

# Montana State Rehabilitation Council

## Wilderness Room at the Colonial Building

### August 23 & 24, 2018

### Meeting Minutes

**Members present:** Tiffany Costa, Wayne Dagele (via phone), Barbara Davis, Lisa Gault, Kathy Hampton, Chanda Hermanson-Dudley, Denise May, Kathy Meier, Susan Nielson, Frank Podobnik, Diana Tavary, and Scott Trent

**Members absent:** Coreen Faulkner, Brook Hodge, Andy Kemp, Barbara Kriskovich, and Arlene Templer

**Staff and guests:** Nick Domitrovich, Sheri Vukasin, Beverly Berg, Shawn Tulloch, Barbara Schiederemayer, Beth Brenneman of MT Disability Rights.

**Welcome and Introductions:** Council Chair Tiffany Costa called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. (Thursday, 8-23-2018)

**May Meeting minutes:** Scott Trent moved approval of the minutes; Kathy Hampton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Announcements:** Chair Tiffany presented a plaque for outgoing members Arlene Templer and Lisa Gault. Chanda announced she is now the incoming acting Administrator for the Disability, Employment, and Transitions Division. Nick Domitrovich will be the acting Chief Legal for the Division.

**Public comments:** No public comments were given.

**Budget Report:** Sheri Vukasin referred to a narrative she provided on the budget. The report includes the federal fiscal year time period- October 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>. The total federal grant award for FY2018 is \$11,793,410. She provided an overview of the funding sources and their estimated amounts, actual expenses according to funding sources, and projected expenditures. Sheri asked for feedback of the narrative provided; council members expressed support for the format.

Kathy Hampton asked for the amount of supplemental funding. Sheri indicated no supplemental funding was provided and the program was able to operate within its means. No supplemental funding was requested for either the state or federal fiscal year. Nick noted moving forward the program will not continue to operate in anticipation of supplemental funds.

Discussion was held on timeframes for different funding award decisions and announcements.

**Federal/State updates & Field Services updates:** Nick reported the house budget funding committee passed a stand-alone funding bill for DPHHS with support of both parties. He noted staff would be monitoring the bill closely.

Chanda reported on recent training attended in Bethesda, Maryland. A great deal of funding and policy information was discussed and the training was very beneficial. Vocational Rehabilitation staff also presented information on several of Montana's programs, many of which have not been tried in any other state.

Chanda Hermanson-Dudley reported on a recent RSA decision regarding post-employment services. Discussion was held on the program's outcomes and eligibility and timeframe (3 months after job placement).

Nick reported the Department of Labor remains interested in moving Vocational Rehab under their agency. The issue will be monitored closely as it moves forward. Discussion was held on how the reorganization may affect funding.

Chanda announced staff is ready to assist 50 new IPE's? and requested concurrence from the council to move forward with the proposed order of selection. Nick discussed the rationale behind accepting 50 people at a time.

Kathy Hampton expressed the need for better communication between Vocational Rehab and CRPs. Chanda explained efforts staff has implemented to improve communications. Nick discussed division outreach and how funding issues affect relationships with CRPs. CRP incentive payments and division staffing and general budgetary issues (internal spending controls) were also discussed. Tiffany suggested CRPs and other partners be invited to attend internal team meetings.

Frank commended the agency's work to now be ready for 50 new cases. Scott concurred with Frank's comments and the strides that have been made by the agency in the past year.

**Motion: Order of selection**

**Scott Trent moved approval to open selection for 50 new category 1 cases; Frank Podobnik seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

Chanda provided a detailed report of division staffing vacancies and duty re-distributions in addition to the funding for numerous positions.

There have been no appeals since the last meeting. Unsuccessful mediation was held in a case of internet reimbursement.

***Strategic Plan updates:*** Barbara Schiedermayer reported on implementation of the strategic plan, including priorities and progress to date. Detailed information on the plan's priorities is provided below.

**PRIORITIES:**

Increasing services to youth with disabilities

*Method for accomplishment is by increasing the contracts with schools; however, this year contracts decreased from 89 to 40 due to shortened timeframes for contract completion and how funding was allocated.*

Expansion of specialized programs for youth with disabilities

*Specialized camps are very successful - My Life camps and newly created Mini My Life camps, Moving On camps to explore secondary education, and Green Corp – farm work experience camp. The Montana Youth Transitions website provides expanded information as well.*

Increased engagement between vocational rehab counselors and youth with disabilities

*Several counselors in the state are teaching in schools and are personally inviting students to attend the above referenced camps. Counselors have received training on the three types of students needing*

*assistance (already being served, on the waiting list for services and potentially in need of services) and all of their time is being documented in order to track which groups of youth are being served.*

Expansion of contracts with schools near reservations and in treatment and detention facilities

