

Minutes
WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL
August 11, 2022
WebEx Meeting
9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

WRC Member Attendees: Steven Wheeler, Richard (Dick) Straub, Deb Henderson-Guenther, Julie Burish, Liz Kennedy, Ramsey Lee, Alan Kaltenberg, Lori Karcher, Norene Lueck, Alicia Reinhard, Joalyn Torgerson, Delora Newton, Gadeen Taylor-Duke, Natalia Graf, Kyle Kleist, Alexis Riggs, Jenny Felty, Debbie Lee, Megan Bisonette

WRC Members Absent: Edward Kastern

DVR Staff: Meredith Dressel, Allison Gordon, Anna Eggebrecht, Sarah Kuehn, Deanna Krell, Kathleen Enders, Andrzej Walz-Chojnacki, Kaylyn Schoone, Amy Grotzke

Guests: Becky Hebda, Ann Franz (WRC applicant), Danita Jackson (Disability Rights Wisconsin/Client Assistance Program - DRW/CAP), Franky Newcomb (DRW/CAP), Nicolas Kurutz (DRW/CAP), Ramsey Lee, Lawrence Brown, David Pinno.

Roll Call and Introductions

Announcements

- 3 new members: Alexis Riggs, Jenny Felty, and Debbie Lee.
- The meeting has been shortened to end at 2:30.
- There will be a full 30-minute break for lunch (not a working lunch).
- Committees will vote on membership today. New members are expected to participate in at least one committee.

Quorum Check

- 13 members were present during roll call and a quorum is met.

Approval of Minutes – May 2022

- Alan moved to approve the minutes; Liz seconded. Minutes approved.

Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals:

Council Engagement Committee – Deb Henderson-Guenther

- A written process has been created for voting, eligibility for reappointment of members, outreach to members that have not attended meetings, and welcoming new members.
- Working to develop orientation for new members.
- Created a written template to ask other stakeholder groups to share information on WRC at their meetings, newsletters, etc.
- Communicated with the governor's appointment staff to review the process for appointing new members. The staff person emailed a response and Deb shared with the WRC. If the WRC approves a person applying, WRC can send a letter of recommendation for the applicant to submit with their online application. Must apply at least six weeks in advance of appointment.
- Developed Exit Interview Questionnaire for members.
- Developed questions to ask members at their one year anniversary.

- Kay was asked to develop a location/repository for WRC documents that can be accessed by all WRC members.
- Deb asked all members to share a phone number that can be shared with all members. If a member is not comfortable having their phone number shared with WRC members, please send Deb a private chat during the meeting today.
- Considering a mentor program for new members.
- Deb made a motion to appoint Ramsey Lee to remain on the Council Engagement Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Deb made a motion to appoint Debbie Lee to the Council Engagement Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Becky Hebda to the Council Engagement Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appointment Lori to the Council Engagement Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appointment Dick to the Council Engagement Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Dick asked who to contact for second term to WRC? Kay tracks the membership; she will reach out when a term is coming due.

Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee – Julie Burish

- Reviewed Work Incentive Benefits Analysis (WIBA) fee schedule and technical specifications and made recommendations to DVR staff. New fee schedule will go into effect October 1, 2022.
- Joint meeting with Policy Review and Administration Committee to review the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) recommendations. There are several priority areas for DVR to address. The Committees made recommendations to DVR on what areas to prioritize.
- Julie asked Kay to forward the CSNA report to the three new members.
- Created a draft WRC Resource Plan which will be reviewed later in the meeting.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Kyle Kleist to the Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee, seconded by Liz – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Alexis Riggs to the Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee, seconded by Dick – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Becky Hebda to the Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee, seconded by Joalyn – Passed.

