WSRC QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 4, 2021
9:00 am to 11:45 am

Members Present:
Jen Chong-Jewell, Parent Advocate, Everett
Lesa Dunphy, DVR Counselor Representative, Colville
Peggy Frisk, Community Rehabilitation Provider, Lake Stevens
Laurae MacClain, Tribal VR Representative, Nespelem
Jayson Morris, Current or Former Recipient of Services, Seattle
Tania May, OSPI Representative, Olympia
Justin Poole, Council 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
Jennifer Bean, Client Assistance Program, Bellingham

Members Absent:
Dion Graham, State Independent Living Council Representative, Union
Erica Wollen, Workforce Training Representative, Olympia

Council Staff:
Shelby Satko, WSRC Executive Director, Lacey
Jolie Ramsey, WSRC Executive Lead, Lacey

Visitors:
Elizabeth Gordon, Executive Director, GCDE
Rachael Baur, Business Specialist, DVR Vancouver Office
Mari Heusman, Policy Manager, DVR State Office
Heather Evans, Morningside
Carol Baker, DVR Counselor, Spokane Office
Rebecca Jansson, Mainstay/SAILS
Brandi Monts, WISE
Kaire Downin, Oregon State Rehabilitation Council
Linda Pomeroy, DVR Counselor, SeaTac Office
Nikki Wegner, Chinook Enterprises
LeAnne Raines, DVR Supervisor, Silverdale Office
Angela Merritt, DVR Supervisor, Spokane Office
Valerie Davis, DVR Counselor, Spokane Office
Andrew Fickes, Communication Specialist, DVR State Office
Allessandria Goard, DVR Chief of Field Services
Amy Lystad, DVR Regional Trainer, Tumwater Office
Lori Magnuson, DVR Regional Trainer, Central Seattle Office
Bonnie Vintin, DVR Rehab Tech, Omak Office
Robb St. Lawrence, Fiscal Compliance Manager, DVR State Office
Ann Martin, DVR Region 2 Administrator
Peyton Acree, DVR Rehab Tech, Bellingham Office
Call to Order— Meeting called to order by Justin Poole, Chair

DVR Interim Director Update: Terry Redmon

- Budget Update
  - DVR is seeing a slow increase in expenditures and anticipates this increase to continue as we reopen and return to our ‘new’ normal operations
  - The budget for Biennium 2021-23 has been enacted and we are currently working on allotments
  - DVR has received $5,398,644 of program income in SFY21.

- Pre-ETS Update
  - Recruitment of two RTC positions: Vancouver and Tacoma
  - Trainings
    - YSP/KSA continues through the end of the year
      - Youth service professionals, knowledge skills and abilities
      - Nine modules led by the institute for educational leadership
        - Construction on universal design, trauma-informed practice, understanding impacts of intergenerational poverty, racial mindfulness, and so on.
    - MEGI (Motivational Enhancement Group Intervention)
      - Tool used by Regional Transition Consultants to do motivational interviewing
    - WSU Demonstration Project
      - 3-5 school pilot sites across the state
    - Internal DVR trainings
      - Transition Part C, Part D

- Federal Fiscal Q3 Update
  - Compared to 2019, the Pre-ETS federal grant expenditures vs 2020 shows increases in accessibility and availability of Pre-ETS opportunities.

- Performance Measures—Pre and Post COVID
  - Case numbers continued to trend upward in the April-June quarter and more customers were working than in any quarter post-COVID.
  - Applications and eligibility determinations were about approx. 50% of pre-COVID levels.
  - Number of successful closures remained around 80/month.
  - IPEs were completed more promptly during the quarter.
    - Average days to plan decreased by 12 days to an average of 128 days.

- Order of Selection Update
  - All SD-P2 cases have been released.
  - 403 SD-P3 cases were released on 08/02/21.
  - Earliest application date for SD-P3 at that time will be 08/18/18.

