

## **WSRC QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES**

*Tuesday, November 3, 2020*

*9:00 am to 12:00 pm*

**Present:**

Jen Cole, Parent Advocate, Everett.  
Lesa Dunphy – DVR Counselor Representative, Colville.  
Peggy Frisk, Community Rehabilitation Provider, Lake Stevens  
Rob Hines, DVR Director, Lacey.  
Jerry Johnsen, Client Assistance Program, Seattle.  
Laurae MacClain, Tribal VR Representative, Nespalem.  
Tania May, OSPI Representative, Olympia.  
Justin Poole, Council Vice-Chair, DVR Customer Representative, Yakima.  
Ivanova Smith, Disability Advocacy Representative, Tacoma.  
Michele Stelovich, Labor Representative, Bellingham.  
Erin Williams, Business Representative, Seattle.

**Members**

**Absent:**

Erica Wollen, Workforce Training Representative, Olympia.

**Council Staff:**

Shelby Satko, WSRC Executive Director, Lacey.  
Mari Heusman, WSRC Executive Lead, Lacey.

**Visitors:**

Alveshere, Don – DVR Planning & Evaluation Program Manager (did show up after screenshots)  
Bauer, Rachel – DVR Office  
Bean, Jennifer – DVR Regional Training Specialist  
Brookie, Averie (Eva) – DVR Office  
Chen, Rhonda – DVR Office  
Christensen, Helen – DVR Office  
Fickes, Andrew – DVR State Office  
Forte, Catherine – DVR Region 3 Deputy Director  
Foster Corley, Camala – DVR Office  
Goard, Allesandria – DVR Chief of Field Services  
Harris, Major W Jr. – DVR Office  
Kennedy, Kay – DVR Office  
Lystad, Amy – DVR Regional Trainer  
Martin, Ann – Region 2 Administrator  
Miller, Rayanne – DVR Confidential Secretary  
Mom-Hing, Thavy D – DVR Office  
Mulhern, Michele – DVR, Vancouver Office  
Peterson, Lauren – DVR Office  
Redmon, Terry – DVR State Office  
Reed, Stacey – DVR Office  
Selmann, Stephanie – DVR Office  
St. Lawrence, Robb – DVR State Office  
Stelmakh, Eric – DVR Office

Villegas, Cassi – DVR Community Program Manager  
 Walsworth, Shawn – DVR Region 2 Manager Interim  
 Zawisza, Kristina – DVR State Office  
 Bussler-White, Yvonne – DDA  
 Conner, Kim – Washington State Independent Living Council  
 Dillon, Tami – Skils-kin  
 Geiger, Nicole – Highline  
 Goodwill, Michael – AtWork Washington  
 McCray, Keely –  
 Graham, Dion – King County  
 Hernandez, Jose – Entrust  
 Jansson, Rebecca – Seattle College  
 Jenee – Goldman Inc.  
 Lisa – Fox and Associates  
 Mason-Todd, Megan - Skookum  
 Meyers, Debbie – SKCAC Industries  
 Nowak, Lars – Cares of Washington  
 Powers, Kathy – Orion Industries  
 Solberg, Gina - Provail  
 Stevenson, Mary – Skilskin  
 Wegner, Nikki – Trillium Employment Services  
 ASL Interpreter Aaron Medlock  
 ASL Interpreter Abel Cosentino  
 Captioner - Juline

**Call to Order** Housekeeping, review agendas, introductions – Chair – May 2020 Meeting Minutes

- Meeting called to order by Justin Poole – Chair
- Tribal Land Acknowledgement by Justin Poole – Chair
- Members not available today: Erica Wollen, Workforce Training Representative.
- Vote: Approval of August 2020 Quarterly Meeting Minutes
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Michele, 2<sup>nd</sup> Erin
    - No corrections or edits.
    - Unanimously approved.

**Customer Remote Services Survey Results** – Kristina Zawisza – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- All active customers were sent a survey: 1549 responses for a 29% response rate
- All 23 major occupation groups represented
- 58% have regular contact with their counselor
- Overall satisfaction was lower than WSRC satisfaction
- Service needs: skills, transportation, technology/technology training
- 2/3 of customers are comfortable meeting virtually
- Qualitative responses are clear – many aspects of services going well for some customers are not going well for others
  - Communication: about 25% of “not going well” responses call out communication issues
  - Lack of contact: customers report difficulty reaching their counselor
  - Timeliness of services: customers report frustration with timeliness of remote communication from counselors
- Question was asked about the age range of respondents, specifically numbers of customers identified as students.
  - Kristina will get this information for council

