



Northgate Hampton Inn
9550 1st Ave NE
Seattle, WA

WSRC QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 7th, 2019

9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Present: Jerry Johnsen, Council Vice-Chair, Customer Assistance Program, Seattle.
Erin Williams, Business Representative, Seattle.
Josephine Ko, VR Counselor Representative, Kent.
Tania May, OSPI Representative, Olympia WA.
Jen Cole, PAVE, Everett
Laurae MacClain, Tribal VR Representative, Nespalem.
Rob Hines, DVR Director, Lacey.
Justin Poole, DVR Customer Representative, Yakima.
Kathy Powers, Council Chair, Business Representative, Auburn.
Peggy Frisk, Community Rehabilitation Provider, Lake Stevens

Members

Absent: Erica Wollen, Workforce Training Representative, Olympia.
Ivanova Smith, Disability Advocacy Representative, Tacoma.

Council Staff: Shelby Satko, WSRC Executive Director, Lacey.
Mari Heusman, WSRC Executive Lead, Lacey.

Visitors: Kelly Boston – DVR Senior Manager, Olympia
Paul Vertrees – DVR Interim Chief of Field Services, Olympia
Kristina Zawisza – DVR Performance Management and Quality Analyst
Ann Martin, Region 2 Administrator, Everett
Carl Johnston – Deputy Regional 2 Administrator, Central Seattle
Aya Casem – DVR VRS – North Seattle 2
Megan Grundbrecher – DVR VRS North Seattle 2
Rebecca Jansson – CRP – Mainstay/SAILS
Sue Anne Lemkin – CRP – Shoreline CC
Katie Wilson – CRP – Vadis
Andrew Fickes – DVR – Communications Specialist
Alan Knue – WATAP – WATAP State Project Director
Michelle McConaghy – DVR – VRC
Lisa Floyd – King County Behavioral Health – Supported Employment Program Manager

Call to Order Housekeeping, review agendas, introductions – Chair – August 2019 Meeting Minutes

- Review WSRC Purpose, Vision, Mission
- Members not available today: Erica Wollen and Ivanova Smith
- Vote: Approval of August 2019 quarterly meeting minutes
 - 1st Tania, 2nd Josephine
 - No corrections or edits

Executive Director & Executive Committee Report – Shelby Satko, Kathy Powers – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Presented Josephine Ko with a Certification of Appreciation and expressed gratitude for her service to the Council.
- Looking forward

- What's the WSRC mandate? How to identify goals, priorities, and strategies for the next couple years.
- State Plan priorities – review summary - attached
 - Shelby oriented everyone to the list of priorities each subcommittee identified during their meetings in September & October. She also provided a summary list of recommendations sent to DVR within the past 3 years.
 - Will discuss further in the workshop this afternoon.
 - How can the WSRC strengthen partnership with DVR?
 - Possibility of rearranging committee structure to support identified priorities and provide even workload.

DVR Updates – Rob Hines, Kelly Boston, Paul Vertrees – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Leadership staffing updates
 - Looking at establishing a Deputy Director (new position)
 - Moving out from under JRA means a whole host of new responsibilities and representation at DSHS level meetings/commitments.
 - Under review in class & comp., could take a few months to complete process.
 - Chief of Field Services –
 - 4 candidates for Nov 13th Interviews
 - Chief of Operations
 - Don Kay announced retirement effective 12/31/19 after 37 years of service
 - Position oversees contracts, fiscal, IT and facilities.
 - BMMP Project Manager –
 - Shannon Reynolds – contract position to lead analysis of case management system needs to navigate anticipated AWARE
- Budget outlook – including Pre-ETS - refer to master slides for details
 - 7,100,000 Pre-ETS Set aside funds
 - Decision package is \$500,000
 - Total expenditures \$71,760,000
 - Purchasing a new case management system will cost estimated \$5 Million
 - Social Security Ticket Tracker System
 - Provided us with reimbursements last year it was \$1.4 million. This year it's \$7 million
 - Carryover
 - Asked for 4 Million from the federal government and got all of it.
 - Pre-ETS –
 - DVR anticipates that by grant year '19, will spend all of the money.
 - DVR is working on identifying what the gaps are out in Pre-ETS field.
 - TSAT Assessment – Schools assess ability and efficacy for Pre-ETS.
 - Dr. Marcus Poppen from WSU developed assessment.
 - Tania, Marcus, and Tammi went around together to speak to schools and identify gaps in DVR services.
- Case Management System Project status
 - It should take about 2 years to analyze needs, identify, develop, rollout new system.
- Data Warehouse status –
 - Management Reports
 - DVR in process of converting old web-based management/supervisor reports into PowerBI.
 - DVR identified which reports are no longer needed and are cleaning those out of the system.
 - Working with group of supervisors to identify most important reports and prioritizing those first.
 - The project is taking more time than anticipated because of other IT priorities.

