



DVR State Office- Large Conference Room
4565 7th Ave SE
Lacey, WA 98503

WSRC QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Friday, January 19, 2018

9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Present: Kelly Boston, Council Chair, Business Representative, Olympia.
Jerry Johnsen, Council Vice-Chair, Client Assistance Program, Seattle.
Erica Hansen, Workforce Training Representative, Olympia.
Josephine Ko, VR Counselor Representative, Kent.
Justin Poole, DVR Customer Representative, Yakima. (Phone)
Kathy Powers, Business Representative, Auburn.
Keith James, SILC Representative, Tacoma.
Philip Bradford, Labor Representative, Tacoma.
Tania May, OSPI Representative, Olympia WA.
Erin Williams, Business Representative, Seattle.
Ivanova Smith, Disability Advocacy Representative, Tacoma.
Laurae MacClain, Tribal VR Representative, Nespalem.
Shannon McLain, CRP Representative, Spokane.
Deborah Boudreau, DVR Customer Representative, Ellensburg.

Members

Absent: Rosslyn Bethmann, Parent Training Representative, Spokane.
Rob Hines, DVR Director, Lacey.

Council Staff: Teesha Kirschbaum, WRSC Executive Director, Lacey.
Marie Vela, WSRC Executive Lead, Lacey.

Visitors: Jennifer Bean, CAP Rehabilitation Coordinator

Call to Order: *The meeting was called to order on January 19, 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 24 attendees, 15 identified as customers. The council will share the following summary with DVR Leadership for them to distribute:

Timeliness:

- The DVR process is cumbersome.
- Progress is slow and customers do not understand what is or should be happening.

- Customers are uncertain what they should expect from DVR vendors or how to hold them accountable.

Communication:

- There were a number of customers who stated their counselor had left several months ago and they had not been reassigned to another counselor, had not received communication from DVR, and their phone calls were not returned (Tacoma).
- A number of customers conveyed communications with DVR were positive and they felt good about responsiveness and mode of communication (Tumwater).
- One young man noted he struggled with email communication and technology, and was paired with a Deaf counselor whose mode of communication was primarily email.

Counseling:

- Several customers talked about the size of their counselor caseloads and felt discouraged from asking their counselor for time or assistance. They stated that because they knew how big their VRC's caseload was, they were reluctant to ask for additional time and services. They did not want to burden their counselor, knowing how many other customers their VRC were serving.
- While a few customers stated they felt DVR understood them and their disability, others felt DVR counselors do not always listen well and do not fully understand their disability needs.
- Multiple customers state that counselors pushed them toward jobs that are below their skill level and education.
- One person stated she felt her counselor "forced" her to keep a job for 90 days where she did not feel safe.
- Customers noted that their VRC has sometimes struggled to understand their non-visible disabilities, particularly mental health disabilities.

Observations:

- DVR turnover continues to be an issue that customers describe as a major barrier to their progress. One customer had four different counselors.
- Feedback seemed to vary by age of customer, with younger customers reporting comments that are more positive.
- One customer noted that VRCs should be asking customers the same questions the WSRC is asking.

DVR Staff Input

We also hosted a discussion with DVR staff. Below are highlights from that conversation:

- Staff want to stay in touch and do the best they can.
- Counselors want to move faster, but high caseloads and the DVR process make it difficult.
- In past year, DVR offices have looked at how they can respond to customers more quickly.
- Customer should be sure to set up voicemail on their phone!
- A plan to coach staff not to mention their caseload sizes to customers because it is not helpful. It deters timid customers from asking for help and exacerbates customers who exhibit aggressive tendencies.

Discussion: Teesha shared how appreciative DVR staff were at the level of involvement at the forum. Paul Vertrees, the Regional Administrator requested the notes from the forum so he can share with his staff.

A customer voiced a safety concern at the forum. Customer safety was a topic of a previous WSRC recommendation to DVR. How well is DVR checking in with their customers when they have been referred out for services-asking specific questions about their safety and comfort level?

