

# State Rehabilitation Council Meeting Minutes August 8-9, 2024 Dillon, MT



**SRC Mission Statement:** The State Rehabilitation Council advises the Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Service program to improve policies, programs, and delivery of services through a collaborative effort with other agencies.



**VRBS Vision Statement:** Montana values people with disabilities in our workforce and our communities.

**VRBS Mission Statement:** Montana Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services promotes opportunities for Montanans with disabilities to have rewarding careers and achieve maximum personal potential.

## Thursday, August 9, 2024

### **Planning & Review Committee, Marcy Roberts:**

The Governance Committee is currently working on the Governor's Report. Their current task is rating success stories and selecting which stories will be chosen for the Governor's Report. The committee shared a current draft of the Governor's Report. They will share the report once again at the November meeting.

### **Education and Membership-Bylaw changes/edits, Corinne Moore:**

The orientation packet was voted on and approved. New SRC members will begin to receive the orientation packet. The committee is working to reach out to the IL partners to gain additional membership. A new membership flyer will begin to be distributed.

Corinne asked the council to review the bylaws and bring the requested changes to the November meeting for discussion and vote.

There are currently three vacancies in the SRC.

### **Consumer Satisfaction & Needs Assessment, Celina Cline:**

Their current goal is to figure out a survey process. The committee is going to try to solidify a contractor by September 1, 2024. The state is currently in the middle of the procurement process. Once decided, the contractor will report twice a year to Celina.

**Policy, Procedure, & Personnel Development, VACANT:**

The committee has not met as Brook Hodge, the former chair stepped down from the SRC. Allyson Talaska starts her new position on Monday. The committee will meet and let the council know who the new leader is.

**Legislative Committee, June Hermanson**

June would like to conduct Zoom trainings for stakeholders in September and October. The committee will be prioritizing bills during the legislative session that have the most impact on individuals with disabilities, defining stakeholders, and training stakeholders to testify during the legislative session. Some of the bills that the legislative committee currently had their eyes on, including House Bill 872, focused on Behavioral Health. The Governor's budget is due on November 15, so this committee would have an eye on how this budget will affect individuals with disabilities.

**Goals, Priorities, & Strategies Presentation, Lacey Conzelman:**

A new state plan was written and approved in 2024. Our state plan for the Vocational Rehabilitation program is housed in a larger state plan that includes all of our WIOA workforce partners. Lacey did a formal review of the state plan. She also discussed that a needs assessment is done with the goal of gathering information and feedback from stakeholders in a comprehensive way. This needs assessment to inform the state plan.

**Performance Accountability/Data Presentation, Anna Gibbs:**

Anna presented on the process of performance accountability and data. A handout detailing this presentation was provided prior to the meeting.

**Friday, August 9, 2024****Member Moment, Jean Schroeder:**

Jean Schroeder discussed her upbringing, life, family, and reasons for serving on the SRC.

**Federal & State Reports, Chanda Hermanson:**

Chanda reported that she recently met with Dante Alan, the commissioner of RSA, who was recently appointed by Biden. At the meeting, he shared that he has three main priorities for VR. He wants there to be expansion on who they see as partners. His second priority is storytelling and changing the focus from what is not happening to what good things are happening. The governor's report is where we, as a state, do a good job of this. Chanda expressed having counselors take the time to record success stories. His third priority was artificial intelligence. We are exploring this area but are still very new to it all. Chanda encouraged people to show up in January at the legislative session to advocate for the needs of our clients.

**Budget Report, Anna Gibbs:**

Anna presented her budget report. A handout was provided prior to the start of the meeting.

**VRBS Report, Chanda Hermanson & Sarah Seltzer:**

Chanda reported on open positions in the VR offices across the state. The open positions at this time include Chief of Field Services, Administrative Assistant in Billings, Vision Rehab Therapist in Great Falls, and a Supervisor in Helena.

**BLVS Report, Darrel Hannum:**

Darrel reported that BLVS had a staff meeting in June where they looked at the statewide assessment. Darrel mentioned that they are working on a mobile service delivery model and that they have purchased an RV for that. This would replace the need to go into homes. They have increased their outreach efforts. Darrel reported that he just finished up working with the MSDB design team. They are also working on a self-employment IOP.

**Pre-ETS Report, Tammy Hogan:**

Tammy reported the five services of Pre-ETS including job exploration, workplace readiness, workplace learning experiences, secondary opportunities, and self-advocacy for students. Tammy reported on their camps and the number of campers at those. They had 13 campers at the Great Falls camp and 14 in Billings. The Pre-ETS specialists have been very busy with students and secondary programs. One last goal that Tammy reported on was being more active working with foster care.

**Extended/Customized Employment, Lacey Conzelman:**

Extended employment is fully state-funded. It is outside of VR but supports those individuals that require long-term supports. This program gets approximately one million dollars to support it. Each year the money is completely expended. Clients that utilize this program have exited from VR. There is a waitlist due to the restrictions that funding creates for this program. 34 individuals could be supported by this program but are waitlisted due to funding restrictions.