

Montana State Rehabilitation Council
Hybrid Meeting
Butte, MT
November 30 - December 1, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Members present... Barbara Davis, John Gorton (Zoom), Kathy Hampton (Zoom), Chanda Hermanson, Eliza Kragh (Zoom), Tom Manthey, Denise May, Marcy Roberts, Emma Rooney, Jean Schroeder, and Brian Tocher.

Members absent... Scott Eychner and Renea Keough

Staff and guests... Lacey Conzelman, Vena Dagnall, Anna Gibbs (Zoom), Darrel Hannum, Brook Hodge, Sarah Seltzer, Shawn Tulloch, two CART transcribers (Zoom and in-person), 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 for this hybrid meeting. Introductions were made. Tom Manthey read the mission statements.

August Meeting Minutes: Motion made to approve the August Meeting minutes unanimously.

Announcements: As the SWIB representative, Scott Eychner has resigned from the Council.

Public Comments: n/a

Committee Reports:

- Employer of the Year Award:
 - Cheri Reed-Anderson and Lacey reviewed case stories and spoke with clients. It turned out that several clients did not disclose their disabilities to the supervisors. We need more time further research. This committee needs more Council members.
- Education and Member:
 - There are a few applicants to be appointed by the Governor. They would fill the seats for SILC, VRC, and Disability Advocate.
 - Following are the vacancies on the Council:
 - 3 seats for BIL, 1 for Native American VR Project, 1 for SWIB, and 3 Disability Advocates.
- Consumer Satisfaction & Needs Assessment:
 - This committee is of one person.

- The survey was reviewed but not sent out due to no feedbacks from the consumers. It is considered to have the vocational rehabilitation counselors to send out the survey instead of the third-party company. We are aiming to send out survey in the beginning of January. That way the feedbacks will be collected and shared at the next SRC meeting.
- Policy, Procedure & Personnel Development:
 - New procedures have been written and published:
 - Dress code, pre-screening questions before home visits, case transfer, and disability preference for state, county, city & jobs.
 - Administrative Rules and policies are not reader friendly for our constituency – this is a project currently working on.
- Planning and Review:
 - Governor's Report were reviewed.

VR 101 Module, Sarah Seltzer, Quality Assurance Officer: Sarah presented the first module of VR 101 which covers the history of vocational rehabilitation.

Federal & State Reports, Chanda Hermanson, DETD Administrator...(report is not available due to CART transcript was missing)

Budget Report, Anna Gibbs, Bureau Chief of Program Support & Operations: Anna reviewed the handout showing the VRBS spending. 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 \$10,525,641 of the FFY20 grant as of October 31, 2021. The program carried forward the FFY20 award to September 30, 2021. We carried forward \$7,000,811 of the VR grant from FFY20 award into the FFY21 on September 30, 2020 which has been 100% expended by September 30, 2021 but just needs cleaning up journals reflect as fully expended in our fiscal reports. Our FFY21 award is \$12,700,045 plus we applied for and received Reallotment* of \$1,466,732. Together, this brings our total federal award to \$14,166,177. This results in a Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) set aside of \$2,124,927 which leaves \$12,041,250 for General VR. The State General Fund Match is \$ 3,834,210. The VRBS program expended \$3,858,539 of the FFY21 grant as of October 31, 2021. The goal of the program is to carry forward approximately \$9 million from the FFY21 award into the FF22 time period, when we are expecting a large Maintenance of Effort penalty. Our FFY22 award so far is \$2,226,318 which will not be our whole award, but we do not know how much this total will be. We are still

awaiting our Maintenance of Effort penalty notice, and also do not know how much this will be. 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 totaled \$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. The Ticket to Work reimbursements we collected in State Fiscal Year 2022 so far, from 7-1-21 to 10-31-21 totaled \$143,992.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services Report, Brook Hodge, Bureau Chief of Field Services...(report is not available due to CART transcript was missing)

Blind and Low Vision Services Report, Darrel Hannum, Bureau Chief of BLVS...(report is not available due to CART transcript was missing)

Pre-Employment Transition Services Report, Tammy Hogan, Bureau Chief of Pre-ETS...(report is not available due to CART transcript was missing)

Customized Employment Report, Lacey Conzelman, VRBS Program Manager...(report is not available due to CART transcript was missing)