Policy Review and Administration Committee – Deb Henderson-Guenther

- Joint meeting with Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee on WIBA and CSNA (see notes above).
- Delora sent WRC Bylaws that include the descriptions of all the Committees to the new members.
- DVR Administrative Rules review and recommendations.
 - Order of Selection (OOS) - created policy on providing retention services only for consumers on a waitlist.
 - Confidentiality - update for current policy and procedures.
 - Hearing and Appeals – changed numbers of days from one year to 180 days to appeal a decision made by DVR.
- Reviewed the DVR Training Grant process. Identified that consumers on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) do not have to provide a consumer contribution for the Training Grant calculation. DVR has changed their policy to correct this.
- DVR Staff have received training on exceptions and the Assistive Technology (AT) fee schedule.

- Asked DVR to reassess how they fund Comprehensive Training Programs (Think College). DVR has 13 consumers enrolled in this type of training.
- DVR is encouraging staff to support Career Pathway opportunities for consumers, when appropriate.
- SSI/SSDI consumers are not required to contribute to services in their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) according to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). DVR has asked RSA if fee schedules can apply to consumers receiving SSI/SSDI. DVR is waiting for clarification from RSA.
- Reviewing Rapid Engagement strategies when serving consumers. California DVR has embraced Rapid Engagement practices around eligibility/OOS.
- Transportation for consumers is an ongoing issue. DVR service providers can provide this service if they are transportation provider for DVR. They are not allowed to provide transportation if providing other services to consumers if they are not a transportation provider. DVR will readdress this issue in 2024 when the new service agreements are due.
- Create an ad-hoc committee for WRC members to address Administrative Law Judge process for appeals. Deb will send an email asking for interest.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Becky Hebda to the Policy Review and Administration Committee, seconded by Deb – Passed.

Services to Business Committee – Julie Burish

- Committee has not met recently and currently there is no chair.
- Julie will set up a meeting with current members to assign a chair.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Ramsey Lee to the Services for Business Committee, seconded by Joalyn – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Becky Hebda to the Services for Business Committee, seconded by Joalyn – Passed.
- Deb made a motion to appoint Jenny Felty to the Services for Business Committee, seconded by Lori – Passed.
- Julie made a motion to appoint Megan Bisonette to the Services for Business Committee, seconded by Deb – Passed.

Annual Report Workgroup

- Only meets when the WRC report is created.
- WRC Report must be filed with RSA by December 31. The DVR Communications and Policy Advisor assists with creation of the Report. The group will meet in August or September.

Executive Committee

- Create the agenda for the WRC meetings looking at a list of priorities for the WRC to address.
- Review the work of all other Committees.
- Shortened the WRC meeting and reorganized the agenda items.
- Finalized the WRC Resource Plan

WRC Resource Plan Approval - Julie Burish and Deb Henderson-Guenther

- Julie reviewed the Resource Plan included in meeting packets.
- Deb corrected a typo (DRV changed to DVR).
- Julie recommended the addition of fees for speakers or presenters if WRC wants to hire speakers for a WRC retreat.
- Deb suggested the Plan clarify it is referring to a Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Attorney and not a Disability Rights of Wisconsin (DRW) Attorney when seeking attorney time at appropriate meetings.

- Dick suggested a Glossary of Terms be added. Deb will create one, it will be made available to all members during future WRC meetings.
- Add that DVR will research a repository for WRC only documents.
- Liz made a motion to approve the WRC Resource Plan as amended, seconded by Deb – Passed.
- The next step will be to review the Plan with DVR staff at the WRC Executive Committee.

