared she will likely be requesting a special meeting with SRC to offer input if and when they prepare to open priority group one. Jerry Bryan asked if there was a timeline to serve those in priority group two. Lindy shared first they need to address priority group one, once that category is opened, they can begin looking at pulling twos off the waitlist.

Lindy discussed the WIOA report card which was recently received and reviewed its successful results for Nebraska.

Lindy discussed legislative session and two bills related directly and indirectly to Nebraska VR. LB 527 was reviewed which proposes to move the required age for transition services from 16 to 14, Lindy shared the analysis found concern that additional staff would be needed to serve younger students, Lindy shared the Department of Education is in support of this bill. Also, LB 493 was analyzed as indirectly affecting VR through shared client support services.

Lindy reported VR is moving out of the state office building in Lincoln effective March 1st and will be in the State Farm Building at 84th & O, sharing staff will still be working remotely for the time being.

Lindy discussed involving the SRC in the WIOA State Plan for the next meeting assisting in reviewing and assessing the plan goals and priorities by council committees.

Transition Services Committee WIOA State Plan Goals include: 1. Increasing the number of students/interns completing Project SEARCH and obtaining competitive integrated employment. 2. Improving communication with clients, businesses, stakeholders, service providers, core partner programs, SRC, educators, and staff members.

Client Services Committee WIOA State Plan Goals include: 1. Improving quality and consistency of supported employment services through the development and implementation of best practices for service providers. 2. Develop cultural competencies to ensure equitable access to Nebraska VR services. 3. Increasing the number of individuals who exit VR supported employment with competitive integrated employment. 4. Improve communication with clients, businesses, stakeholders, service providers, core partner programs, SRC, educators and staff members.

Employer Services Committee WIOA State Plan Goals include: 1. Increasing the number of individuals who exit VR supported employment with competitive integrated employment. 2. Improve communication with clients, businesses, stakeholders, service providers, core partner programs, SRC, educators and staff members.

Next steps are during break-out committee sessions of the next council meeting to review and advise VR on their progress on those plan goals. Crystal Booker shared her support of this work.

ADJOURN

Chris Gaspari moved, and Gayle Hahn seconded the motion to adjourn. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.** The meeting adjourned at 12:58pm.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Council Membership
- WIOA State Plan Goals - committees