

# WSRC QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 4, 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, Customer Assistance Program, Seattle. Laurae MacClain, Tribal VR Representative, Nespelem.

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.

Erica Wollen, Workforce Training Representative, Olympia.

Members

**Absent:** Sheila Turner, SILC Liaison, Pasco.

Kathy Powers, Council Chair, Business Representative, Auburn.

**Council Staff:** Shelby Satko, WSRC Executive Director, Lacey.

Mari Heusman, WSRC Executive Lead, Lacey.

**Visitors:** Abram, LaTonya – DVR, Kent Office

Balajadia, Kristina - DVR RT, Kent Office

Bean, Jennifer – DVR Regional Training Specialist Boston, Kelly – DVR Senior Manager, Olympia Forte, Catherine – DVR Region 3 Deputy Director Goard, Allesandria – DVR Chief of Field Services

Gray, Angela – DVR, Kent Office Jaeger, Brian –DVR, Bellevue

Johnston, Carl – DVR Region 2 Deputy Administrator

Kolle, Bianca – DVR Supervisor, Kent office

Lystad, Amy – DVR Regional Trainer Martin, Ann – Region 2 Administrator

Miller, Rayanne – DVR Confidential Secretary

McCorkle, James – DVR, Kent Office Mundy, Patty – DVR, Colville Office Nicholson, Dustin – DVR, Kent Office Ogg, Joanne – DVR, Kent Office Pitchford, Bonnie – DVR State Office Sodergren, Danielle – DVR, Kent Office

Villegas, Cassi – DVR Community Program Manager

Walsworth, Shawn – DVR Supervisor, SeaTac Vellucci, Cassondra – DVR, Port Angeles

Alveshere, Don – DVR Planning & Evaluation Program Manager

Bjerkestrand, Merrily - Power & Polish

Burt, Danielle – Downtown Emergency Service Center

Carla

Conner, Kim – Washington State Independent Living Council

Dockter, Brenna - PACE Services

Euritt, Shauna - Vadis

Gordon, Elizabeth – Governor's Council on Disability Issues & Employment

Harper, Shawna - Morningside Services

Killian, Jennifer - First Choice Employment Services

Kirsten

Koehl, Amy – Lighthouse for the Blind

Maxwell, Polly - Artisans

Meyers, Debbie – SKCAC Industries

Ravenna, Mary – The Artisans

Saunsaucie, Anton – Service Alternatives

Scott, Alexis

Williams, Courtney – Community Employment Alliance

Williams, Karen – Trillium Employment Services

Zilbert, Michele

**ASL Interpreter Emily** 

**ASL Interpreter Abel Cosentino** 

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

- Meeting called to order by Justin Poole Vice Chair
- Tribal Land Acknowledgement by Justin Poole Vice Chair
- Members not available today: Sheila Turner, State Independent Living Council Representative, Kathy Powers, Business Representative.
- Vote: Approval of May 2020 quarterly meeting minutes
  - o 1<sup>st</sup> Michele, 2<sup>nd</sup> Erin
    - No corrections or edits.
    - Unanimously approved.
- Vote: Nomination of Council Officers: Justin Poole for Chair and Jerry Johnsen as Vice Chair
  - o 1<sup>st</sup> Michelle, 2<sup>nd</sup> Laurae
    - Motion to elect Jerry for Vice and Justin for Chair.
    - Unanimously approved.
  - Congratulations to Justin & Jerry!

# Executive Director & Executive Committee Report – Shelby Satko – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Welcome to Lesa Dunphy, new VRC Representative
- Acknowledge DVR staff in their successful and quick shift to remote work.
- Advocacy
  - o Community Rehabilitation Providers support:
    - Supplemental Rates due to COVID-19
      - Two state examples: Wisconsin and Missouri supplemental rate structures for Community Rehabilitation Providers.
      - Kathy Powers (WSRC), Cassi Villegas (DVR), Kelly Boston (DVR), and Allesandria Goard (DVR) participated in a call with Missouri VR regarding the supplemental rate structure they implemented for CRP's. Resulting in DVR implementing a 50% temporary rate increase until August 31<sup>st</sup> with possibility of extension for CRP's.
    - Accreditation Review WSRC is supportive of DVR researching accreditation options for Community Rehabilitation Providers.
- Council made a formal recommendation regarding Non-CRP Job placement