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Update
  - To improve EDI, DVR developed interventions, action steps and initiatives related to improving outcomes by race, ethnicity, requiring a holistic approach to customer service practices and vendor business relations.
  - DVR developing a robust and holistic EDI approach throughout the organization.
    - Hired an EDI administrator, Cassi Villegas
    - Diverse recruitment, diverse staff representation psychological safety training, and training on bias of anti-racism.
- Staff being introduced to foundational EDI concepts through “More Than a Moment” EDI awareness conversations within staff’s respective teams/departments.
  - Implemented a Tribal VR handoff for the Native American customers to be connected with a Tribal VR program to ensure culturally appropriate services.

- Terry’s Top priorities:
  - Waitlist
    - Continuing to release at the current rate of 400 individuals per month
  - Training
    - Developing an on-boarding checklist for new staff
    - Provide training opportunities for partners and stakeholders
    - Professional development opportunities for internal staff
  - Road to Recovery (Staff returning to the office post-COVID)
    - Spreadsheet with office level detail for occupancy levels (currently 1 person per 500 sq. ft.)
    - Created a handbook for staff with resources and process requirements
    - Hybrid model to maintain some teleworking while meeting customers’ needs.

- Customer satisfaction survey: How is DVR working to improve customer service
  - Removed some supervisory approvals and now allowing VRCs to use more professional judgment
  - Expressed importance of improving customer service
    - Timely responses to phone calls
    - Terry began touring the main statewide offices to talk to staff about issues addressed in the survey
    - Terry will hold Executive Leadership Team and supervisors and staff to continue to work on making inroads
    - Making effort to connect and inform people to understand where they are in the process and next steps. Communication is paramount.
  - Marketing of services
  - Considering how to accommodate customers as we transition into hybrid working model

- Rescinded VRS approval for certain services policy
- Post-Employment Services (PES)

**Region 3 / Olympic Unit Update:** Shawn Walsworth and LeAnne Raines

*Shawn Walsworth*
- Challenges of COVID: What will schedules look like, expectations, meeting needs of customers and of staff. Staff turnover. 12 vacant positions. Some customers are harder to reach. Barriers: Tech challenges. Internet issues. Use of equipment. The postal service. Paperwork sent/not received.
- What is working: Unit check-ins. Case notes being inputted in a timely manner. Holly Anderson recently hired at the Vancouver office.
- Greater work-life balance. Customers reporting the ease of virtual meetings with their counselors. No need to ride bus, drive, etc.
- Able to attend more meetings.

*LeAnne Raines:*
- Challenges: issues with reliable internet, especially in Clallam County. Some customers live in an area that is not set up for internet. No infrastructure. Issue in outlying areas. Ability to meet with students and schools in-person is challenging. Transportation challenges. In order to get to high paying jobs, people need to travel farther. Some areas don’t have public transportation. Lack of IL providers that can do in-home care due to COVID.
- Eligibility average in Olympic unit is 36 days. In Port Angeles it is 22 days—better than the state average of 43 days.
- Average day to plan in Olympic unit is 96 days. Port Townsend unit average is 79 days to plan. Silverdale is 87 days to plan.
- Strong working relationships with Work Source and DDA and with the Tribes and Schools in Kitsap and Clallam Counties. Working on improving relationships with Jefferson County. Meeting monthly with CRPs, schools, DDA, etc.
- Silverdale success stories: Customers placed in high paying jobs
  - $107K/year job as a Hospital Administrator
Software developer started at $110K/year with $15K sign on bonus after 30 days’ employment.

- Many customers are going back to school for their Master’s and other degrees during COVID.
- Seeing an uptick in employment and of customers getting hired.
- Strong working relationships with DCYF, DSHS, etc.
- Jefferson County: The service industry lost 370 jobs; leisure and hospitality lost 280(?) jobs
- Two Tribal Liaisons with local tribes: see slides

**Client Assistance Program**: Jen Bean
- Jen Bean is the new CAP Director, replacing Jerry Johnsen
- Values and guiding principles of CAP overview
- Leadership changes
- New EDI position

**Meeting adjourned at 11:45am**