Presentation of Butte Local Development Corp., Joseph J. Willauer, Executive Director...(report is not available due to CART transcript was missing)

Member Moment, Emma Rooney of Westaff Staffing Services: While operated under a national company called Employ Bridge, Westaff is the only one in Montana. Westaff is a full service human resources specializing in recruitment. With Emma in the role of branch manager, there are five people working in the Helena office. Emma talked a bit about how a temporary employee gets a permanent job. If a temporary employee wants to work permanently with a company, that can happen after working for Westaff for three months. For those working with the State, there is no contract obligation to follow. There are many different job options such as entry to high level office personnel, medical direct care staff in local clinics and hospital, financial positions in banking, specialized trades and sales, construction and more. These jobs are posted online. Pre-COVID, the office would have about 2 to 3 candidates for 30 openings. Now, there is a lot more candidates. Westaff offered two services: staffing and human resource. Westaff is partnered with VRBS for about six years. They are able to help VRBS clients to get jobs.

SRC Council Manual and Bylaws revisions: Marcy Roberts encouraged the Council members to watch the four modules from Rehabilitation Council webinar series (forwarded to the Council earlier this month). A brief discussion on allowing members who are waiting to be appointed by the Governor to attend the SRC meeting. The only thing they can't do is vote. Other discussion is keeping the SRC website updated and accessible for the public. Due to the struggle of filling the Native American VR Project seat, Denise recommended revising the sentence to allow a representative of the Tribal VR programs to join the Council (not just a director of the Tribal VR programs). Denise suggested to change the name of SWIB to State Workforce Innovation Board (instead of State Workforce Investment Board). Denise asked for clarification on what is the "statutory function" and the paper ballot of voting on statutory function. She also suggested to amend the part where it says that if both Chair and vice Chair are absent, the VRBS administrator can continue the Council meeting. It seems a conflict of interest for the administrator to run the meeting. Marcy suggested to add past Chair and secretary, so administrator would not run the meeting. The Education and Membership committee had more questions: if the Council is supposed to review, analyze, and advise VRBS programs, there has not been much of that. There have not been much public comments; maybe having open table would help? Another question was asked about the advising DPHHS and VRBS and assist with application part. It was agreed that applications are for recruiting new members to serve on the Council. Another part talks about informed communication between regional and state staff. Chanda explained that we used to have regional staff but no longer have it now. Denise pointed out that secret ballot is written in the Bylaw but that has not been used. Instead, we can add voting can be through email, Survey Monkey, polling on Zoom and in-person. Marcy suggested to add something about a conflict of interest and about finishing a term and reapplying in a different role after a break.

The other thing that the Council needs is to monitor the emails and announcement from National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Council (NCSRC). NCSRC hosts Zoom conference calls monthly – who is responsible to attend them? Denise brought up one more item in the Bylaws: the subcommittees to have a minimum number of persons, so it all even out.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services Work Plan, Lacey Conzelman: In June 2020, several stakeholders got together via Zoom to come up with vision, mission and core beliefs. They also developed strategic plan for VRBS. The Work Plan is broken into five parts: access & quality, coordination, youth engagement, equity, and organizational stability. Under each part has a list of objectives to accomplish from 2020 to 2025. Lacey

gave a review and result of each objective on the work plan. The staff give input of the objective each month – placed on Microsoft Teams.

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

November Conference Update, Tom Manthey: He reported that he attended two days of the conference. He listened to a couple of panels/presentations and shared what he learned:

- VR counselors in Alaska and Connecticut gets paid well and have no problem filling the positions.
- Amazon is hiring people with disability.
- Conservation Legacy also hired people with disability for internship.
- United Health group does the Disability Inclusion hiring.
- A set of parents appreciates having the Pre-ETS for their child.
- Partnership of Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and Department of Mental Health to develop an employment model for job seekers (aged 18-26 years old).

Election of Chair and Vice Chair of SRC 2022: A motion to nominate Emma Rooney as the Chair and Tom Manthey as the Vice-Chair starting in 2022. Jeanne Schroeder seconded. CARRIED.

Wrap-Up:

- Discussion on the 2022 meeting dates:
 - February 1-2; location TBD
 - April 20-21 with SILC
 - August 23-24
 - November 15-16
- Agenda Items:
 - Eliza requested time set aside for questions.