

MINUTES
STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
March 22, 2016

Attendees: Joan Bindel, Sherri Clark, Nicole Cleveland, Jill Crosser, Randell Davis (attended via phone), Page Eastin, Pam Fitzsimmons, David Mitchell (non-voting), Gary McDermott (attended via phone), Lori Moore, Renee Nepl (departed at 1:15), Deb Samson, James Smith (non-voting)

Absent: Kathy Joblinske, Rosie Thierer, Brian Dennis

IVRS Staff: Matt Coulter, Kenda Jochimsen, Kelley Rice, Lee Ann Russo, Kathy Slater

Other Attendees: Richard Clark and Mary Jackson, IVRS Resource Managers; and IVRS Supervisors joined from 2:00 – adjournment.

The March 22, 2016, State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Jill Crosser at 10:38 a.m., with introductions. A quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 10, 2015, MEETING MINUTES

Pam moved the SRC Minutes from the May 12, 2015, meeting be approved as submitted; Jill seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously with one correction: Brandi McOmber is domiciled at the Waterloo office and not the Cedar Rapids office.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT – *Administrator David Mitchell*

David noted upcoming events in which he is involved. Governor Branstad and Lt. Governor Reynolds' March 28 weekly press conference will highlight Iowa's leadership role in the employment of people with disabilities. Working in partnership with Department for the Blind, IVRS had two business representatives who communicated the value of an IVRS business partnership.

April 1 brings the Future Ready Iowa Employment panel in Davenport. David is facilitating this panel, which will include the Governor and Lt. Governor as well as the Director of the Dept. of Education and Workforce Development. The panel will address working with individuals who have barriers to employment. The discussion will offer an opportunity to highlight vocational training, work-based learning (WBL) and meeting business needs. The emphasis for a future ready Iowa is about meeting business needs, with a goal by 2025 of 70% of working Iowans having education or training beyond high school.

David is on a statewide committee for the Iowa National Governor's Association (NGA), which is integrating work-based learning opportunities for Iowans. The NGA awarded a

grant to the State of Iowa to scale work-based learning to connect Iowa's youth with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) middle skill careers. The grant provides a written agreement of structured activity for secondary transition services. IVRS, with workforce and education leaders, will partner on ways to promote better career pathways. The grant also provides for a messaging campaign about how to improve marketing of what is now referred to as mid-skills jobs, which are defined as post-high school, but less than a four-year degree. David shared a draft of the messaging campaign which includes taglines that can be used in social media. IVRS will need to ask how we can integrate persons with disabilities into a Future Ready Iowa and integrate into IVRS strategies. David will be partnering with RSB Bureau Chief Kenda Jochimsen to determine how best to message this out to staff.

An important issue for IVRS involves Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS). Under WIOA, VR is required to spend 15% of its resources for PETS. Although Iowa is #1 in the nation for our IVRS presence in secondary schools, we are still having a hard time achieving this 15% expenditure. We have until Sept. 30, 2016, to spend last year's funds. If we are unable to expend PETS funding, we will need to return these dollars.

A handout was also provided regarding the May 12 Iowa Passenger Transportation Summit at Iowa Valley Continuing Education Conference Center in Marshalltown.

Other items:

- IVRS is working on a possible summer readiness camp. A lot of ideas have been generated, but it will take some time to get them up and running.
- Kenda is working on a computer program with a STEM emphasis for Forest City and Charles City school districts.
- IVRS has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Iowa Dept. of Education which defines how IVRS will partner with schools. The MOA defines the responsibilities of both divisions and the utilization of agency resources.
- The agency is partnering with Page Eastin, of the Dept. of Human Rights, on an ADA Transition Plan in collaboration with IVRS Resource Manager Jeff Haight to identify IVRS leased office spaces that are not in compliance with ADA standards.
- As part of Work-Based Learning, there are intermediary network staff who are tasked with WBL opportunities in community colleges. These intermediary staff will prepare students for the workforce by connecting business and the education system. David is discussing with Iowa Dept. of Education and community colleges to hire more staff to reach those students in community colleges and is meeting with the Governor's staff to discuss this.