- Was any of the information disaggregated by race, ethnicity or language access needs? Undoing systemic racism, means needing data on diversity. Is this a priority of the agency?
  - Allesandria- the commitment is there, but FVR does not have answers yet. This survey was geared more toward barriers connecting customers with services
  - Survey was translated. Received 4 Spanish language responses.
- Customers reported missing face-to-face connection – virtual services not feeling effective or timely.
  - Technology challenges like disruption in internet or missing emails or not being familiar with Zoom
  - Struggling with self-directed employment searching, not having any progress with their cases, or services not being available.
- Identifying ways to improve:
  - Frequency of communication – more timely responses to inquiries
  - Further assistance with job search, identifying work from home opportunities, and online training opportunities.
  - Providing support more effectively.
- What’s the next step? Is there a plan to move forward?
  - Allesandria –Results of the survey will be reported to Executive Leadership next.
  - Drilling down to get office level information.
  - Customers have been getting surveyed a lot; being mindful of customers being overly surveyed.
- Kristina expected more customers to report challenges with technology (only 1/3 reported challenges. Half of those customers don’t feel comfortable at all with technology.
  - The number of people who have left their jobs due to COVID were big numbers and big impediments and suggest a need for more targeting of those folks when things open back up.
- Surprises from the survey – more than half of customers did not identify a job goal, this should be more of a focus.
- Shelby thanked Kristina for her presentation.

### **Region 3 Updates – Allesandria Goard – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint**

- Regional Staffing Updates
  - No formal updates for Region 3 – as she’s filling in right now for this position
  - New Interim Region 3 Administrator – Shawn Walsworth – he introduced himself
  - New Regional Transition Consultants who work with Pre-ETS customers– customers who may not apply to DVR in the future but receive group Pre-ETS services while enrolled in school.
- Vancouver Office Updates – Michele Mulhern – Supervisor in Clark and Skamania Counties
  - What’s working and challenges to services in Vancouver area
    - What’s working: Increased proficiency in delivering remote service, increasing intakes, CRPs providing services in-person, reduction in travel means more meetings, equipment is available.
    - Challenging – timeliness of USPS, timely return of extensions, customers returning calls, electronic formats for documents, delays in case movement due to fear, Zoom fatigue
    - Question – do you use other formats, like email, texts, mail, phone?
      - Michele: Yes
    - Staff upskilling to new technology – Skype, Zoom, cell phones
  - Staffing Updates – fully staffed, reviewed office positions
  - EDI – Customer & Staff Diversity
    - Customers
      - 78% white European, 7% African American, Native American 3.5%
      - Top two disabilities: psychosocial impairments, cognitive impairments
    - Staff
      - Dual language – ASL, Taiwanese Dialect & Mandarin, Khmer, Russian & Ukrainian
    - Equity: open mindedness and the way staff work together is reflected in services
  - Workforce Development Relationship

- Michele is a board member of Workforce Southwest and attends sponsorship meetings, and Lead VRC has office at WorkSource (when in-person)
  - Order of Selection (OOS) Information & Referral–
    - They decided to send out regular mailers with resources and information to customers.
    - Sometimes mailers get returned due to bad address, so trying to get updates on addresses
  - Q&A
    - Jerry – Are physical WorkSource offices open?
      - Michele – Yes
    - Jen – What supports are available for staff for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)?
      - Michele – self-care for staff and trying to improve outreach (refugee community, tribal population, community groups).
    - 328 active customers in Vancouver. 447 on waitlist.
      - Making contact with 40-43 individuals a month.
      - Number of applications has fallen, but number of individuals in plan has not fallen.
    - What percent of applicants are waitlisted?
      - Michele monitors eligibility determinations – most are being determined eligible and priority category 1.
    - Shelby thanked Michele and expressed appreciation on the work being done to reach out to the customers on the waitlist.
      - Council has been paying attention to information and referrals.

**DVR Director Update** – Rob Hines – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Budget Updates – Decision Package, financial outlook, legislative updates
  - Facing 70% reduction in customer applications, eligibility determinations down, impact to service deliveries, staffing costs down.
  - DVR will not request any state funds, though there may be future surge for services.
  - Returned funds to RSA: \$5,746,218 – Set aside for Pre-ETS: \$8,054,632
  - Tania and Jen commented this is very disheartening to see the trends of DVR funds needing to be returned to RSA reversed.
- COVID related updates
  - Safe Start Goal: efforts agencies are making to look at office space and staffing levels – following CDC guidelines and DOH guidelines.
  - Phased re-entry planned with 20% staffing at the office at any one time, maxing out at 50% staffing levels.
  - When blanket rules apply – sometimes the margins get disparately impacted where customers don't benefit from that type of service delivery.
    - Trying to tap into the voice of the customer right now.
  - DSHS is teleworking through June 2021
    - OFM asking for projections: looking at facilities space (50% of current) to meet DSHS business needs.
    - Terry Redmon, Deputy Director, has been overseeing this. Staff will have “in-office” days.
      - Not planning to close offices or scale back services in communities – brick and mortar model has been historical but this will go away to some degree.
      - Provides opportunities to find better ways to serve people in remote areas.
    - Justin – how do these cutbacks and travel possibilities affect the waitlist?
- DVR Caseload & Performance Trends
  - Consistent with what is going on across the country: new applications are going down but customers “in-plan” holding steady.
  - Rehab Rate is going down. Hope there won't be unintended consequence like federally not making match or penalties.

