



Holiday Inn Downtown Yakima
802 East Yakima Avenue
Yakima, WA 98901

WSRC QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Friday, April 20, 2018

9:00 am to 1:30 pm

Present: Kelly Boston, Council Chair, Business Representative, Olympia.
Jerry Johnsen, Council Vice-Chair, Client Assistance Program, Seattle.
Deborah Boudreau, DVR Customer Representative, Ellensburg
Erica Wollen, Workforce Training Representative, Olympia.
Erin Williams, Business Representative, Seattle.
Ivanova Smith, Disability Advocacy Representative, Tacoma.
Josephine Ko, VR Counselor Representative, Kent.
Justin Poole, DVR Customer Representative, Yakima.
Kathy Powers, Business Representative, Auburn.
Laurae MacClain, Tribal VR Representative, Nespelem.
Philip Bradford, Labor Representative, Tacoma.
Rob Hines, DVR Director, Lacey.
Rosslyn Bethmann, Parent Training Representative, Spokane.
Shannon McLain, CRP Representative, Spokane.

Members

Absent: Keith James, SILC Representative, Tacoma.
Tania May, OSPI Representative, Olympia WA.

Council Staff: Marie Vela, WSRC Executive Lead, Lacey.

Visitors: Jennifer Bean, CAP Rehabilitation Coordinator.

Call to Order: *The meeting was called to order on April 20, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. by Kelly Boston, Council Chair.*

Customer Forum Debrief: The group discussed areas that went well and areas to improve the previous day's forum. There were 10 attendees, 6 identified as customers. The council will share a summary with DVR Leadership for them to distribute

General Impressions

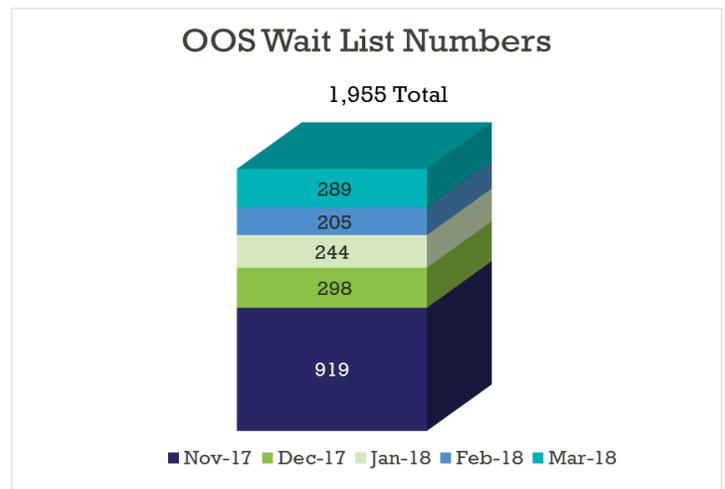
Some staff were pulled away to the customer table because clients needed Spanish language interpreting assistance. The group will include a language translation as an accommodation on the customer forum invite. Staff did not seem to feel comfortable sharing with DVR Director Rob Hines at their table. The questions

seem to repetitive; the group discussed the need to simplify questions overall for broader understanding. Kathy heard that counselors are not advising customers there is a waitlist. Counselors also tell customers there is no money for DVR to spend on customers.

DVR Director Report: DVR Director, Rob Hines reported on DVR updates from the last quarter.

Order of Selection: Order of selection was planned in-house, communicated to staff, and tips to communicate with customers. Even though OOS does not account for geography, DVR can shuffle resources to where the need is.

Case Status	FFY 17 Average	Post-OOS Average	% Change
Caseload Movement			
Applications	931	786	-16%
Eligibility Determinations	835	729	-13%
New Plans	498	299	-40%
Caseload Status			
In Application	1,383	1,255	-9%
In Eligibility	3,157	2,081	-34%
In Plan	5,890	6,211	5%



*October 2017 caseload data not included

Projected waitlist is lower than anticipated. DVR has been getting about 200 customers added to the wait list per month. DVR is working with the other core partners to assist with customers who are being placed on the waitlist.

Information and referral is required and staff have been trained to provide a warm handoff to partners. Integrated services with workforce partners is also required and DVR being in an order of selection has been the opportunity to provide this service.

DBHR braided funding around the 1115 waiver. The fidelity model is the national best practice. DVR is considering open enrollment to CRP IL services to get a handle on all the contracts.

Discussion: Kathy asked DVR to consider not closing open enrollment to smaller communities where resources may be limited.

Training

Training recently developed by DVR did not meet staff needs or expectations and was poorly communicated. DVR Leadership decided to publish it anyway in order to receive feedback.

It is still moving forward and will be republished after it has been thoroughly reviewed. DVR plans to contract out trainers (WINTAC, CCER) to provide the level of training that DVR does not have the bandwidth to provide internally. Rob plans to make the training program visionary and use as a tool to recruit and retain staff. Rob still wants to provide internal in-person training from counselors who are the gold standard before they retire.

