

# Montana State Rehabilitation Council

## Virtual & In-person Meeting

### August 5 & 6, 2021

#### Meeting Minutes

**Members present:** Barbara Davis, Chanda Hermanson, Kathy Hampton, Eliza Kragh (Zoom), Denise May, Kathy Meier (Zoom), Cheri Reed-Anderson, Marcy Roberts, Emma Rooney, and Tom Sullivan

**Members absent:** Scott Eychner, Renea Keough, Dr. Tom Manthey, and Sandy Taylor

**Staff and guests:** Beth Brenneman, Lacey Conzelman (Zoom), Anna Gibbs, Jeff Haley (Montana Telecommunication Access Program), Darrel Hannum, Brook Hodge, Jean Schroeder (Zoom), Shawn Tulloch, CART transcriber (Zoom), and two sign language interpreters.

**Welcome and Introduction:** Council Chair, Marcy Roberts, called the meeting to order. Shawn Tulloch reminded the Council the ground rules during this hybrid meeting. Introductions were made. Council Vice Chair, Kathy Meier, read aloud the mission statements.

**May Meeting Minutes:** Motion made to approve the May 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes unanimously.

**Announcements:** n/a

**Public Comments:** Kathy Hampton had questions regarding the counselors providing assistances with the benefits. Darrel Hannum informed her that a procedure is being written up.

#### **Committee Reports:**

- Planning & Review, Chair Barbara Davis:
  - Three responsibilities: write the Governor's Report, review the State Plan, and discuss priorities and goals.
  - State plan is a three-year document submitted to Rehabilitation Service Administration. The staff have several responsibilities for the State Plan to meet the goals and they meet monthly to update their tasks on it. The State Plan has SRC's recommendations (also in the Governor's Report)
  - Used a rubric to review the case stories.
- Education & Membership, Chair Denise May:

- Working on recruiting new members as a few members resigned or will be termed out this fall.
- Waiting for official appointments from the Office of Governor.
- Will review the MT SRC's Bylaws.
- Consumer Satisfaction & Needs Assessment, Chair Eliza Kragh:
  - Continues to review the data collected.
- Policy, Procedure, & Personnel, Chair Brook Hodge:
  - Self-Employment procedure will be reviewed and should be approved next week.
  - Developmental Disabilities Program Referral Procedure has been finalized.
  - Transportation Procedure is being worked on.
  - New procedures will be coming out: Dress Code (for the staff), On the Job Training, Case Transfer, Driver Ed's Training, Benefits Counseling
- SRC's Employer of the Year, no chair at this time:
  - After the Council chose the top four success cases, we have a letter ready to go out to different employers. The letter contains questions such as how hiring the individual with disabilities improve business, etc. The answers need to be returned by Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>.

***Federal and State update; Waiting List update, Chanda Hermanson, Disability, Employment, and Transitions Division Administrator:***

Chanda reported on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Governor set up commissions in different areas on how the money will be utilized. Most of the work and services are going through commission and Medicaid. The work we do follows Section 602 of the Workforce Commission.

We have a package proposing to hire 10 contracted VR counselors using \$2 million of the ARPA funds. Due to COVID and the way we manage the program, we are serving more clients but we do not have the staff to do so. The proposal says we contract out for two years with the temporarily hired counselors.

There is a big effort to focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as part of Council of State Administrators for VR (CSAVR). Chanda and Brook Hodge, as the representatives, believes that we can do more with DEI by offering training opportunities for VRBS, developing specific referral procedures for other programs, and increasing our presence at various veteran events.

Objective, Goals, Strategy and Measurement (OGSM) is a method the Governor's office is using among its leadership to document goals and

strategies. Chanda and other division administrators are developing these and submitting to the Governor. She shared some examples with the Council.

Chanda also reported that with the Category One open, the staff have been busy learning the ropes on the new case management, Madison. With Category Two and Three closed, there are 1,188 on the waitlist.

**Budget Update, Anna Gibbs, Program Support & Operations Bureau Chief:** Anna reported on the new case management system, Madison. We have had the old system, MACS, for six years before switching to a new one. The staff attended the Madison training last July and will continue to adjust to the new system. Anna showed the Council what the Madison case management system looks like via projector.