These efforts are geared to secondary school students. The earlier students and parents are engaged, the more successful IVRS hopes to be with employment opportunities. David shared a chart regarding career readiness activities: Career Awareness activities (elementary), Career Exploration (middle school), and Career Preparation/Career Training (high school) – which shows a continuum of services throughout the school career.

Questions and comments:

- Deb Samson – how do we prevent two different systems from occurring with the utilization of intermediary network staff? David said we will need to identify gaps resulting from capacity issues to ensure students with disabilities are served.
- Joan Bindel – are we reaching all students who need VR services? Are they being identified? David answered “no,” we probably aren’t reaching all of them. Kenda added that legislation allows VRs to work with the potentially eligible. There are students with disabilities who may not have a 504 Plan or IEP, but those students could still receive pre-employment transition services. This is the first year we’ve been asked to do this. She explained that some teachers may not know how to go about ensuring students access these services. There are a lot of kids who do not need VR intensive services, but need the guidance and advice that VR can provide.
 - As a clarification to Joan’s question, David used SRC member and IVRS counselor James Smith’s caseload as an example. James currently has about 135 students and adults with whom he provides services. As part of the new WIOA legislation, he now must add the potentially-eligible to that number, along with the students he works with as part of PETS requirements. The challenge for IVRS is to determine how counselors can navigate the system in other ways. IVRS will need to view strategic planning and state plans differently.
- Lori commented that families need to be involved and this message needs to reach them. Parents of students with disabilities are oftentimes unsure; they don’t know what to do.
- Randy Davis inquired about the opportunity for a home-schooled student to utilize transition services. Kenda and David encouraged the student’s parents to contact their local school district. Page also encouraged the home-schooled student to apply for VR services to help with a career pathway.

David asked Page Eastin to share activities with which she is involved.

- Page is working with IVRS on the production of three video tracks, each targeting a different audience – one video showcasing IVRS job candidates who talk about the services they received, another video series will present a “parent angle,” and the third video series will share information from staff perspectives about how they guide their job candidates. The videos are still a work in progress and intended to be short, brief and informative.
 - Once completed, videos that appear on the IVRS website will be specific to the VR experience, since the goal is to get this message out to VR applicants and to current job candidates. Video geared to staff will most likely only be on the IVRS intranet.

- An endeavor with DRI includes outreach to individuals in sheltered workshops; there are 57 providers who may employ people at subminimum wage. The objective is to generate interest in those individuals about competitive employment. A component of the information they will provide is how earnings can affect benefits.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW – ASB Bureau Chief/CFO Matt Coulter

- The IVRS financial position continues to remain stable – and has been for a while.
- Deficit: The projected deficit is related to the possibility of not spending all of the PETS funds – IVRS is trying to spend a large amount of money in a short period of time. Once this money is spent, the agency will need to drop down these expenses, and doing this is very hard as there are numerous contractual relationships committing us to spending these funds.
- IVRS Audit: This is the fourth year in a row with no reportable comments – something Matt said is a source of agency pride. Any errors the auditors have found have not rose to a level that warrants reporting to the public.
- Wait List: The numbers of people on the wait list is shrinking considerably, with a very real possibility of getting through those on the significantly disabled wait list.
 - The wait list is shrinking because there are individuals who need our funding, but may not need our services. We will see a shift as people served by CRPs, and are required to come to VR, will require more intensive services. The workforce model we are implementing should help to prevent the wait list from growing. With this new model, we may see higher expenditures – but because of partnering, IVRS can increase the capacity of those we serve. For example, third party contracts allow VR to expand capacity, such as Project Search, CRP contracts and our Dept. of Aging agreement.

Questions and comments:

Renee commented on some STEM undertakings of which she is aware:

- Project Lead the Way – which is a national non-profit organization education program with an Iowa chapter that develops STEM courses for Iowa schools. The project includes partnership with the Iowa Dept. of Education, state universities, Iowa employers and other sponsors.
- The Aspiring Professional Experience (APEX) program in the Waukee school district brings education, business and the community together to offer experiential opportunities in the areas of financial, insurance, business, technology, engineering, human services and bioscience professions.
- Also within the Waukee school district, there is a pending survey on what each school district is doing for WBL, with the goal of gleaning best practices.