Public Comment*

- Ramsey Lee thanked the WRC for allowing him to continue to stay on WRC Committees. Thanked the Council Engagement Committee for developing the Exit Survey; it was very helpful. It's been an honor and privilege to be part of WRC. The WRC does a wonderful job with the resources it has been given. One observation, there seems to be a disconnect between DVR offices and the need to provide services in a consistent way. Can't forget about the consumers because the main goal of DVR in Wisconsin should be to assist consumers in their job search. Ramsey introduced Lawrence Brown, a DVR consumer who would be a good future WRC member.
- Lawrence Brown shared that he is a current consumer of DVR and would like to be on the WRC to help people with disabilities that would like to get back in the workplace. He has difficulties with his counselor and would like to help others that struggle. He has also received help from CAP.
 - Julie shared the process to apply for the WRC online. Deb will forward the link.
- Becky Hebda provided feedback on the difficulty of the public to have access to documents that are reviewed at the WRC. She encouraged the WRC to create a way for the information to be accessible to anyone that is interested. WIBA fee schedule and tech specs are going into effect as of October 1, and Service Providers have not been provided any information on the changes.
 - Delora reviewed that the agenda is posted on the Department of Administration (DOA) website, DVR does not control of how they format those documents. All documents are available for the public to view during the meeting. DVR is working to identify a webpage location that will allow the public to access WRC documents on the day of the meeting.
- Deb read a public comment from David Pinno. He verbally provided his testimony later in the meeting. Those notes are captured in the afternoon public comments section of the meeting.

CSNA Recommendations Discussion – Outreach Plan TJ Jerke, DVR Communications and Policy Advisor.

- Meredith provided an overview of the CSNA process.
- TJ shared the status of outreach and engagement efforts the Division is doing to increase referrals for DVR services. He is using the DVR Dashboard to gather data. Also looking at census data and other resources to use as a baseline for outreach efforts.
- The DVR Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan will also impact the direction of outreach efforts.
- Deb shared what WDAs are and where they are located.
<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/about/county-detail-wda-map.pdf> She is hoping that in the future, the WRC could be part of an advertisement so we can share what we do.
- Julie asked for clarification on where the outreach is targeted.
 - TJ shared that the data is one piece of the outreach plan for DVR. DVR welcomes WRC input into the plan as we move forward. There may be value in putting out Public Service Announcements (PSA) as well. DVR needs to explore that option.
- Julie asked if DVR is getting an outside consultant to develop the outreach plan?
 - Delora shared that she and Meredith had a discussion with a consultant who has worked with other State VR agencies. He is employed as a consultant through one of the RSA Technical Assistance Centers. He is willing and available to help and would be a free resource for us to use.

- Dick noticed that WDA sizes vary dramatically across the state. There may be real barriers to staff accessing DVR services based on the size of the WDA. This link shows all the office locations. <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/about/staff-directory.pdf>
 - Delora clarified that we do have offices placed strategically across the state based on the population of that area of that State. Our VRC's can travel to meet with consumers if that is needed. We also have the virtual option to meet as well.
 - Natalia shared where the offices are in WDA 6, DVR does cover all the counties in each WDA.
 - Gadeen shared that she currently covers counties in WDA 7 that do not have office locations. She travels to them weekly/biweekly. She also covers three counties that currently have VRC vacancies.
 - TJ shared that we have a great opportunity to do outreach in the rural parts of the state. We can customize the outreach efforts based on the needs of a specific area of the State.
- Deb asked for a timeline to develop and implement an outreach plan.
 - TJ does not have a specific timeline developed at this point. We want to be strategic in using our resources well and effectively to keep the process moving forward.
 - Deb asked for update on the plan at the November meeting.
 - TJ said that is doable.
- Julie asked for a distinction between the DEI plan and general outreach plan. What are the major goals?
 - Meredith and Deanna clarified that there will be overlap of the DEI Plan and the general outreach plan. TJ is focusing on general outreach using the information from the DEI Plan. They will complement each other.
 - Julie would like a breakdown of the outreach plan and how it will be accomplished at the November meeting.
 - Natalia feels it is a three-level approach: employers, consumers, and service providers.

Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report Franky Newcomb, Danita Jackson, Steven Wheeler, Nicholas Kurutz

- Staff update: Steven is on paternity leave and announced he will be leaving DRW in September. Nicholas Kurutz will be the supervising attorney for the CAP program at DRW in Steven's absence. Steven will complete his full term on the WRC regardless of his employment change.
- Examples of recent CAP cases for DVR were shared.
- Julie asked if DRW has noticed any trends in DVR cases?
 - Franky shared that they are working on providing real data to the CAP report. Hope to have that for the next WRC meeting.
 - Julie asked that the data be broken down by WDA and include trend information.