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services (VRBS) FFY 2020 grant award was \$9,281,550. This results in a Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) set aside of \$1,392,232 which leaves \$7,889,318 for General VR. The State General Funds Match is \$2,512,033. The VRBS program expended \$6,639,350 of the FFY20 grant as of June 30, 2021. The program is carrying forward the FFY20 to September 30, 2021. We carried forward \$7,000,811 of the VR grant from FFY20 into FFY21 on September 30, 2020 which will be 100% expended by September 30, 2021. Our FFY21 award is \$12,700,045 which results in a Pre-Employment Transition Services set aside of \$1,905,007 which leaves \$10,795,038 for general VR. The State General Funds Match is \$3,437,242. The VRBS program expended \$8,067,458 of the FFY21 as of June 30, 2021. The goal of the program is to carry forward approximately \$7 million from the FFY21 award into the FFY22 award when we are expecting a large Maintenance of Effort penalty.

The VRBS program receives program income for reimbursement of VRBS services provided to clients that are SSI and SSDI recipients under the Ticket to Work program. The Ticket to Work reimbursements we collected in State Fiscal Year 2020 from 7-1-19 to 6-30-20 were \$1,245,362. The Ticket to Work reimbursements we collected in State Fiscal Year 2021, from 7-1-20 to 6-30-21 totaled \$1,258,182.

**Vocational Rehabilitation & Blind Services update, Brook Hodge, Field Services Bureau Chief:** Brook reported on vacant positions (five counselors and a Pre-ETS specialist). Cheri Reed-Anderson is the new Business Services specialist. Foundations training (VR orientation) was provided to the newly hired staff. The next All Staff training will be in a few weeks and topic is the adult education program in Missoula. Brook would

like to give more in depth presentation on individualized placement and support model (IPS) at the next SRC meeting.

**Blind Low Vision Services (BLVS) update, Darrel Hannum, BLVS Bureau Chief:** Darrel reported on the vending machines in various places and how the COVID slowed the vending machine businesses. Two of the vending machine businesses were able to get additional funding support. BLVS makes bulk purchases on various items (sunshades, magnifiers, etc.) for those in needs of them. BLVS did not have a good statewide management system for keeping track of the items. However, Madison helps with the bulk purchases and the inventories. One of his staff who relies on JAWS gave feedbacks on the Madison usage. Darrel passed out business cards showing the VRBS vision, mission, and core values.

**Best Western's the Forge presentation:** Tammy Mattson, General Manager of the Forge, shared her experience of landing the job and maintaining the hotel. She believes that the hotel in Anaconda is a perfect location being closed to Missoula and Bozeman.

**Economic Development/Continental Divide Trail Coalition:** Adam Vauthier gave an overview of how the workforce increased in Anaconda. Andrea talked about the Continental Divide Trail Coalition.

**SRC's Member Moment, Kathy Hampton of Disability Rights Montana:** Kathy gave a presentation about how the Disability Rights was established. There are several units: intake (info and referral), education, abuse & neglect, and policy. The organization receives ten different grants. Kathy gave an overview of the different aspects of the organization.

**SRC Council Manual Review, Chair Marcy Roberts:**

- The Council Manual must be scanned as a whole document before uploading to the website. Some pages will be left out such as meeting dates & times, officers, and contact info.
- The VRBS Mission Statement on General Information needs to be updated. With this sentence "The council meets four times a year, generally in Helena," Marcy suggested to remove "generally in Helena," for better support in different communities.
- The Council wants citation of the law.
- SRC Budget – wants to add a sentence "detailed report of expenditures is presented at the request of the Council."
- How VRBS reimburses travel costs – show links of state rate for meals, etc.
- Need to update MT VRBS policy on supported services, prevailing wage – any link supporting this?

- Education and Member Committee will review the MT SRC Bylaws and report to the Council next time.
- Remove the 2011 Memo; instead put in the MCA Title 2 Chapter 3 parts 1 & 2
- Keep RSA-TAC-12-01 dated 10-21-11; any link? Shawn will find it.
- VRBS General Information, VR History, VR History Dates need to be updated
- Governor's Reports are already online; not needed to be stored in the binder.
- Central Office staff, VRBS team bios need to be updated.
- Federal Standards – remove from the binder

***Wrap-up:***

- Next SRC meeting was planned for November 4 & 5 in Helena; however, due to conflict scheduling with the staff, the dates are changed to Tuesday, Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Chair Marcy requested to have the meeting in Butte.
- Agenda items:
  - Governor's Report (Lacey Conzelman)
  - SRC's Bylaws (Denise May)
  - IPS model (Brook Hodge)
  - VRBS Work Plan (Lacey Conzelman)
  - VR 101 (Sarah Seltzer)