- IWD created a program funded by a grant to expose low-income women as well as minorities to non-traditional construction jobs. The truck traveled around the state, targeting women involved in the Promise Jobs programs. They had the chance to operate a simulator in the truck's attached trailer to gauge whether they had an interest in this type of work. There is a demand in this field and pay is generally higher than the more traditional work roles women may have.

Sherri Clark spoke of the dilemma for CRPs in rural IA:

- There is a need to make an informed decision about community employment
 - Clients won't be able to get the hours needed to earn as much as they can in a sheltered workshop environment. Those kinds of opportunities are not yet available in rural Iowa. Rural dynamics are different than those in urban settings simply because of the employment options available.
 - Some older individuals who have been in a sheltered environment for a long time prefer working in this setting. They want to work, but are most comfortable in a sheltered environment.

David remarked that this is a very real issue for families. If a client is only working 10 hours a week – it is a concern for families who must grapple with this reality and figure out how other hours in the week are spent.

- VR is trying to provide other options and choices. IVRS will not make decisions for families, but rather provide those options. VR's goal is not to shut down sheltered workshops.
- Kenda concurred with David, indicating legislation does not say there cannot be sheltered employment but rather, prior to entering a sheltered workshop, there are specific steps that need to occur. This is an important distinction.
- Lori Moore added it is important that a continuum of services is provided, full inclusion isn't the best option for each and every person.
- Page said it will take at least a year to get the message out regarding options available to those in a workshop, and assured there won't be a pressure campaign.
- Sherri expressed the need for a global approach in order to ensure it will truly be an informed choice for clients.
- Page inquired about the eligibility criteria changes Matt mentioned as it regards the "Others Eligible" category. David said he would be interested in getting feedback from SRC in future meetings about helping those who are already working to save their current job positions. Federal regulation allows for priority eligibility for those at risk of losing employment because of their disability.

INDEPENDENT LIVING AND PARTNER CONTRACTS UPDATE –

IVRS Resource Manager Lee Ann Russo

- IVRS monitors program and financial contractual agreements. For Centers for Independent Living (CIL), funding dollars come through IVRS and are then distributed to the CILs. Clients served via the CIL typically do not have an employment goal, but can receive services which will allow them to live independently in their homes. As a result of monitoring activity, VR became aware of an issue related to Access 2 Independence, an Independent Living Center serving the eastern Iowa corridor. The Executive Director was terminated approximately two years ago, they attempted to hire another director but did not follow the appropriate processes. IVRS has apprised federal authorities of these issues.
- The NE Iowa Center for Independent Living, which served the Waterloo area, has been closed for some time, so not all area offices have a CIL in their area, which is of concern.
- The Iowa-Illinois CIL is assisting with education efforts for the Project Search program established at a hospital in Clinton, IA.
- IVRS has established 78 CRP contracts, all of whom can now help to coordinate employment services around the state.
- CRP Referrals and SES Closures are increasing since a low in 2009, with overall Supported Employment closures reflecting a rehab rate high of 85.17%.
- Services have evolved over time with our CRPs, with new services not previously provided or recognized by VR as needed (such as Customized Employment).

Questions and comments:

- Randy commented that one of the biggest challenge facing CILs is transitioning people with significant disabilities out of nursing homes and into home and community-based residences. This will be a fifth core service. He inquired as to whether the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE) has been in touch with Olmstead Task Force.
- David responded that yes, ICIE has a rep on the task force as well as Dawn Francis, who is the Executive Director of the Statewide Independent Living Council and serves as Vice Chair of the Iowa Olmstead Consumer Taskforce. He elaborated that the core IL services are 1) advocacy, 2) information and referral, as well as 3) mentoring and 4) training. The addition of this fifth core service in WIOA legislation – transition from a nursing home to a more independent living center, currently includes no funding behind this mandate, nor has there has been training related to this.