Workforce Board Update: Erica gave an overview of what the Workforce Board does and how the Workforce Board connects to serving individuals with disabilities. Erica used the State Auditor's report on Workforce Development as part of her presentation. One aspect of this report is how well each workforce program is serving the priority populations. She also explained that the public workforce development is multifaceted and is complex; unfortunately, it can also be complex for customers. There is a current goal to make the system integrated enough that this confusion is mitigated. That there is no wrong door and excellent navigator services. Each Workforce Development Council must also submit a two-year update to their local plans. In those update they must explain how well they are serving individuals with disabilities. There has been significant focus on ensuring that the public workforce development system is prepared to serve more individuals with disabilities and other job seekers with barriers to employment. A learning management system is being built for anyone affiliated with the PWDS. One of the first training is focused on serving Focus 14 population.

Discussion: Ivanova expressed her concern with the autistic community being pushed off the cliff with the order of selection. Functioning labels may cause

denial of services because of invisible disabilities. Members asked for this Auditors report to be sent to them.

Workforce Development System: Eric Wolf, the Workforce Board's Director of Policy and Programs, gave a presentation on the State Workforce Development System and some of its current initiatives. He explained that the level of local control in Washington is extremely high, more so than in other states.

In Washington, there is a culture of diffusing power into the local level. Another reason for the complexity of the system is that it has both federal and state law that it must follow. Our state law says that we have to collaborate with way more than what the federal law requires. Eric explained that workforce development and education are closely linked. They create one integrated pipeline of talent development that serves both businesses and jobseekers.

The federal law that governs the public workforce development system, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is organized into four different titles. WIOA title three has the largest amount of funding and provides general job seekers and business engagement services. Typically, Title 3 and Title 4 Vocational Rehabilitation are comparable in funding levels and number of customers served.

The State is organized into 12 different Workforce Development Areas (WDA), which are organized like a nonprofit with its own board and are completely autonomous from the state Workforce Development Board. Each WDA has a DVR representative on its board and these members are appointed at the local level, not the state level. This structure is very common to how schools boards and school districts operate with their state partners.

The State Workforce Training and Education Coordination Board has 30 staff. Supporting the State Workforce Board is just one part of their responsibilities. The State Workforce Board has nine voting members, three business, three labor, and three representing different state agencies (Employment Security Department, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges). There are four other non-voting members, representing Special Populations, DSHS, local elected officials, and the Department of Commerce.

Eric stated that a new interest of the Workforce board was automation and how this will dramatically change work in the future, and how it will affect job seekers and employers.

Discussion: Ivanova asked if jobseekers were represented on the board. Eric stated they were not, but that the non-voting seat representing Special Populations fulfilled that role. Ivanova also asked about assistive technology or just technology in general was used to help jobseekers with disabilities to become employed and stay employed. Jerry then explained how DVR's Region 3 continues without an Assistive Technology Provider (ATAP) on staff. CAP is seeing a need for this service in Region 3. Currently staff in Region 3 have to get approval from the Regional Administrator before they can reach out to an ATAP. This is very different from the other two regions.

Kelly asked someone to present on how DVR was doing on achieving its core outcomes and pointed out that the information Eric provided showed that wages and net impact is extremely low for jobseekers with disabilities.

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

- Lack of understanding regarding reasonable accommodations remains to be an issue.
- DVR Staff Training also remains to be an issue.
- Jerry discussed OOS related to transfer of responsibilities: “the practitioner recommends you do this.”
- People who are eligible for trial work should by definition be MSD, however there are some that are being placed on the waitlist.
 - Not many customers have appealed their waitlist determination.
- DVR ATAP service inconsistencies across the State.

Discussion: Kelly would like to take the topic of OOS category determination to the Executive Committee for discussion. There may be a potential recommendation to DVR regarding clarification around category determination causing issues in the mental health population.

