

NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES
January 13, 2026

Roll Call

Members Present

Bruce Klootwyk, Josh Villibrant, Robyn Soiseth, Kaycee Johnson, Chaz Brobst, Jacey Enget, Gillian Plenty Chief, Trampes Brown, Lea Kugel, Darrel Hannum, Trevor Vannett

Members Absent

Mercedes Drechsel, Mistie Clementich, Landis Larson

Others Present

Aimee Volk, Robyn Throlson, Cheryl Anderson, Micah Olson

Call to Order

Jacey Enget called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm. There was a quorum present.

January Agenda Approval

A motion to amend the January 2026 agenda was made by Jacey Enget as the HIT, Inc. Presentation was cancelled. Robyn Soiseth made a motion to accept the amended agenda and seconded Chaz Brobst the motion. The motion passed by unanimous decision. Motion carried.

July Minutes Approval

A motion to approve the July 2025 minutes as presented was made by Chaz Brobst and seconded by Robyn Soiseth. The motion passed by unanimous decision. Motion carried.

Reschedule October 2025 Meeting

Discussion was held and a special meeting will be needed to discuss the state plan in February.

Robyn made a motion to schedule a special meeting for February 11, 2026, at 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. and Lea Kugel seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous decision. Motion carried.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Region I (Williston) Update – Aimee Easton

Coverage Area

- Serves three counties: Divide, McKenzie, and Williams.

Staffing – fully staffed

- 1 Regional Administrator
- 1 Support Staff
- 3 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors
 - A new VR Counselor was just hired.
- 1 VR Intern that started on August 25, 2025.
- They have downsized their office space and are currently working hybrid.

They are currently serving 186 people. They are serving all but one high school in their region. Most schools have a Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) lab or a Project Discovery.

They will have one of their VR counselors covering McKenzie County as they are growing. They serve Providence House in Arnegard as that referral source is strong.

- 186 clients on caseload
- 37 applicants since Oct. 1, 2025.
- 12 closures since Oct. 1, 2025.
- Receive about four to six (4-6) referrals per week.
- Completing about two to three (2-3) applications per week.
- Goal is to have about 75 clients per VR counselor.
- Outreach about 3 days per week.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Region I (Minot) Update – Tanya Ide

Staffing

- 11 staff are in Minot. They are fully staffed at this time.
 - Six (6) counselors, one vision rehabilitation specialist, one rehab technician, one business service specialist, one support staff, and one RA.
- Two (2) counselors are senior counselors and one (1) is a Qualified Rehab Professional (QRP).
- Two (2) counselors doing the master's program in Rehab Counseling.
- The rehab technician finished a bachelor's degree and can assist with more assessments.

Goals (25% of the way through FFY 2026)

Applicants

- 2026 - 53 of 300 (18%)
- 2025 - 264 of 300 (88%)

VR Plans/Service

- 2026 - 48 of 250 (19%)
- 2025 - 224 of 250 (90%)

Employed

- 2026 - 29 of 110 (26%)
- 2025 - 77 of 110 (70%)

Business Services

- 2026 -152 of 625 (24%)
- 2025 - 630 of 625 (101%)
- 2026 - 35 of the 127 State total
- 2025 - 204 of the 525 State total

Average Days in Status

- Application Status
 - 2026- Goal of 25 days or less – Currently at nine (9) days.
 - 2025- Goal of 25 days or less – 10 days.
- Eligible Status
 - 2026 - Goal of 48 days or less – Currently at 34 days.
 - 2025 - Goal of 48 days or less – 39 days.

Transition Services

- In the summer, caseload assignments were changed. Two (2) counselors do transition outreach to other communities, one (1) counselor covers the Minot Public Schools, and one (1) counselor covers school close to Minot.
- 1,008.25 hours of 3100 (33%) since 10/1/2025.
- Serving 34 high schools, Minot Adult Learning Center, and Job Corps.
- Two (2) counselors created a curriculum for four years of transition services, training to staff, and a toolkit for transition services

Vision Services

- FFY 2026 – At 26% of goal of new Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) applications (13/50).
- FFY 2025 – Met 118% of new OIB applications (59 of 50).

Partnerships/Providers

- They maintain regular communication with Protection and Advocacy and Job Service.
- They attend quarterly Community Connection Hour at Minot Adult Learning Center.
- The business service specialist is a member of the local HR chapter and chamber ambassadors, making great business partnerships and community connections.
- Other staff are involved with Magic City Lions, Rotary, Sertoma, and Minot Optimist Club.
- Chamber business after hours networking, ribbon cuttings, and the showcase of business
- Vision services booth at the ND State Fair and Veterans events.