LUNCH PRESENTATION: *Amy Desenberg-Wines, Project Manager,
Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE)*

ICIE is a consortium which includes representatives from the Iowa Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council, Iowa Dept. of Education, IVRS and the Dept. of Human Services. Amy has worked in the disability arena for all of her employment career. She expressed excitement about what is happening, due to all of the people who have come to the table to work together.

ICIE is 4½ years into a five-year system change project related to integrated, competitive employment for youth with DD. The intention of the project is to look at Iowa funding policy, funding, practices and capacity to determine ways to provide integrated, competitive employment no matter where someone lives.

Amy emphasized ICIE's intention is not to close down facility-based settings. Historically, 80% of public funding is spent on facility services, with 20% spent on integrated employment. The Medicaid employment rate focus was on facility services. ICIE's objective is to rebalance this ratio, improving the balance between facility employment and community integrated employment. ICIE members have worked closely with the Employment First initiative. Although there are different funders at the federal level, the goal is the same.

The Coalition has had a number of different objectives and areas of focus:

- Collaboration with stakeholders from different focus areas.
- A consistent employment outcome measurement system.
- Services during high school that support a seamless transition to employment.
- Development of a wider assortment of service providers who focus on providing services that promote integrated, competitive employment for youth with intellectual or developmental disabilities.
- Increase the expectation and demand for employment of these youths.
- Change current policies, practices and funding as needed.

The collective impact of trying to change employment as it relates to disability is complicated because there are complex issues with a lot of moving parts. Even with a plan in place to achieve employment objectives, it is difficult to always predict the outcome due to numerous dynamics.

Despite the fact that the coalition has not actively recruited for members, they have 200+ providers who have come together, including CRPs, DHS, State and County personnel, case managers, parents/family members, as well as individuals with disabilities, and school personnel. Sixty-four provider agencies have participated in ICIE work. All have a vested interest in systems change and meet quarterly. There was hesitancy in the beginning between the stakeholders, but people continued to return for meetings and have developed an honesty with each other. Leadership (CORE) team members meets monthly and serve as a board of directors, governing the direction of the work.

ICIE talking points for Washington are derived from the conduction of extensive evaluation of their work so as to refine practices and achieve better outcomes. They utilize surveys of their coalition members, using an external evaluator so people will be comfortable and candid with their responses. In response to the question “What has happened since your engagement, have you seen a change in your knowledge, actions and beliefs?”

- 80% report they’ve changed their knowledge as a result of their engagement and participation.
- 78% have changed their attitude about employment of people with disabilities.
- 61% report changes in their skills.
- 74% report change in their action.
- 61% transformation in their beliefs.
- 100% reported their opinions are valued in the work they do.

When asked specifically how they have changed, participant responses indicate coalition members feel they have new skills and have moved from idealistic to realistic. Regular meetings, with speakers facilitating a variety of topics, have helped them to refocus, prevent burn-out, and change attitudes to focus on helping each person achieve their highest level of ability.

The coalition doesn’t seek to change “what has been,” which works for some, but leaves open the door to ideas for systems change towards integrated employment. Some projects include:

- Work Groups: A diverse group of stakeholders have formed work groups and determined how Iowa is performing in these areas. The State data measurement system will look at employment settings, wages, and the number of hours worked by persons with disabilities. All of this information is provided to legislators.
- Transition: Coalition members have also worked on transition projects – there is a critical need at a community level to have cross partnerships to engage youth in employment services. The Dept. of Education will invest in staff for ongoing development beyond the ICIE project.
- Monthly webinars: ICIE coordinates webinars with relevant topics that are of interest to the attendees, speakers include subject matter experts. About 40 – 60 participants attend each month, with at least 25 agencies represented. IVRS coordinates information into one location on their agency internet page, recordings of webinars can be found at <http://www.ivrs.iowa.gov/CustomizedEmploymentStrategies.html>
- Pilot Projects: There have been several Pilot Projects involving partnering with schools, to look at customized employment strategies and system-wide implementation of transformation efforts. More recently, ICIE has partnered with Washington State, which has the highest rate in the country for outcomes in integrated employment.