- Pre-ETS Tracking for customers who are enrolled in group services only. Individual services are tracked through the current case management system.
 - Currently, DVR is relying on manual processes of recording and documenting.
 - It's not easy to collect or easy to report.
 - Once it's finished, will have a lot more data to report outcomes, movement in or out of VR services, successes.
 - Tracking Tool has grown in scope and complexity.
 - Possibility of maybe rolling it out in phases
 - Consent first
 - Needs to have components for VRC Time & Customer tracking next.
 - Then tracking customer activities.
 - ETA: hopefully by the new year.
 - Question: Could this be tacked onto AWARE or will it only work with STARS?
 - Answer: It's a complicated question. Not sure if it can attach to STARS. DVR could define it as requirement for AWARE that the tracking system has the capability, but each customization costs money with AWARE.
 - Jen Cole, WSRC Parent Advocate Representative – what are other states doing?
 - Rob Hines, DVR Director attended CSAVR where state directors talked about Pre-ETS.
 - Some states bolt on Pre-ETS tracking to their homegrown system.
 - AWARE does have this capability (he thinks) it's just an extra cost.
 - A lot of states are struggling with Pre-ETS implementation– Washington is not behind; the state is ahead of the curve.
 - 2019 is the first year of federal monitoring for Pre-ETS.
 - Jen asked what the anticipated challenges are in putting together taskforces since DVR has low staffing.
 - Program staff and steering committee (governance) will be a function of DVR. With a hired Project Manager.
 - The biggest challenge DVR is facing with these data projects is hiring.
 - Business analysts are getting hired faster than DVR can offer jobs
 - DVR might end up contracting for these services or looking at other options
 - Developers and a Change Management Specialist will also be hired.
 - Kathy WSRC Chair asked if DVR can pay a competitive wage for Business Analyst? Or is DVR more open to paying higher wages to a contracted employee
 - Kelly Boston, Senior Manager at DVR expressed how she would like to hire and have someone stay long term (grow it in-house).
 - Rob Hines stated another option is to train current in-house Business Analyst so she can be Subject Matter Expert while contracting out the initial big job, which she would then be able to maintain long term.
- Case Review Summary –
 - Was completed a year ago. Report draft is currently being reviewed and approved by Executive Leadership Team (ELT)
 - Staff and everyone wants to know what the outcomes were.
 - Refer to master slides for further information
- OOS/Waitlist Release (application dates of released customers)
 - Between 5,000 and 6,000 customers currently on the waitlist.
 - Waitlist: DVR is releasing 200 customers per month from Priority Category 2 – 600 total so far.
 - State Office staff continue to do outreach to the waitlist applicants – good faith efforts to communicate.