Cinda Johnson: Cinda Johnson gave a presentation of the Post-School Outcomes for students with Intellectual Disabilities in Washington. The Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI) funds five State Needs grants. One of those grants funds the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS). CCTS is contracted by OSPI to assist some of its Federal data collection and reporting. CCTS collects, analyzes, and reports post-school outcomes for all high school students who had an IEP in Washington State. The post-school interviews are

conducted by local school staff during the summer and one year after the student with an IEP has graduated or permanently exited high school. Survey takes place one year after the student exits high school by way of graduation, dropout, or age out.

A telephone survey is conducted by district/school personnel between June 1 and November 1. The data is entered into the Transition Systemic Framework (TSF), CCTS' secure online data collection platform, as phone calls are made.

A minimum of three contact attempts are required. District/school is responsible for tracking leavers and their contact information. CCTS is available for technical assistance as well as assisting schools in meeting the state target for contact rate. The survey asks collects information about the students work and school experiences. For example, if they are either working or involved in education. The survey also asks about the number of hours they are working, the number of hours involved in education, and what type of connection they have with adult agencies. Results show that 27.8% of survey responders are not engaged with either work, education or adult services.

Public Comment: None.

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

Customer Satisfaction Subcommittee

- Find themes within the forum and pass along to DVR Director and request that it be passed along to all staff
 - Kathy has drafted and sent to Teesha for review
 - Highlight customer safety issue
 - Communication regarding caseload sizes and money (include with customer forum feedback?)
- Fix PowerPoint from department of voc. Rehab to “Division”
- Develop a one-year review of customer satisfaction survey and results
 - Extension percentage - median days to plan, and if DVR should track rationale for extension.
 - Intent of CFR change was to reduce time to plan – does not appear DVR is meeting expectation.

Policy and Planning Subcommittee

- Follow up - WSRC CAP involvement in their training workgroup
 - Teesha drafted email to Esther. Jerry is reviewing.

- DVR training does not include cultural competency training, including but not limited to tribal cultural training or VR ethics training.
- Regulations analysis – next steps

Partnerships Committee

- Phil will reach out to DDC
- Keith will provide an update on the SPIL progress at the next Quarterly Meeting
- Tania is connected to SEAC but she is not on the partnerships subcommittee
 - Tania has now joined the Partnership subcommittee, no longer a member of Policy subcommittee

Executive Committee

- Draft a recommendation related DVR training
 - Follow up - WSRC CAP involvement in their training workgroup
 - DVR training does not include cultural competency training, including but not limited to tribal cultural training or VR ethics training
 - Need for MH training as new DBHR employment services may increase representation of individuals with mental illness on DVR caseloads
- ATAP Inconsistencies – pending more discussion
- Draft an email conveying the following discussion at the quarterly meeting: category determination under an (OOS) order of selection – CAP report
 - Inconsistencies across the state, related to establishing priority category
 - There is a myth among some counselors that every impediment that the counselor had to be supported documentation
 - Counselors need more guidance around common functional limitations experienced by individuals with MH disabilities
 - How to handle customer requests for review of priority category
- Regular CRP/IL Provider updates – Meet with Community Programs Manager, Andres

DVR Staff Retention

- Regroup, who is still interested and are there next steps

CSNA

- Reach out to Policy/Planning/Performance Manager, Michele Mulhern, for an update

Placement Ad Hoc

- Decide on next meeting date and determine next steps

April Meeting Ideas:

1. Discuss Voting for Chair and Vice-Chair at the July Meeting
2. 1115 waiver training as it relates to supported employment and DVR, and not being able to receive services from both
3. Pre-ETS update
4. Training update
5. PIPs
6. Regional update
7. How the Tax plans may affect us
8. ATAP what is available, how is it used, where they access it
9. Tribal barrier update regarding connecting with the state in that particular are
10. Order of selection update – projected date for release from waitlist, and what is the communication from CRPs.
11. Interagency agreement DVR/DSB/OSPI

Adjourn: *Meeting adjourned at 3:00p.m.*