Discussion: Laurae suggested DVR to utilize the Northwest Indian College as a training resource for VR staff. They provide an online training course for VR with a requirement to take the Tribal VR History class first. Ivanova suggested having someone with a disability to provide training on disability stigma.

DVR Current Top 3 Priorities

1. Employee Survey distributed to the field on 4/9/18. The things staff like most about their job relate to working with customers and the community and teamwork. Staff want to see improvement in how we manage changes to work process, communications, and staff recognition and support. Mobile work is a priority of the governor and DVR has been promoting that.

The priorities for improvement are for staff to receive clear information about changes being made within the agency and using customer feedback to improve their work processes.

2. Advisory Workgroup kicked off their first meeting on March 26-27 and discussed technology to support mobility, communication, and professional development, growth, and self-care:

Technology to Support Mobility

The workgroup committed to seeking opportunities to utilize technology that is available within our agency in order to better serve and communicate with

customers. The group agreed that one way of addressing this would be to focus on mobility solutions. The input provided would be in the interest of allowing leadership to more effectively evaluate future need and lay the groundwork for further expansion of mobile work within DVR.

Communication

The need for more effective internal communication throughout DVR was discussed, and a set of principles to guide the implementation of future communication strategies was drafted. The group emphasized the need for transparency and inclusion, along with the need for staff to be able to access information on an as-needed, when-needed basis.

The workgroup proposed the following principles for consideration by leadership: that a future state vision should inform messaging, that knowing "why" was motivational, that each DVR staff should approach communication with respect for all, that information should be both usable and available as needed, and that the protocol for seeking information should be clear and consistent.

Professional Development, Growth, and Self-Care

The group recognized that one of the most important factors in DVR's future ability to retain great staff is the opportunity for professional growth. This included both the need for VR-specific training and for opportunities to engage in professional development and leadership training.

3. State Auditor's Office (SAO) – DVR Audit findings (Audit period 7/1/15-6/30/16)

Individual Plans and Employment

Completed July 2017 – The case management system was updated to require both the counselor and client's signatures upon completion of the IEP.

Due April 2018 – Review and enhance reports from the case management system to monitor critical deadlines, establish an SOP for the extension process, and provide staff training.

Eligibility

Completed May 2017 – Directive to staff to communicate the expectations for timely eligibility determinations which includes proper documentation. Updated the Customer Service Manual, and enhanced the web reports.

Due April 2018 – Establish an SOP for requesting an extension of eligibility to include a supervisory review process.

Activities Allowed

Completed May 2017 – Directive to staff outlining the expectations for timely IEP completion, the federal requirement to include employment services in the IEP, updates to the customer service manual, and conducted quarterly internal compliance reviews.

Due April 2018 – Enhance STARS to send staff alerts to staff when new services are initiated that are not on the clients IEP, and develop staff training.

Earmarking

Completed September 2017 – Developed an SOP to provide guidance to staff on how to determine allowed use of earmarked funds.

Completed October 2017 – Updated STARS to ensure payments made for Pre-ETS services from the earmarked funds are only made for those eligible.

Due March 2018 – Develop an SOP for identifying how to correct payment errors.

WAC Formal Rule Making Progress Update

The DVR Policy Team completed the process of requesting consultation with Tribal Governments in February and have incorporated staff, stakeholder, AAG, and RPAU (Rules and Policy Assistance Unit) comments, edits, and suggestions, as appropriate. The CR-102, Formal Proposed Rule was transmitted to the DSHS RPAU on February 28. The amendment proposes a sequence for the amended sections of WAC that follows the VR process. This required a full repeal and new chapter.

The timeline for rule making remains very tight. The proposed amendment will be published for comment in the Washington State Register later this month, at which point a notice will go out to all stakeholders. Public hearing for the proposed amendment is scheduled for May 8. Upon completion of a “Concise Explanatory Statement” that responds to all feedback received in this formal comment period, permanent rule text will be submitted in late May, with a late June effective date.

RSA Guidance on Rollbacks

DVR received guidance this winter from RSA by email. RSA requested that VR programs discontinue the practice of “rolling back” cases from closed to open status when previously reported as closed. The guidance allows for an exception

when the State Unit has been ordered by a judge to reopen a case. DVR has asked for clarification of this guidance, but have not received any to date. Unintended consequence may be the elimination of the opportunity for informal dispute resolution with customers. DVR is evaluating the impact of the guidance and considering have a supervisory review prior to closing cases.

Fiscal Update

DVR is five months into Order of Selection and case expenditures are declining slowly. We continue to provide uninterrupted services to the most significantly disabled. Currently close to 2,000 individuals on the Wait List. DVR continues to evaluate and assess all expenditures. Current analyses does not indicate cases will be released from the waitlist any sooner than originally projected. DVR will continue to analyze case spending trends and share findings as we start to see significant change.