- People coming off waitlist are being closed at a higher rate – possible anecdotal reasons why: customers moved, changed contact information, already have jobs, or are no longer interested in receiving services.
 - Applicant date of waitlisted customers who have been released: November 2017.
- Training: RFP, Regional Trainers, Functional Loss/Eligibility Determination
 - VR Institute contract has been granted to Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER).
 - Training scheduled to start January 2020.
 - Staff have been very interested and excited to receive training. DVR ELT will be closely monitoring the training
 - CCER and DVR have had conversations about how this needs to be new and different, not same type of training CCER Has offered in the past.
 - Regional Trainers - 4 of 6 will start on December 1.
 - Region 1 and 3 only have 1.
 - Region 2 has 2.
 - Training support team including Kelly, Derek, Carl Johnston & Shelby (WSRC) has been put together to ensure they have the support they need to successfully complete priorities and promote statewide consistency
 - First priority: eligibility determination & functional loss training
- Eligibility Determination VSM; Pilots – how is it going functional loss & eligibility determination CSM updates and training
 - Without Order of Selection (OOS), eligibility determination is not a priority, but when in OOS, it's tantamount.
 - Data is showing fluctuations in determinations across the state.
 - 60% swing for MSD to SD in different offices.
 - The VSM group assessed what different offices did for determinations and found it was wide ranging.
 - 7 different units across the state participating in pilots to test a consistent process flow
 - NOT centralizing eligibility – trying to come up with consistent processes across the state
 - 2+ months into the process – will have information for what works and how to rollout statewide.
 - There will always be variability, but the goal is to build consistency so the outcome is the same.
 - It's increasing competency of the overall process for staff.
 - Paul sees this project as a really good thing that will develop into valuable training for staff.
- Tribal VR grant updates
 - Today and tomorrow the Centennial Accord Meeting is happening.
 - DVR updated their Government to Government agreement.
 - Liaison role – clarified responsibilities of DVR's Tribal Liaison role as there was some confusion from tribes about statewide role vs regional roles.
 - American Indian Vocational Services Grant is 1% of whole VR grant set aside.
 - Every 5 years, each tribe needs to apply for the grant.
 - Laurae MacClain, Tribal VR Representative, shared how the grant application was posted late and tribes didn't find out if they received funding until Sept 30th for funding starting Oct 1.
 - 5 Programs filled updated applications this year and all 5 were funded.
- Kathy Powers shared outcome and data information her business is currently working on and invited DVR to do work on figuring out ways to tie survey/satisfaction responses to outcome data points.
 - How can the WSRC support DVR in the outcomes of this data?
- Josephine Ko, Vocational Rehabilitation Representative, expressed how a Change Manager would be great to successfully disperse some of the messages coming from the top about the rollout of the new database and other big changes at DVR
- Lisa Floyd – from King County Behavioral Health pitched the idea of including a behavioral health piece in the VR institute. She expressed she would love to be a part of supporting the training process so counselors can learn how to write in functional loss for behavioral health individuals, which is a hidden illness.

- Ann Martin, DVR Region 2 Administrator thanked Lisa for the suggestion and added that training should go both ways and how dual trainings would be good for both sides to attend together.

Region 2 Update – Ann Martin, Carl Johnston- refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Performance Measures – attached
 - Averages 125 days to plan.
 - The minimum wage is only slightly higher than the other regions, which is interesting because of the higher minimum wage in King County.
- Barriers and challenges to services in King County – what’s working, what’s not
 - Ann thanked the hard work and resilience of her office supervisors who are working in different units and moving around as needed to cover caseloads.
 - Ann also expressed that Region 2 has a great staff and she is grateful for them.
 - Region 2 hired a Deputy Director, Carl Johnston
 - VRC training cohort to support new VRC 1 & 2 staff onboarding
 - Jim O’Brien (DVR Lynnwood Supervisor) and Carl Johnston (DVR Region 2 Deputy) lead the program. Lot of positive feedback from participants.
 - Kicked it off at the start of 2019 by asking the cohort where they thought their gaps were.
 - One outcome of the training program has been identifying inconsistency between offices.
 - Opportunity to share messaging to supervisors to make sure everyone including supervisors are on the same page and providing consistent services.
 - What’s next? Will this cohort stay together? Getting to know other VRCs from throughout the state is important.
 - With the implementation of the VR institute, not sure what the cohort training will end up looking like.
 - Jim has expressed interest in continuing this cohort in some form.
 - DDA pilot project
 - Identified ways of smoothly transitioning between DD and DVR services by facilitating communication between VRC and DD Case Manager.
 - Sometimes a customer would go off DD waiver to get DVR services. Sometimes they would get job and come to DVR quickly.
 - Region 2 is the only pilot and has received positive feedback, so far.
 - Peggy Frisk, CRP Representative reflected how this is a good idea and really helpful for providing uninterrupted services.
 - Kathy – is the intent to take this pilot statewide?
 - Ann - It’s a braided funding model. How do we best use the funds and what can each partner bring to the table?
 - It’s up to DDA whether they want to take this statewide.
 - CRP/DVR training & support– Jim O’Brien
 - Offers quarterly training for CRP'
 - Also working to include the statewide consistency of brown bags/lunch and learns/coffee connections with CRP’s with the support of the Community Programs Manager and the communication and collaboration workgroup.
 - He’s focused on supporting units all over the Region to help them better understand the contract and existing stakeholder roles.
 - Region 2 Challenges:
 - Recruiting.
 - 5 retirements this year and it’s the beginning of a wave.
 - Losing institutional knowledge.
 - Getting the VR Institute training going as soon as possible is important.
 - Staff training
 - Staff recognition – DVR needs to better recognize staff successes.