- Integrated Employment Leadership Series: Twenty-six agencies participated in three 2-day workshop sessions, targeted at middle managers regarding how to build and grow their employment programs. The sessions have been well-received by the participants.

As a result of this pilot project work, IVRS recognized there are some individuals who may have previously been denied services and, as a result, added service codes to address this.

At the start of the coalition project, they really wanted to engage parents and family members. Eighty-seven members are currently participating in the parents/family member's coalition. They have a voice and they need to be able to help shape advocacy and change, even if this is not a part of their "professional" expertise. Legislators have reached out to this group to get their opinions on what is needed from a lawmaking viewpoint. ICIE also works to engage at the regional level, encouraging people to be a part of the solution process, regularly working with regional workforce personnel.

Amy concluded her presentation by encouraging SRC members to look at how this work can help them in their efforts as stakeholders, conveying, *it doesn't take money to continue engagement*. In a collective effort, SRC members can share with their communities of what needs to happen at the state level. Amy cautioned that it won't work if it is just a grassroots effort or a state level effort. Everyone needs to be involved in continuing this discussion – she expressed her appreciation for the level of participation and support by Administrator Mitchell and IVRS personnel. SRC can add their resources to this effort, using the coalition structure to get community input.

Comments:

- Sherri sees value in continuing this effort and sees significance in SRC participation. It is a process that takes time, but she hates to see this end with the coalition project.
- Deb Samson appreciates the need for a diverse group of stakeholders vested in better outcomes because there is a way to manage the effort when it is a coordinated endeavor.
- Lori added that she would like to continue to see growing numbers of families as a part of this effort to ensure they have a voice.

[Renee left at 1:15 p.m.]

REHABILITATION SERVICES REPORT – RSB Bureau Chief Kenda Jochimsen

Kenda facilitated a discussion regarding Reverse Integration as an employment model for IVRS to work with community rehabilitation providers in supporting competitive, community-integrated employment. Much discussion occurred regarding the intent of the program.

Sherri Clark, representing community providers, discussed transformation efforts occurring across the state as sheltered workshops close their programs and/or begin

transitioning to more community-based programming. The better description of the program efforts was a new business model developing for these organizations as they became community-based businesses hiring and employing individuals from the community on a competitive basis. Business employees were integrated into the business with the majority of the workers being employees without disabilities. No employees were being hired that were continuing to receive programmed sheltered work services. All individuals were hired on a competitive basis, earned the compelling wage rate and benefits for the position, all were above minimum wage and interacted and worked with all employees of the business.

Questions/Comments:

Business representatives on the Council voiced support for the program and did not see differences or disadvantages from their business operations.

- Page Eastin asked questions, inquiring whether these were temporary, transitional positions or permanent positions. Page expressed she would be more comfortable if this is a short-term situation. Kenda responded that for them to be considered competitive, they would need to be permanent positions and not be used as a transitional programming piece for someone's rehabilitation plan.
- Joan Bindel and Nicole Cleveland both expressed agreement of the concept, viewing it as win-win for all.
- Lori asked if VR would review the job candidates' progress yearly; Kenda responded that would not happen as this is not placement into sheltered employment – job candidates would be performing competitive work.

Discussions also occurred regarding the environment/setting of the business, but it was explained that the business was operating as an independent unit, distinguished from service delivery programs. David elaborated that a CRP would approach this in the same way as a traditional employer providing a business service – they would be hiring the most qualified, whether it is someone with a disability or not.

It was moved by Joan Bindel and seconded by Pam Fitzsimmons to vote on whether the Council supported this programming initiative. Vice-Chair Jill Crosser placed the motion to vote; the motion was approved with a show of hands vote of 6-2-2. YES: Joan Bindel, Nicole Cleveland, Jill Crosser, Pam Fitzsimmons, Lori Moore, Deb Samson; NO: Page Eastin, Randy Davis; ABSTAINED: Sherri Clark, Gary McDermott. Sherri indicated a potential conflict of interest with the vote and Gary indicated it was difficult to hear the full conversation being on the telephone and felt more comfortable not voting.

