



WSRC QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

9:00 am to 11:51 am

Present:

Jen Cole, Parent Advocate, Everett.
Lesla Dunphy, DVR Counselor Representative, Colville.
Peggy Frisk, Community Rehabilitation Provider, Lake Stevens
Dion Graham, State Independent Living Council Representative
Jerry Johnsen, Client Assistance Program, Seattle.
Laurae MacClain, Tribal VR Representative, Nespelam.
Tania May, OSPI Representative, Olympia.
Justin Poole, Council Vice-Chair, DVR Customer Representative, Yakima.
Terry Redmon, Interim DVR Director, Lacey.
Ivanova Smith, Disability Advocacy Representative, Tacoma.
Michele Stelovich, Labor Representative, Bellingham.
Erin Williams, Business Representative, Seattle.
Erica Wollen, Workforce Training Representative, Olympia.

Members

Absent:

None

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)
Boston, Kelly – DVR State Office
Davis, Valerie - DVR Regional Trainer
Fickes, Andrew – DVR State Office
Goard, Allesandria – DVR Chief of Field Services
Lystad, Amy – DVR Regional Trainer
Magnuson, Lori – DVR Regional Trainer
Martin, Ann – Region 2 Administrator
Miller, Rayanne – DVR Confidential Secretary
Peterson, Lauren – DVR Office
Pitchford, Bonnie – DVR State Office
St. Lawrence, Robb – DVR State Office
Tigerson, Deborah – DVR State Office
Villegas, Cassi – DVR Community Program Manager
Zawisza, Kristina – DVR State Office
Villarreal, Pablo – DVR Region 1 Interim Administrator
Walsworth, Shawn – DVR Region 2 Manager Interim
Zawisza, Kristina – DVR State Office
Diseth, A. – Northwest Center
Bauer, Rachel
Bean, Jennifer – Client Assistance Program
Clark, Valerie
Conner, Kim – Washington State Independent Living Council

Davis, Dan
Farley, Taryn – Northwest Center
Kay, Don – Guest
Powers, Kathy – Orion Industries
Williams, Courtney – Community Employment Alliance
ASL Interpreter Amber Robinson
ASL Interpreter Amanda Wilkes
Captioner - Juline

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

- Meeting called to order by Justin Poole – Chair
- Tribal Land Acknowledgement by Justin Poole – Chair
- Vote: Approval of November 2020 Quarterly Meeting Minutes
 - 1st Jerry, 2nd Erin
 - No corrections or edits.
 - Unanimously approved.

DVR Interim Director Update – Terry Redmon – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Staffing update
 - Hiring Fiscal Compliance Manager, Deputy Director and full-time EDI position.
- Budget
 - Update sent to staff – doing well, no difficulties to match federal grants.
 - Received almost 5 million of program income in FY21
- Business Management Modernization Project (BMMP) Update
 - Electronic Document Management System on target for March 2021
 - Case Management System replacing STARS has go live date of June 2022; DVR announcing vendor soon.
- EDI Update – three year plan for all DSHS divisions for social justice and dismantling racism
 - Developing antiracism statement through DVR Community of Practice
 - Continue to hold listening sessions for staff
 - Systemic changes, including examples: creating EDI/race conversation moments in team huddles to make sure all employees have value and voice, contracting through Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises, recruitment through traditionally black colleges for positions.
- DVR Performance in pre and post COVID
 - Average days to plan is increasing, but cases in plan remain stable with signs of renewed customer interest in services.
- Outcomes by race-ethnicity: shows customers reflect diversity of working age people with disabilities in WA.
 - Disparities in case progress and outcomes for Black, Native American, and Hispanic customers.
 - When there are changes by regions, this is a concern. Reaching out to individuals in those populations with services that meets their needs.
 - Maybe a branding issue – ways to do promotions to get to people who can utilize services and can feel comfortable connecting. Equipment given to customers is part of it, but cannot expect them to just come to DVR.
- Jerry – what percentage within represented categories as compared to representativeness in the state?
 - Order of Selection affected different populations disproportionately – plus COVID response/socioeconomic impact disproportionate.
 - Terry – this is a starting point in the conversation and the council can help look at areas DVR is missing.
 - Comparing to prior to and after Order of Selection, compare to the whole population of the state, getting stories so people understand what the data means.
- Ivanova – have you tracked immigrants in service?
 - Kelly – the data tells us there is a disparity. The next step is to find points along the way where there are differences. DVR is looking at milestones and in the process of identifying actionable items that can come out of this data.