*Youth service teams have received specialized training on these situations and circumstances and eight (8) new contracts with the following schools have been initiated: Valier, Polson, Lame Deer, Browning, Charlo, Plains and Pryor-Plenty Coup.*

Increased alignment with vocational rehab partners and services to businesses

*This includes helping businesses meet their VR needs, and increasing awareness of the possibilities offered by VR employees. Staff has joined SHRM (Association of Senior Human Resources Professionals), various Chambers of commerce and have given public presentations highlighting the benefits of VR employees, including career fairs. Windmills training has been given to VR counselors and can now give the training, and communication between all interested parties have become more hands-on and better. Barbara also identified several pilot projects currently occurring throughout the state.*

Ensure knowledge of alternative employment options

*Counseling is being provided to citizens who are working with disabilities, to make sure they know they are able to work in competitive, alternative employment outside of workshops and thorough education of their options is being provided.*

Discussion was held on scenarios such as the recent Helena Industries closure.

**Governor's Report:** Shawn Tulloch provided an update on the process for submittal of the Governor's Report for 2018. She referred to the 2017 report and reviewed the information being updated throughout, and asked for general suggestions from the Council. She specifically asked the council to review page 4 of the 2017 report, in order to provide updates to that information. She noted the updated plan is due at the end of the year. Scott noted the council is required to provide the report; however, it does not need to consume a lot of time or money. There was consensus by the Council to provide their updates and changes via email.

Kathy Hampton spoke of a national disability rights network conference she attended in Baltimore earlier in August, noting vocational rehab council membership, gubernatorial appointments to, and the option of forming internal committees within councils were specifically at a breakout session.

Discussion was held on how such committees would be implemented. Chair Costa will vet council interest via email.

**Apprenticeship programs:** Scott introduced Dylan Rogness, the Apprenticeship Liaison at Missoula College. Dylan provided his education, employment history, apprenticeship program statistics for the State of Montana and explained his position as apprenticeship liaison. He gave his experience working with VR benefited students and how well the benefits would coordinate with participation in apprenticeship programs. He noted 2,000 on-the-job training hours and 140 continuing education hours per year are all that are required of an apprenticeship program. He asked council members to think of apprenticeships when working with VR clients and referred to the website listed below for more information and to provide to interested persons. [www.mcapprnticeships.org](http://www.mcapprnticeships.org)

General discussion was held on the apprenticeship programs and offerings in Montana. The issue of para-educator training was also discussed, including the current KOTOPP training available online.

**Montana Council Developmental Disabilities:** Deborah Swingley-CEO/Executive Director provided an overview of the Montana Council of Developmental Disabilities (MCDD) organization and distributed several informational handouts, including an Executive Summary for MCDD's 5-Year Plan of Action – Goals, Objectives and Activities for 2017-2021. Ms. Swingley also discussed MCDD current projects and programs, and encouraged Council members to learn more about posturing at [www.posture24-7.org](http://www.posture24-7.org).

**Job Services:** Rhonda Huseby- Bureau Chief of Job Service Operations provided an update on the current services being provided by the job service, including an update on the recent closure of seven (7) job service locations. She will provide Shawn with an updated list of DRC staff statewide.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

**Welcome and Introductions:** Council Chair Tiffany Costa called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. (Friday, 8-24-2018)

**Youth Services Updates:** Cheri Reed, Miles City VR Counselor, provided a power point presentation on existing strategies and projects in pre-employment in youth services. Chanda referred to the recent dashboard report showing 4,954 students have received a pre-ETS service since July 22, 2014.

**Windmills Training:** Cheri Reed provided a Windmills Training exercise, specifically related to reasonable accommodations.

**Service Animals:** Lloyd Sparks, Civil Rights & EEO Coordinator for MT DPHHS, provided an informational report on the regulations for service animals. Montana Code Annotated 49-4-219 outlines the requirements for using a service animal. Discussion was held on how to address the issues that can arise from the use of a service animal. Mr. Sparks noted service animals in Montana do not have to be registered. He also addressed the instances of people claiming their animals are service animals when they may in fact not be; and recommended unless the animal is being disruptive to leave the situation alone rather than asking the individual to prove their animal is trained as a service animal.

**Wrap-up:** Shawn advised the council that the website has been updated with the most current operating documents. Chair Costa announced the next meeting will be in a retreat format and held in Billings on November 29-30, 2018. It was noted the amount of in person reports/presentations should be kept to a minimum to reduce travel costs.

Possible Agenda Items for November 29-30, 2018 or future meeting:

- State SPED Advisory Council – Tammy Hogan
- Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation – Shaunda Albert, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe
- LIFE – Christy Sofianek
- Mental Disabilities Board of Visitors
- Shannon Lewis from SWIB

Scott Trent moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:03am; Kathy Hampton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.