Guardianship and Conservatorship: Kenda shared there are 22,000 Iowans with a guardianship in place, and that Iowa is first in the nation with the number of people under a Guardianship or Conservatorship, many of those are youths. The Iowa Supreme Court created a task force to look at this and has asked IVRS to participate in their study and provide recommendations regarding practices and procedures to determine how someone might be assessed for guardianship or conservatorship. For

example, in the case of someone who cannot manage money, the court appointment of a guardian may not necessarily be the appropriate response.

LEGAL UPDATE – IVRS Staff Attorney Kelley Rice

Kelley noted that members have a handout of legislative updates included in their meeting packets that are of interest to VR. She distributed another sheet which included updates on the status of these bills. She added that Senate File 509 is now in the House Ways and Means committee, having passed the Senate last year. This is a bill that requires motor fuel sites (gas pumps) to be accessible for those with disabilities and comply with federal ADA standards.

The 2016 legislative session is expected to adjourn on April 19, but whether that will happen is still up in the air. There have been no appropriations bills to review. Matt attended the Education Supplemental Aid appropriation, the bill passed with an increase of 2.5%. This appropriation should have occurred last year, but did not.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning and Evaluation:

- Lee Ann reported that no closure surveys were mailed in October or November 2015 due to verbiage changes. Based on SRC vote, Question 12 now incorporates four sub-parts to that question.
- One area office is now incorporating the Active Survey with their appointment cards. Lee Ann noted there have been some inconsistencies with the wording of the Active Survey/postcard entitled “How Are We Doing?” which has changed three times. The current wording at the bottom states “If you have additional questions, please contact the IVRS state office by calling (800 number provided).” Lee Ann added that the Active Survey is provided to job candidates at Intake, Plan/Development and Closure.
 - Page suggested this be changed to add job candidate contact info at the bottom of the card (name/phone).
 - Kenda asked they keep the statement which reflects that adding their name will not negatively affect their VR services.
 - David said VR staff will contact job candidates with any concerns noted if their name and contact info is provided.

It was moved by Joan Bindel and seconded by Lori Moore to amend the Active Survey postcard by removing the phone number for job candidates to call IVRS, to provide a place for contact name and information, and to note that providing identifying information will not affect services received. Vice-Chair Jill Crosser placed the motion to vote; the motion passed with unanimously with all in favor.

Outreach Committee: Jill explained SRC logistics for the next day’s legislative reception. The committee has assembled the goody bags they will be distributing; Jill asked for a \$5.00 contribution from the membership to cover costs. A copy of the flyer that will be included in the legislator bags is included in the SRC member meeting packets.

Members are to meet at 6:30 a.m. to prepare their space in the Capitol rotunda for the 7:00 a.m. event.

Financial Committee:

No report. Due to a schedule conflict, Matt was unable to attend to lead the committee meeting.

LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

- David distributed talking points to SRC members and VR supervisors and resource managers who joined the meeting, noting these points are not prescriptive nor should they be “read” to a legislator. A 30-second elevator speech was provided indicating a status quo budget, expressing appreciation for past support and requesting continued support of current funding levels.
- The talking points touch on information that may be of special interest to various legislators, as well as general information such as who we are, who we serve, information indicating we have met our federal standards, and the positive return on investment.
- A key piece of information to convey is that we are not operating in a silo, noting expanded VR partnerships.
- SRC members are instructed to direct questions to VR staff members if questions are out of their comfort zone.
- Special VR guests will include Project Search staff as well as one of their successful students.

David shared with the group that even if they reach just one person or make just one connection, the effort is worth it. Matt added it is good for legislators to hear from SRC members rather than just VR personnel. David concluded the meeting by sharing with the group that this activity is consistent with the Governor’s message and ties to the Governor’s Monday, March 28, press conference as well as the Future Ready Iowa panel discussion the following week.

A motion for adjournment was made by Jill and seconded by Lori; all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

The next SRC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 7, 2016, in Des Moines at the Jessie Parker Building, Knudsen Room, from 10:30 a.m. until 3 p.m., with committee meetings beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Meeting minutes approved by the Council on this date: _____

SRC Chair – Rosie Thierer