- Lesa – Is there a way to gather information about who has closed prior to eligibility based on not having social security or ID?
 - Kelly – will need to look at that in STARS. Need to have appropriate documentation for customers to move forward with DVR services.
- Justin – what is happening for TVR individuals?
 - Cassi – working with partners on warm handoff for referrals. Reaching out to underrepresented communities and developing programs and initiatives and connecting with community-based organizations.
- Ivanova – any information on customers looking for and achieving remote employment?
 - Kelly – Remote work is not a data point DVR tracks right now, but can take a look at this.
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion – Jen – DVR is making positive strides, but how to ensure DVR doesn't revert back to the way systems were built?
 - Terry – in his opinion, it's hard to make changes in systems – need to look at the grass roots and make changes for people, who are the main part of the culture. No matter if it's eastern or western Washington, staff will own the culture change, which will outlive management.
 - Cassi – this is one piece of the larger initiatives that are going on enterprise-wide. Fortunate to have Inslee and Secretary Strange leading by example. Racism and inequities are called out. Hopeful this will be very impactful and will have wide reaching changes for customers.
- Budget – Jen – 15% general fund reduction – DVR will still be able to meet budget. Pre-ETS services keep returning funds.
 - Allesandria – Returning Pre-ETS funding is definitely a concern for DVR. COVID was a big setback for Pre-ETS. The pandemic has shaken DVR and schools. Trying to move forward and offer what they can virtually. This is hugely important.
 - Terry – this is an area DVR is looking at to do a better job engaging in pre-employment services.

Chief of Field Services Update – Allesandria Goard – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Pre-ETS
 - Regional transition consultants liaison with schools and contractors.
 - Additional training coming, and better tracking will come with the new case management system.
 - Looking forward to serving youth in person again.
 - Transition Services Self-Assessment Tool (TSAT) assessed the gap of services needed for youth in transition services. DVR continues this work and plans another assessment expanding into tribal schools.
- Remote Service Delivery
 - Making sure staff and customers have everything they need – equipment, training, resources, i.e. implementing tech corner for staff.
- Pre-ETS Budget
 - 15% of Federal allocation must be spent on Pre-ETS or be sent back. In 2015 – gave back 5.7M, 2016 – gave back 4.5M, 2017 – gave back 1.9M, 2018 – gave back 1.8M, 2019 – Timeframe 10-2019-9/2020 impacted by COVID, gave back 5.7M. 2020 – 7.3M set aside, spent 702,000 starting in Oct 2020 through December 2020. Have 6.691M left to spend through end of September.
 - Trying to be flexible, make things easier, expand direct delivery of service, and connecting with contractors to schools who haven't been served.
 - Jen – how to find ways with the partners – some programs do not have money and some programs are sending money back. How to get at the marginalized young people who are left out? For example, Snohomish county group homes do not have capacity to support kids' education. They're not getting the support they need.
 - Allesandria – need to find a way to get services to those populations and make it work. Finding ways to engage at least to the point of going out into community.
 - DVR is in discussions with Department of Children, Youth, and Family Services (DCYF) as well as Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) in how to better serve customers. Also talking about collaborating to serve foster youth better and revising agreement with Juvenile Rehabilitation for a focus on those youth, as well.

- Tania – has there been advocacy or discussion at federal level to provide relief for this kind of spending? Is there a grace year for the pandemic? Is there an opportunity for this?
 - Terry – yes, having communication with current administration about this right now.
 - Tania – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) can write a letter of support, if needed. OSPI is doing some work for funding for school districts to serve customers through age 22 or 23, not sure if they'll stay enrolled, due to current regulations.
 - Robb St. Lawrence – the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) was written to tie to legislation, so DVR can serve up to age 21 per the WAC.
 - Tania – opportunity to think differently about how this work is done, maybe through leveraging more community-based organizations?
 - Allesandria – have amazing contractors who target those populations well. Figuring out how to expand these opportunities, especially with virtual services. New case management system should support these changes in this work.
- Michele – looking at 2020 transition students who have lost engagement. How to support the students in this class safely? Some DDA students choosing not to engage – a population who has chosen to wait and maybe they won't want to continue to engage for another year?
 - Allesandria and Tania – both share this concern impacts for people who have chosen to wait will have lasting effects.
- Jerry – OOS Determination question – some DVR staff ask medical doctors to provide more medical information than is necessary. Medical model should not be what runs DVR. Hoping to move this ball forward.
 - Allesandria – agree wholeheartedly – medical records do not spell out severity of functional loss. DVR has known there are discrepancies – but the understanding speaks to needing a higher level of training for staff. Looking at the whole picture of the customer service – having a consistent intake process, asking pertinent questions, giving counselors the same tools and resources.
 - Hope to launch training team into new era, to work these topics out and deliver consistent training statewide, which will create autonomy of decision making for counselors.
 - Hope to stand up quality assurance for determinations, having a group meet on a monthly or ongoing basis across regions to have difficult conversations about discrepancies and differences, to keep things consistent.
- Laurie – what is the diversity data for kids in transition programs?
 - Allesandria – will continue to look at this in more detail but no answers right now.
 - Deborah – it would be interesting to see what post-secondary options like the Bellevue OLS program are using to engage students in the population group that is being discussed.
- Training
 - Steering committee – Shelby is on the training steering committee. Closing gaps in EDI for services for students.
 - Very big undertaking for DVR. Very happy with progress and hope to be rolling out soon.

Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) Updates – Cassi Villegas – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Themes –
 - General inconsistencies across the state from DVR – increase training and communication to staff.
 - Informed choice – about communication, follow-up expectations, working from home.
 - What information is ok to share with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) prior to making referral?
 - Delineation of responsibilities between VR and CRP staff.
 - Signatures – not CRP's job to get signatures from customers.
 - Sent guidance out to DVR staff and CRPs.
 - When is it ok to cancel or extend Service Deliver Outcome Plan's (SDOP's)?
 - Authorizations for Purchase (AFP) CRPs were asked to provide services without a signed AFP.
 - Sent out guidance to staff.
 - Contact Regional Administrator if this is not working – information provided will be anonymous.
 - Decrease in DVR applications across the nation is affecting number of referrals to CRPs.

- Communication delays – DVR staff are required to respond within 48 hours. If this is an issue, contact Regional Administrators.
- Barriers to being virtual only – trying to be flexible and getting training. Developing curriculum with Washington Assistive Technology Assistance Program (WATAP) to better support technological issues with customers and CRPs.
- More training on Pre-ETS – misunderstandings regarding CRP contracts. Decline providing services outside the scope of the contract.
- Accreditation Options – DVR has been consistently hearing that Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) accreditation cost being a barrier for CRPs.
 - Postponed CARF requirement for this contract, reviewing and discussion on options for future contracts.
 - Rehabilitation Services Accreditation System (RSAS) will be reinstated – used prior to 2003. This service is local, affordable, and value added. Housed in Chehalis and provides services to Idaho and Montana.
 - At next meeting, the CEO of RSAS will come speak at the WSRC/DVR/CRP Quarterly meeting Feb 17th.
 - Also adding 2 individual level options. Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) and Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certifications. Though, individuals will not be able to provide all DVR services.
- WSRC Partnership – Shelby/Mari participate in the contract support group. This will kick off again next month.
 - Look at contract changes and quality indicators, etc.
 - Will meet monthly and will include a large amount of work, including fee structures, bonus payments, incentives, training needs, and other aspects needed to reevaluate current contract.
 - If interested in participating, reach out to Cassi.
- Jen – during COVID – If CRPs are asked to work outside of contract, is there flexibility to amend contracts if they're willing to put requests in the scope of work?
 - Cassi – can always amend the contract – some can be amendments and some need to have entire new contract. Contract unit staff is down to one person right now and capacity is limited. DVR has been as flexible as they can. Contract monitoring does happen and DVR needs to make sure it's followed, and to protect the CRPs so they don't have to owe money back later.
 - Peggy – from CRP perspective, it's really confusing for staff to change things and change expectations. Staff are trained to know the contract inside and out. Every DVR office has different personalities and expectations and procedures. This is confusing to train staff and then to send mixed messages to staff.
 - Allesandria – it's part of making sure providers have opportunity to let DVR leadership know when they are asked to provide services outside the scope of the contract, so this can get addressed. Building trust with contractors is important. Reach out to Cassi if needed.

Public Comment 11:30-11:45– Justin Poole

- Angela Cox – Related to the earlier Pre-ETS & Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) topic: Are there any resources that would be beneficial for employment agencies to review to learn about serving at-risk youth? Best practices, what they can do better?
 - Allesandria – shifting focus to make sure JR customers receive pre-ETS while they are incarcerated and connect with DVR office when released.
 - Jen – community-based organizations might be good partners for intentional training and relationship building, including Treehouse; Mockingbird Society, including coalition for juvenile justice, which is a nationwide coalition of state advisory groups (SAGs).
- Andrew Fickes – The H.E.R.O. Workshops that Tammie Doyle and Rashad Norris launched today is a good example of representing diverse populations within Pre-ETS.

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

- Tania – as a council, are there action items or advocacy activities/opportunities to consider supporting?
- Laurie MacClain – Virtual Legislative Event – statewide participation was available. Going forward, planning committee will look at how to have in-person element and broadcast statewide.
 - Jerry – liked the new model that opened door to new way of thinking and doing this event. The success can lead to even more commitments from legislators.
 - Terry – Yes, this virtual model is more inclusive, even better the hybrid version!

- Ivanova – self advocacy community felt it was not very participatory. Didn't like the webinar format and lack of interaction and not 100% inclusive. Wanted a Zoom meeting option and not webinar.
- Shelby – breakout rooms were not provided due to accessibility concerns. The personal stories were impactful. Tried to do best and honor wide range of folks wanting to participate.
- Jen – thoughts about sharing information and mobilize community together. Appreciated discussion with foster youth and bigger attempts at connecting the equity efforts under the DSHS greater community. How do we mobilize together and work together?

ADJOURN 12:00pm

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