- Rob contacted congressional delegation to request advocacy. RSA taking view of “let’s see what happens” and then deal with it then. Provide waiver if needed.
- Order of Selection: status of releases and discussion about increasing releases?
  - What happens if they are released and not ready for work due to the pandemic – do they get to stay on waitlist?
    - Rob – Increasing monthly releases from 200 to 300 starting in November.
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) – new position, vision for the future
  - Cassi is doing a great job as current EDI Manager, but this is only one piece of her job.
  - New position to be posted: EDI Manager for DVR
    - Being propelled in this direction due to what is happening in society and by priorities identified by DSHS Executive Level.
    - This must be done – our customers and our agency demand this change in order to become an anti-racist agency.
  - EDI is an Agency-wide focus across DSHS. Tribal liaison role will move to the EDI Manager, as well.
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) – new approaches to services during pandemic (virtual programming YouScience, Virtual Job Shadow, Deaf Ready). Spending levels. Statewide training for VRC’s working with schools
  - Transition collaborative for Pre-ETS – virtual services currently being provided are effective.
  - Tania echoed by Kim Conner and Lesa Dunphy – Interested in updates on data collection and reporting for Transition and Pre-ETS. It has seemed difficult to discern reach and impact of these services, for both individual students and for group services.
    - On a federal level, DVR isn’t required to report out on Pre-ETS. It’s currently collected manually and not at a high level.
    - Under reporting potentially eligible customers in particular
    - Don Alveshire, DVR Planning and Evaluation Program Manager – the new Case Management System (CMS) will have this capability.
    - ETA for the online case management system? Rob – 18 months to 2 years from today
  - Ivanova – There are customers in rural areas who don’t have any wi-fi and can’t use the library or community centers because they are closed.
    - Allesandria – easy access to wi-fi has been a challenge, which was even more impactful since the beginning of the pandemic. DVR is encouraging counselors to reach out to all customers to find barriers to accessing technology and address them.
- Eligibility Determination/Priority of Service – timeline and next steps for ensuring statewide consistency.
  - Disparity around the way different DVR Regions determined customers eligible and what Priority of Service category customers were assigned.
  - Completed Value Stream Mapping VSM to identify issues and found training issues. They found philosophical, foundational differences, and wide disparity between Regions and by office, as much as 50%.
  - Doing more work at the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) level to establish clarity about priorities and considerations for staff in order to provide consistent and equitable services statewide.
  - Allesandria is putting together documents and content to be used for training, hopefully by next spring, to build more consistency statewide.
- Questions – what percent of customers are opting out of pursuing services? 70% of customers coming off the waitlist are not responding or not engaging with services. This sounds high to Rob and he will circle back with Jerry.\*
  - Jen – What are some of the opportunities to work differently with communities to design services that will work for them? This includes opportunities that intersect with students with disabilities and the school relationship.
    - Rob looking through Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) lens on all that the agency is doing right now. This is key to engaging with all communities. Capitalizing on doing timely surveys and holding some town halls – Alaska is doing town halls. They’ve seen 80% reduction in applications

- advertising that VR is open. Need to look at innovative approaches, like putting word out on street and social media, in how to increase referrals, and engage in work together.
  - Ivanova – Discussion on online jobs or work? Asking in the survey and having discussions about this. No plan in pushing people to online jobs. Reevaluate the job market.
  - Lesa – Is ELT working on defining each of the 7 functional limitation categories with clear expectation info field staff? There is a huge range of interpretations, especially around work skills.
- Staffing – new staff
  - Deputy Director, Terry Redmon
  - Interim Regional Administrators for areas 1 and 3.
    - Pablo Villarreal (Region 1) and Shawn Walsworth (Region 3)
- State Plan Priorities, Year 1 Update – Don Alveshere
  - State plan went into effect July 1, 2020. Listed goals and strategies and tentative timeline for how these would begin and take place.
  - COVID has made a lot of adjustments but has not changed the priorities or goals of DVR.
  - Goal 1: Customers
    - Improving access to utilizing technology, including electronic signature and customer equipment and devices.
      - Going paperless, including electronic signature, which would reduce service delays from postal service.
      - Tracking and capturing potentially eligible customers– this can be a way to track Pre-ETS customers.
      - Staff transition is a big impact and barrier to timely services.
  - Goal 2: Staff development and performance – enhancing training, getting data into computer software.
    - Teleworking was supposed to start PY2022, but this has changed.
    - Getting and maintaining relationships and networking.
  - Goal 3: Collaboration with businesses and partners
    - Big switch within WIOA – businesses are now defined as a customer.
    - Charters, teams, planning – to get established, i.e. FCS conference partnership.
  - Goal 4: Operations and infrastructure
    - Build reports, implement Customer Satisfaction Survey, Modernize VR Electronic Document Management System (EDMS), establish formal IT portfolio.
    - ESMS going live on March 1, 2021 with active cases being put in last.
    - Case Management System go live date is May 1, 2022.
    - New Pre-ETS Application
- Q&A
  - Jen – What is DVR’s priority with collaboration with businesses that are women and minority owned and smaller businesses? Is it a consideration or a strategic collaboration?
    - Don – This is essential.