Statewide Performance Update

October 2016 – September 2017

Performance Measures

- Eligibility Determinations within 60 Days: 97.23%
- IPEs Developed within 90 Days: 95.75%

Benchmarks

- Customers Served: 22,322
- IPE Closures: 4,842
- Rehabilitation Rate: 61.8%
- Average Hourly Wage: \$13.55
- Average Weekly Hours: 25

October 2017 – April 9, 2018

Performance Measures

- Eligibility Determinations within 60 Days: 97.43%
- IPEs Developed within 90 Days: 98.92%

Benchmarks

- Customers Served: 17,083
- IPE Closures: 2,554
- Rehabilitation Rate: 59.5%
- Average Hourly Wage: \$14.27
- Average Weekly Hours: 25

ATAP Plan: Rob recognizes that filling this position statewide is an issue. Rob is evaluating this position for what the field needs and going to have the advisory workgroup discuss. Rob does not know if DVR will have one in each region or statewide, or what it will look like moving forward.

Staffing Changes and Plan

Chief of Field Services: Esther Bennett is retiring in May. Workgroup in headquarters is determining how this position may need to transform based on

changes in organizational structure and agency needs. Rob wants to work lean, and they feel the pressure of needing more hands on deck.

Community Programs Manager: Andres Aguirre retired/is going to retire. The position is going to be reassessed prior to recruitment.

The position administers two DVR/CRP workgroups, 1) Communication & Collaboration, and 2) Contracts Models. In recent months, workgroups have been losing traction due to administrative support in scheduling and consistence attendance. Expect these to continue once new hire is onboard.

Transition manager: Rob wants to have the Pre-ETS plan in place before a new secondary school transition manager is hired.

Pre-ETS Reset

Still not meeting the 15% requirement and sending back funds for RSA to reallocate. Streamline the model to include the core workforce partners who are already working with youth. DVR is putting a hold on new contracts to create a template for consistent services and evaluating how to move current contracts to the template model. Focus areas include:

- Creating a contract template: end current contracts and re-establish based on updated focus on Work Based Learning and Work Readiness Training activities
- Communication campaign
- Engage with workforce partners as primary contractors who can then subcontract. (Workforce partners have statewide system in place to carryout services)
- System/program development

Case Management System

Current STARS database is incapable of meeting Pre-ETS data tracking requirements. Procurement process for new system is still layered with approvals needed from WaTech and Department of Enterprise Services

Vision & Values exercise

DVR Executive Leadership Team collaborated with the Institute for Community Inclusion to work with engage staff in development of agency new Vision and Values statements.

Vision: DVR on the cutting edge for facilitating customers to excel and reach full potential.

Values: Transparency and empowerment

The next step is to decide what DVR needs to do to show how they demonstrate their values every day.

Client Assistant Program (CAP) Report: Jerry Johnsen, Client Assistance Program (CAP) Director, reported on what CAP has been experiencing for the last quarter.

Jerry started with a quote, “Through conflict comes peace”. He recommends tackling conflict head on so you can start talking about solutions. The WSRC is a partner in the VR process, working towards the same vision.

He shared an analogy comparing a DVR office to a doctor’s office waiting room, regarding someone’s first experience/impression of the office. While waiting, customers size up the space and the people who work there. Did the customer receive good information? Did they feel like a number? Were staff friendly? That feeling sets the rest of their experience in motion.

Jerry explained the encounter he had visiting a rural office co-located with a DSHS, not an employment office. CAP had to enter personal information into the computer system and wait for his number to be called. It was not a welcoming experience. Regional Administrators need to know what their offices look like and advocate for better options.

Jerry is working with Rob Hines regarding training issues and concerns. CAP has been providing a mini rehab-law-trainings when doing outreach to offices. His outreach also includes talking about the WSRC and how collaboration can improve services to customers.

Jerry also addressed the history and status of the assistive technology practitioner (ATAP) within DVR. Previously, each Region had one ATAP who integrated into the field and making AT part of the VR culture. Area 2 is the only Area to have an ATAP at this time, and the agency has lost the sense of culture and role of the ATAP for addressing assistive technology challenges. All staff need to think about how AT can help in all aspects of a customer’s life. Jerry shared the importance of VRC’s being aware of the resources and options available to help their customers, including AT, Independent Living, and Benefits Planning.

Jerry discussed how the support from Rehab Services Administration (RSA) changed when RSA lost their regional offices. RSA has become more about enforcement and less about offering technical support. There needs to be a better

partnership, a supportive relationship. The role as a council and agency is to give feedback and let RSA know when things do not work and how customers are impacted.

Public Comment: None.

Review Task List: Kelly reviewed follow up items or things that need to be accomplished prior to the next meeting.

Adjourn: *Meeting adjourned at 1:30p.m.*