Areas of Focus

- Completed uploading case file documents to Filenet in an effort to move toward paperless case management system.
- Continued engagement with clients to ensure movement toward Employment Plans and eligibilities.
- Changed to specializing areas of service to reduce the number of outreach counselors, hoping to help with the vehicle situation and caseload management. Areas of specialization are transition, provider services, and justice involved/behavioral health.

Tribal Updates – Standing Rock VR Project – Ben Wolf Necklace

Currently they have 38 consumers they are working with. They have partnered with state agencies to help serve their consumers. They work with individuals from North Dakota and South Dakota as the Standing Rock tribal lands span both states. They are able to utilize tribal resources that benefit their consumers which have been beneficial.

VR Interim Director Update – Darrel Hannum

Importance of Attendance and Federal Requirements

- The State Rehabilitation Council is federally required to meet four times per year.
- In order for our meetings to officially count, we must have a quorum.
- When you agreed to serve on the SRC, you committed to supporting the advisory board's work – attendance is part of that commitment and is outlined in our Bylaws.

- Your attendance ensures that we can move forward with decisions, meet federal expectations, and continue the great work we do for North Dakotans with disabilities.

Reimbursement Updates

- A recent change requires that all members complete a W-9 or a Substitute W-9 (for direct deposit) before any reimbursement can be issued.
- If you need the form, reach out to Aimee.
- If you are traveling to attend SRC meetings and need a hotel room, please notify Aimee in advance so arrangements can be made (at least one week in advance).
- We will review the Bylaws and make recommendations for this update by the next meeting.

Statement of Interest Updates

- During the 2025 Legislative Session there was new guidance under North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) 16.1-09-02, SRC members must complete a Statement of Interest annually (Jan. 1-31) versus when you are appointed.
- Please submit as soon as possible. If you need assistance contact Aimee.

Annual Report Submission

- The SRC Annual Report was submitted.

Other

- Darrel started on Oct. 27th as the VR director. Cheryl Anderson is now the VR Assistant Director. They will be visiting all of the VR offices and having conversations with staff. They are working on reengaging businesses, agencies, and partners to benefit clients.
- They are reviewing all of the policies and procedures to ensure they align with the mission and vision of VR.
- They are working on additional training opportunities, especially for students and career pathways and hands-on opportunities.

FFY 2025 VR Data (Oct. 1, 2024-Sept. 30, 2025) – Robyn Throlson

- Transition services (the numbers are not applied to VR as are potentially eligible)
 - 2,470 students were served
 - 182 schools received services
 - Core services that schools provide
 - Job exploration
 - Work-based learning experiences
 - Instruction on self-advocacy
 - Counseling for post-secondary education
 - Workplace readiness training
- VR Employment Services
 - 2,256 applicants (starting to see increases in these numbers)
 - 1,165 plans to work with clients
 - 5,151 individuals worked with VR
 - 724 clients were successfully employed
 - 23% of the clients had a physical disability followed closely at 21% that had mental illness

- \$15.3 Million
 - Return on Investment - \$9.50 pays back \$1.92 in taxes

Statewide Independent Living Council - Robyn Soiseth

The last meeting was in November. Senator Tim Mathern presented on the Special Session that will be around the Rural Transition Plan. They also had a presentation on the overview of the Statewide Independent Living Council. The Internal Affairs Committee completed and distributed a new SILC brochure to promote the council. The next meeting will be in February in Bismarck.

Committee Breakout Session

Committee Reports

Membership and Public Relations Committee

Angie Dubovoy resigned as the Client Assistance Program representative. Micah Olson has applied for the position. Our current disability rate is 60%. Looking at ways to get more tribal engagement. For the Bylaws, have Darrel part of the next meeting to review Bylaws.

Planning and Evaluation Committee

Client Authorized Purchases Operational Policy and have a proposed update:

- Stressed the importance of prior-approval and limited back-dating authorizations.
- Clarified the use of comparable benefits.
- Updated the language for the bid process for Level 1 purchases.
- Updated the dollar amounts for the subsequent levels.
- Amended the flow chart to reflect the changes.

Trevor Vannett made a motion to approve the proposed changes to the Client Authorized Purchases Operational Policy and Chaz Brobst seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous vote. Motion carried.

They discussed the upcoming State Plan and amendments. They went over the ND State Satisfaction Survey results for one year.

Resource Committee

Discussed parking fees and discussed revisiting this topic. A Needs Assessment that was completed by VR staff, identified training topics were counseling skills, substance abuse, workplace wellness, etc. Training is given through Cyber Chats, Annual Training, etc. There is a toolkit that is being developed for transition students. Qualified Rehab Professionals (QRP) and how they are being evaluated and having identified mentors for counselors.

Public Comment

No comment.

Robyn Soiseth made a motion to adjourn, and Josh Villbrandt seconded. Meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m. Motion carried.