**Public Comment – Justin Poole**

- Vancouver Presentation Question: Kathy Hall – what are the efforts to recruiting diverse staff?
  - Michele Mulhern (DVR Vancouver Supervisor) – can’t speak to DVR in general, but Vancouver has talented and diverse staff. Efforts to get resources to potential clients, i.e. in Vancouver they created Intake packets folder to guide to services and all brochures.
- Kathy Powers – how do you include customer’s preference in office changes/staff availability? It seems some remote areas could be best served via remote services. Some customers may need face to face benefit. How will DVR assess these needs as they make changes?
  - Rob – looks different depending on who you talk to. DVR is reaching out to customers on a monthly basis. Standard questions have been identified to ask – do they need some piece of technology? Office level direct contact is the best way.

- Andrew – I am happy to help in support of that social media outreach to the public to let people know DVR is open and here for them?
- VClark – is there a change with the money process with Pre-ETS? Rob – DVR amended Pre-ETS contracts in the recent past, but there haven't been changes to allocated contract amounts, which is currently determined by customer numbers in the area. Redistributing money that hasn't been spent to areas using the funds – need to put the dollars to use in the contracts.
- Rachel Bauer Business Specialist: Hi – Business Specialist here! The business relations team (there are 14 of us) throughout Washington work closely with small, medium, and large businesses.

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

- Applaud DVR in trying to make services work in this challenging environment where things are needing adjustment and adaptation.
- Welcome Jen Bean to CAP. Today is her first day. It will change the way CAP does business in the future.
  - Rob – glad Jen will be working with DVR in the future, but sorry to see her leave DVR.
  - Erin – glad to hear you're back Jen!
  - Jen – thanks! I'm happy to be back :)
- It takes a real effort to stay engaged with all the players and with all the partners in this virtual world.
- Types of cases and trends CAP is addressing anecdotally – not a reflection on what's going on at DVR, but glimpse of what CAP is seeing.
  - Customers receiving pre-closure letters from DVR.
    - Discussion about what's happening with their VR program.
      - Often, they've been out of contact with counselor, either due to personal circumstances or because VR has not done a good job staying in touch to let them know what's happening and what the customer needs to do.
    - Jerry spends a lot of time connecting customers with contact information (may not have the right phone number or office contact information is not readily available).
      - Jerry suggests making contact information more readily available for customers.
  - Trends:
    - Lack of communication, customers who not heard from their VRC in more than a month.
    - Issues of being on the waitlist but not understanding what this means.
      - Were they given appropriate information when they started the process? Were they fully engaged in the eligibility process about their functional limitations?
    - Self-employment is not an easy process for customers to engage in and what DVR's responsibility is in the process.
    - Issues of transparency in the processes, who is responsible, and services available.
    - Families calling about transition issues – Jerry doesn't attempt to answer these, tries to get them connected with the correct person at DVR, which has worked well.
  - Jerry has been doing a lot of counseling and guidance with customers.
  - VR100 celebration – Congratulations to Andrew Fickes for his work on the presentation, and for Mari and Shelby as well. This was great.

**Presentation Feedback and Discussion** – Justin – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Jen – glad that the VR100 presentation was mentioned – she also watched it. It was well done and centered the customer. In her opinion, the theme was designing, with the customer, solutions that were going to work for them on their future path.
  - Wondering how solutions can be designed for communities disproportionately impacted. How can they be designed as full partners? Outreach can be designed differently in forming and building relationships to design working solutions to benefit the community.
- Tania – shared from her perspective as educator and parent – focus of work comes on impact on individuals who are having a challenge in this new world. Thinking innovatively about how to understand impact and lack of

access and being nimble enough for initiative that takes time to change in systems– how to mitigate and make changes now while we wait for systems to pivot.

**ADJOURN** 12:00pm

- Justin adjourned Day 1 of the meeting.
- Tomorrow meeting reconvenes at 9am, please login early to troubleshoot technology if needed.