

Montana State Rehabilitation Council

Meeting

February 1 & 2, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Members present: Celina Cline, John Gorton (Zoom), Chanda Hermanson, Kathy Hampton (Zoom), Lacey Keller (Zoom), Eliza Kragh (Zoom), Tom Manthey, Denise May, Carlos Ramalho (Zoom), Marcy Roberts, Emma Rooney, and Jean Schroeder.

Members absent: Brian Tocher

Staff and guests: Joleen Weatherwax, Lacey Conzelman (Zoom), Vena Dagnall (Zoom), Anna Gibbs, Darrel Hannum, Brook Hodge, Tammy Hogan (Tuesday), Kendra Joyce (Zoom), Shannon Mackey (Zoom), Shawn Tulloch, CART transcribers (Zoom), and two sign language interpreters.

Welcome/Introduction/Rules/Read the mission
May Meeting Minutes: not presented to the board yet.

Announcements: none

Public Comments:

Committee breakout meetings / Reports:

- **Planning & Review, Marcy Roberts:** We are working with Lacey Conzelman to create a time line of everything needed in the Governor's Report. This will make it easier to track the components and for future committees to produce the report.
- **Education & Membership, Chair Denise May:** Welcome. We have several new members starting at this meeting. Kendra Joyce is interested in joining the board and is attending online. We are waiting on the governor's office for a couple of applications. We have a couple of Advocacy slots open. Send any suggestions for names.
- **Consumer Satisfaction & Needs Assessment, Chair Eliza Kragh:** Discussed sending out a survey and updating that survey to an electronic survey and discussing doing a survey for businesses who employ VRBS clients.
- **Policy, Procedure, & Personnel, Chair Brook Hodge:** Focused on reviewing our new procedure on in-house benefits planning and process to our blind and low-vision counselors who are certified. We are working on updating current procedures to align with the changes that have come about as a result of our new case management system called "Madison". We are working on how to coordinate services with the client assistance program, self-employment, on-the-job training and customized employment.
- **Employer of the Year,** no chair at this time, no report.

NCSRC – National Coalition of State Rehab Councils have quarterly zoom meetings, and send out weekly emails. We need a person to attend the meetings and report back to the council. Celina Cline volunteered.

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

-Reminder that the State Rehabilitation Report must cost less than \$1. We can use an electronic format or email.

-Order of selection- less than 1,000 on the waiting list!

-We have several temp VR Technicians hired to help with work flow

-No budget approved yet by congress.

-Commissioner for VR not yet appointed by Pres. Biden

-Red Tape Reform initiative – goal is to cut bothersome rules and prioritize reforms.

-All Staff training May 18-20 in Havre. SRC members are invited.

-Projects- Foster care youth underserved, identified last year as a priority
Work with Child and Family Services to streamline services
Connect with Veterans differently
Work with mental health institutions differently

Budget Update, Anna Gibbs, Program Support & Operations Bureau Chief:

FFY 2021 breakdown \$ 12,041,250 Federal Grant Funds
\$3,834,210 State General Funds
\$2,124,927 Federal Pre-ETS Set Aside
\$18,000,387 Total Funds

VRBS program expended \$6,084,832 of the FFY21 grant as of 12/31/21

The goal is to carry forward approx. \$9 million from the FFY21 award into the FF22 time period, when we are expecting a large penalty. We have carried over funds for 6 years to pay the penalty. October 2022 will end the penalty pay back.

FFY 2022 Award – Our award is \$2,226,318 which won't be our whole award, but we do not know how much it will be yet. Dec. 2021 Penalty letter said our total grant for FFY22 will be reduced by \$6,874,637.

Ticket to Work reimbursements collected: 2020 totaled \$1,258,182. 2021 totaled \$1,258,182 and so far in 2022 7/21 to 12/21 totaled \$143,992.

Vocational Rehabilitation & Blind Services Brook Hodge, Field Services Bureau Chief: One opening in Butte, other positions are all filled. Continued staff training, SRC members are invited to the weekly 90 min. meeting and the joining a team meeting. March 22 is Rehab Counselor Day. Madison is the name of the case management system we have been using for 7 months.

Blind Low Vision Services (BLVS) Darrel Hannum, BLVS Bureau Chief: We are building the older blind program by working with Mississippi State Blind Technical Assistance Center. Over 300 people served in Older Blind Program. Currently have 2 vendors in the Randolph Sheppard Program. Voc. Rehab is serving a caseload of 35-40 clients. We are working with NFB of MT to provide more social resources. Missoula is starting a MT Assoc. for the Blind chapter. 3 current vacancies in our program.

PreETS report – Tammy Hogan: Introduced PreETS program, staff, services and eligibility. Current numbers: Reoccurring PreETS-927
Potential eligible people- 761
Applied to PreETS -166

Currently making contracts with schools. Some challenges: data entry with the new case management system, Madison, lack of Community Rehab programs, Independent Living programs or independent vendors. We are collaborating with CFS, and the Foster Care system.

Extended Employment – Lacey Conzelman: The EE program was explained. They are currently using Madison, the new case management system. Currently 254 clients are receiving EE. Working to revamp some things in the EE system: billable time guide, procedure for clients to transition from VR to EE and to clean up role descriptions, processes, procedures and annual reviews.

Discussion about SRC manual, bylaws revision and new secretary position

SRC's Member Moment, Tom Manthey

Open Forum/Roundtable discussion - We went around the room and on zoom to elicit comments, questions and statements.

Wrap-up: Next SRC meeting is in Helena on April 20-21 2022. It is a joint meeting on Wed, 4/20 with SILC for half a day and a full day meeting on Thursday, 4/21.