- Ann tasked all supervisors in her region with coming up with a staff recognition plan.
 - Rob Hines expressed how creating a recognition program came up at the supervisor in-service, but supervisors are divided about whether or not to implement it.
 - Homelessness leads to case closures
 - It's difficult to engage and stay in contact with someone who is homeless.
- Staffing updates
 - Bellevue is extremely challenging – 2 counselor vacancies – one has been posted 5 times.
 - Lynnwood is a stable office. It's less expensive to live there. Stable supervisor.
 - Counselors are transferring offices at unprecedented rates.
 - Jerry Johnsen, Client Assistance Program Representative asked how DVR can access some of the “retired” individuals who don't want to work every day but still want to do something. How to create greater flexibility in VR?
 - Answer: by offering incentives and being flexible and creative for commutes.
 - DVR is embracing this as much as it makes sense to do.
- Pre-ETS – regional focus
 - Transition Consultants
 - Meeting on a monthly basis to keep messaging and services consistent.
 - 3 different transition models in 3 areas of service.
 - One staff is mainly traveling to do outreach to deaf and hard of hearing students.
 - Transition consultants are in 100% of Whatcom schools including tribal, and island schools. 80% of Skagit, and 60% of Snohomish.
 - Working on workplace readiness.
 - uScience – videogame concept to identify abilities and interests. Students take information and identify areas of interests. Then Transition Consultants Develop contracts with different occupational areas of interest.
 - Providing customers with 100-hour experiences in skills centers and then moving to a paid job experience.
 - King County –
 - Active contracts: Hyatt, Bellevue, Highline, King County Youth Source, SeaKing, ANEW
 - Between all those – all the schools are covered.
 - Individualized services
 - Working with counselors on who needs individualized services. Do they need to open a DVR case or can they be served through the group contracts?
 - Can DVR provide a service? If it's Pre-ETS – do they need that increased level of support they wouldn't get from group services?
 - Look at what's already available. Then assess other services – IL, Assistive Technology, etc.
 - Individualized services are correlated with Most Significantly Disabled Category 1.
 - Statewide participation
 - 3,199 students receiving Pre-ETS group services.
 - 453 open cases for individualized services.
 - Lisa Floyd - King County Behavioral Health has been around since 1969 – this is the first time young Behavioral Health students have received employment services.

Client Assistance Program – Jerry Johnsen – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Leadership in Area 2 has shared encouraging dialogue.
 - The key is mentoring as well as training.
 - DVR needs to come together to train at a higher level.
 - Encouraging passion among DVR staff
 - “Make the exceptions happen instead of the rules.”
- Trends:
 - Customers who are on waitlist don't believe they should be on the waitlist.