Break for Lunch

CSNA Recommendations Discussion – Diversity, Equity, an Inclusion (DEI) - Deanna Krell, DVR Bureau of Management Services Director

- Deanna provided an update on DEI Planning.
- Deb asked if the DEI training is mandatory for DVR staff and is tracked?
 - Deanna shared that DVR has software called Cornerstone where trainings are located and recorded for each staff person. Some of the trainings we offer are mandatory. DVR does have a Training Officer that creates, manages, and tracks training for all staff in Cornerstone.
 - Deb shared that statewide consistency in training is important, she encouraged DVR to make the DEI trainings mandatory.

- Gadeen shared that she is part of the Employee Resource Group (ERG) and indicated that all DEI training will be mandatory for all levels of DVR staff.
- Deanna shared that diversity is more than just race/ethnicity, there have been trainings on the LTBTQ+ community as well.
- Kyle shared there is not a lot of diversity in western Wisconsin which can cause issues when trying to hire diverse staff.
- Amy, WDA 9 Director located in western Wisconsin, shared that her staff have a book club where they read and reviewed, "Waking up White." It was very impactful for her staff. Also brought in local LGBTQ individuals to educate and train her staff. She also has been engaged with individuals from the Ho-Chunk tribe to provide summer programming for their youth in 2023.
- Julie asked if there is a disability component to the DVR staff diversity training?
 - Deanna shared that DVR has always focused on disability training for our staff. We will continue to provide that training in addition to the DEI trainings.
 - Meredith shared that DWD includes disability in their DEI planning and training efforts.
 - Deb shared that the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) also includes disability in their DEI efforts.

DVR Administrative Update Delora Newton, DVR Administrator

- Julie asked if DVR is struggling to hire staff because of the amount we can pay?
 - Delora shared that there are fewer individuals that are graduating with the Vocational Counseling degree, so the candidate pool is smaller and hiring takes more time.
 - The rate of pay that the state offers is often lower than the public sector, but the state offers a benefits package that is often better than what the private sector offers.
- Deb asked that WRC members interested in becoming mentors for new members to contact her.

Public Comment*

- David Pinno submitted a written comment that Deb read at the public comment period in the morning. He Repeated his request that DVR pay routine vehicle maintenance costs.
- Becky Hebda shared that from a Service Provider perspective, 100 miles is a long distance to travel before being reimbursed. She asked DVR to reconsider reducing the mile requirement for Providers.
- Ramsey Lee shared that DVR should fund vehicle modifications. Websites need to be accessible for screen readers.

Review of Open Items and Suggested Discussion Topics for Future Meeting

- Overview and update of DVR Outreach Plan at the November 10 meeting.
- TJ will set up a meeting for the WRC Annual Report workgroup.
- Julie asked the WRC members for input on the format of this meeting including the shorted timeframe. Members like the changes.
- CSNA Tier 2 discussion to be on the November 10 meeting agenda.
- An in-person meeting option for 2023 will be discussed at the WRC Executive Committee. Ideally one in-person should be held annually. May of 2023 will be officer elections, so may work best.
- DEI Plan update at the November 10 meeting.
- Review the WRC Resource Plan at the November 10 meeting.
- Transportation to be reviewed at Policy Review and Administration Committee.
 - DVR raised the mileage reimbursement rate paid to consumers from \$0.35 to \$0.51. Modified vehicle mileage reimbursement is \$0.685 because those vehicles generally get less miles per gallon.

Adjourn

*Public comment is limited to the time listed on the agenda. Comments can be sent at any time to: DVRWRehabCouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

Comments sent to that e-mail box will be read to the full council at the next meeting.