

NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES January 9, 2024 - 1:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m. CST

Present: Terry Peterson, Russ Cusack, Mercedes Drechsel, Landis Larson, Jacey Enget, Renee Wetzsteon, Damian Schlinger, Misty Bouilly, Alicia Halle, Cheryl Anderson, Robyn Throlson Lea Kugel, Amy Arenz, Barb Burghart, Angie Dubovoy, Samantha Reese, Tanya Ide, David Kvasager.

Members Absent, Trampes Brown, Shannon Cook, Chaz Brobst. Kevin Phelps

Roll Call

Call to Order: Amy Arenz called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. There was a quorum.

Action: A motion to accept the agenda was made by Jacey Enget and seconded by Renee Wetzsteon, Motion carried.

Action: A motion to approve the October 2023 minutes was made by Renee Wetzsteon and seconded by Jacey Enget.
Motion carried.

VR Region II (Minot) Update – Tanya Ide

Staffing:

11 Total Staff

Plans/Service

2024 - 59/250 - 24% of goal

2023 - 231/236 - 98% of goal

Business Services:

2024 - 48/625 - 24% of goal

2023 - 635/623 - 102% of goal

Caseload:

2024 average caseload- 404/6= 67 Cases

2023 average caseload- 401/6= 67 Cases

Transition Services:

Pre-ETS – 4 contracts

Goals: (25% of our year)

Applicants

2024 - 87/300 - 29% of goal

2023 - 302/264 - 114% of goal

Employed:

2024 - 30/115 - 26% of goal

2023 - 103/95 - 108% of goal

Vision Services:

2024 - 13/55 - 24%

2023 - 53/53 - 100%

VR Region IV (Grand Forks) Update – David Kvasager

- Local office is in Job Service building.
- Cover 4 counties.
- Fully staffed.
- Applications - 117/360 = 33% of goal
- Eligibility 127/340 = 37%
- Plan 102/275 = 37%
- OIB 20/50 = 40%
- 60-day max for eligibility - average 11 days
- 90-days max to plan - average 39 days.

Devils Lake III – (Devils Lake) Update – Samantha Reese

- Fully staffed.
- Six counties and two tribal programs (Turtle Mountain and Spirit Lake)
- Average caseload = 74
- Successful closures this year = 5
- New applications = 33
- Highest number of applicants since 2012.
- Met all goals set for last fiscal year.
- Schools served = 20
- Currently 3 Community Rehab Providers

Discussion of Council Positions

Russ Cusack gave a brief history of how the Employment for People with Disabilities Committee merged with the SRC. When the merger happened Developmental Disabilities (DD) and ND Associations of Community Providers (NDACP), became required members of the SRC. They are required in bylaws but not by state or federal law.

Action: A motion was made by Russ Cusack to keep DD a required representative on the Council and seconded by Lea Kugel.
Motion carried.

Action: A motion was made by Renee Wetzsteon, to remove NDACP as a required representative on the Council and seconded by Amy Arenz.
Motion carried.

Update on Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Grant

Amy Arenz announced the entities who received CIE grant funds and the amounts.

Appeals Report

2 VR appeals - one administratively resolved. The other went to hearing and judge found in favor of VR.

VR Director Update – Damian Schlinger

- VR Conference was a success.
- Engagement at 60%. Gallup reports that engagement at 50% or more is outstanding.
- Strategic Plan update - aiming for a multi-year plan, employed an external facilitator for the planning - invited the input of the SRC.
- DD/VR collaboration - 350 individuals in pre-voc. Planning a more solid process to refer pre-voc individuals to VR and vice versa.
- WOTC - collaboration with Workforce - businesses receive tax credits for employment of individuals with disabilities - 97 in the past 12 months where it was single digit prior.
- NGA - Disability Inclusive Workforce Learning Collaborative – one of 6 states accepted, lots of opportunity to bring in ideas to advance policy, EEO form changes, etc.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Russ Cusack

- SILC will be writing a new state plan.
- Specific training is being planned for members to be even more effective on the SILC.
- Russ will forward training materials for us to review.
- Next meeting Feb 2-3.

Tribal Updates - no reports

Employment Committee - Shannon Cook

- Discussion around Council and committees working on specific parts of the VR Strategic Plan.
- Discussion on dissolving the Employment Committee.

Action: A motion was made by Ranae Wetzsteon to dissolve the employment committee and seconded by Russ Cusack

Motion carried.

Discussion around combining the duties of the Employment Committee with the other committees.

Action: A motion was made by Jacey Enget to combine the duties of the Employment Committee with the other three committees and seconded by Landis Larson.

Action: A motion was made by Jacey to add an Executive committee and seconded by Landis Larson.

Motion carried.

Membership & Public Relations Committee - Trampes Brown

- Obtained an applicant for the AIVR representative.
- Contacting two former SRC member to come back onto the Council.
- New Pathfinders representative has been sent to the Governor's office.
- Mercedes Drechsel appointed as counselor rep.
- Ranae Wetzsteon has a possible businessperson to bring on.

Planning & Evaluation Committee - Terry Peterson

- Reviewed two policies:
- Closure – new policy
- Job Readiness, Placement and Short-Term Training had an amendment.
- Reviewed the goals and state plan amended

Action: A motion was made by Renee Wetzsteon to accept the polices and was seconded by Russ Cusack.

Resource Committee - Landis Larson

- Counselors will meet the QRP standard upon completing training, field experience and evaluation of competency areas by their regional administrator and members of an internal VR team.
- Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and program supervisors who do not meet the criteria as listed above must obtain review and signature from supervisor for eligibility, disability, IPE and case closure.

Public Comment - no one was present for public comment.

Action: At 4:15 pm a motion was made by Jacey to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Renee Wetzsteon
Motion carried.