- VSM project needs to address the inconsistency across the state in determining eligibility.
 - DVR staff didn't receive training when went into OOS – no common language and how staff interprets challenges and barriers varies.
 - Decrease reliance on medical model of service where the focus is diagnosis & documentation by doctor.
 - VR staff see multiple functional limitations.
 - “If a customer can come from waitlist and be presented with Trial Work Experience because they're ‘too severe’ to be served, there's something wrong with the process.”
 - Being reliant on providers outside the agency to determine functional loss isn't the way to go. VRCs need to trust the customer, families, and important people in the customers' lives
 - Looking forward to the VR institute and being involved in development and rollout.
- Examples of cases
 - Staffing issues – we hear this in our focus groups. Counselors moving from case load to case load. Staff changes – new counselor looks at case and doesn't know what's happening and redoes a bunch of the work. Re-evaluates, which takes time.
 - DVR needs to be sensitive when customer is transferred and how those changes impact the customer's life.
 - If someone is in school and is dependent on their loan provided by DVR. If they lose it, the impacts can be devastating.
 - Tania May, OSPI Representative, asked how often a customer's pathway is stopped and redirected.
 - Answer from Jerry: It's not rare, but doesn't happen all that often.
- Jerry acknowledged the life of Duane French, onetime member of the WSRC.
 - Duane reminded Jerry to keep the bar high and not to compromise.
 - Duane received the Governor's Award last week for his advocacy.
 - We need to keep the Toby Olsen's and Duane French's as advocacy examples in our lives. We're being asked to carry on and not forget to not let the bureaucracy and laws get in the way of our vision to give people a better life.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

- Andrew Fickes – Thanked the council for the great information. He reported he has been busy in Olympia rewriting the Customer handbook, brochures, etc. He appreciated WSRC's assistance in getting all the information sorted and is looking forward to offering his work to the council for review.
- SueAnne Lemkin, Shoreline. She thanked Region 2 and has been appreciating the DDA and DVR pilot project, which she feels has been a huge benefit to the customers.
 - She also asked how her agency could get involved with Pre-ETS? Ann responded that SueAnne should reach out to Francis, the Transition Consultant.

DVR Strategic Planning Update – Kristina Zawisza – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- State Plan Update
 - Timeline – Public Comment will be in February 2020.
 - DVR's State Plan is due March 2nd.
- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
 - Overview
 - Required every 3 years.
 - Timeline for development - May – November 2019
 - Alaska Native and American Indians served through DVR show higher rate of disability than in the state.
 - DVR Staff – Black/African American and American Indian are underrepresented compared to customer base.

- Employment and unemployment for people with disabilities – a large portion of these individuals are outside the labor force. 54% of people with disabilities are considered out of the labor force, defined as not actively looking for a job.
 - Kathy – unemployment isn't a good metric because it doesn't include people who've given up – removed themselves from the equation. It's a combination of "not in the labor force" and unemployment.
- Rebecca Jansson from CRP SAILS asked if DVR has a way to report non-binary or X gender? Kristina responded – not until the census starts asking that question.
- Supported Employment section
 - Asked Subject Matter Experts (SME) from Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and Foundational Community Supports (FCS) some questions.
 - Justin – did Order of Selection change the outcomes for closed cases. Kristina answered – she doesn't want to make a judgement but will look at it in the final report**
 - MSD cases close at 2x the rate of other cases. 78% of eligible cases closed before plan were MSD.
 - Kathy asked why? Kristina responded – has access to closure information and will look it up.
 - Rehab rate is higher for Supported Employment (SE) individuals.
 - Kathy – SE customers get more ongoing support. DDA offers a ton of training, support, structure around what they expect as a funding source, which represents a real partnership. Providers aren't as equipped to work with more diverse set of customers because the same support isn't provided from DVR.
- Josephine Ko, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Representative asked how DVR has been doing since the last CSNA. Kristina was unable to answer the question as the 2014 plan was the one most like this. DVR has changed a lot since 2014 and is very different – no OOS or funding worries or Pre-ETS set aside.
- Workforce Section
 - DVR is co-located in 14 of 22 comprehensive one-stop centers.
 - Promising practices identified through both the WDC liaison and the DVR liaison calling out the practice.
- Kathy – did DVR identify why there are fewer providers contracting with DVR and offering services?
 - Shelby – lower referrals, policy changes, and guidance in Nov 2018 had a significant impact.
 - Kathy – cost of Accreditation is almost prohibitive for CRPs.
- DVR is still gleaning what kind of recommendations they want to make from the assessment
- Shelby expressed her gratitude to Kristina for all the work she has done on the CSNA. Kristina's lead on this large project keeps driving it forward. Kristina's work on pulling the assessment all together and getting the project completed has been hugely appreciated.

WSRC Priorities Workshop - attached

Focus Group – Peggy – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Timeliness

ADJOURN 5:00pm