- WSRC is recruiting for Business and Current or former DVR customer representatives.
  - Recruitment strategy: need to have far reach and looking for council volunteers to head up recruitment effort. Shelby will circle back in committees.\*
- New WSRC Website: <a href="https://www.wsrcwa.org/">https://www.wsrcwa.org/</a>
- Strategic Planning
  - o Developing strategies about how the council can be effective in a remote environment
  - Jerry Council should hold a regular social meeting to check in without formal business agenda.
  - o Justin likes the idea of monthly check-ins. Save subcommittee updates for another day or training for the council to dig a little deeper with new ideas or innovative practices.
  - Michele and Peggy 2-3 hours is more than enough for a quarterly meeting. It's hard to stay focused.
     Could split the meeting over two days.
  - o 2021 Meeting Timeline in pre-meeting packet
    - Proposing meeting in February vs January in 2020 (since we won't be able to host the Legislative Reception in January).
      - Erica would prefer February due to session being so busy.
    - Ivanova not lining up with the Legislative Reception will be new.
- Locations for 2021 in-person cities or do we decided 2021 meetings will be virtual and choose topic areas
  - O Tania DVR Services and provider services have turned online can council focus on this and customers who have barriers due to meetings online as a topic area.
  - o Jerry maybe Bianca will be able to speak about this today.
  - Council think about these ideas and others. Will discuss further in committee meetings.\*
  - November WSRC Quarterly meeting will be virtual.

## Customer Satisfaction Subcommittee - Peggy Frisk - refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Summary of Customer Listening Sessions refer to Customer Listening session Summary
  - Had 1:1 listening sessions instead of focus groups. This is a good option for us over the next year while we're not meeting in person.
  - o 6 people participated 3 from Kent and 3 from Seatac.
  - o Focus was DVR response of the COVID pandemic, overall satisfaction, and timeliness
  - o Customers reported 1.5 2 out of 5 satisfaction rating.
  - o Comments from customers: disorganized, rare communication from DVR, didn't agree with the direction of their plan.
  - o All 6 customers said their case had not proceeded appropriately since the pandemic began.
    - The council recognizes this is a small percentage of persons served in Kent/Seatac area.
  - o Good feedback from customers to DVR
    - Counselor helped customer learn about barriers, challenges, strengths.
    - Customer likes counselor as a person.
    - Customer received bus pass and computer.
    - Customer referred to Independent Living with good results.
  - WSRC Considerations
    - Customers need to drive their DVR process.
    - Communication: quality and timely.
    - DVR isn't alone in figuring out how to provide remote services. All agencies are going through this
    - Concerning trend over last 2 years: customers feel bad because counselors are reporting high
      caseloads and budget restrictions, so customers aren't advocating for themselves as they might
      have prior.
  - o Jerry's comment process of 1:1 with people. This was very efficient and had the attention of 1 person and not group of people was good. Customers talked more than they might in the focus group.
    - Takeaway VR needs to figure out how to spend quality time connecting with customers and have deeper conversations customers were dealing with their own stuff.
- Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS)
  - o Overall customer satisfaction rates including and not including midpoint response.

- o Feedback from customer listening sessions from 6 people in Kent isn't reflected in the monthly customer satisfaction survey results presented, as they only through April.
- Shelby continues to work with DSHS/RDA on options for them to take over the CSS to ensure the long term goals of the council that includes supplemental surveys and regional level data can be met.
  - Progress with RDA has been impacted due to COVID-related surveys, progress has been slow

#### Policy and Planning Subcommittee – Jerry Johnsen – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- New Committee Member: Lesa Dunphy
- Non-CRP Job Placements Recommendation
  - o Policy, put in place January 2019, put a halt on Community Rehabilitation Provider referrals as first step and made customers go to WorkSource first for 90 days.
  - o SRC has always been strongly opposed to this policy for a number of reasons.
    - DVR offices inconsistently interpreted this policy.
    - DVR need to re-evaluate and reassess relationship with Community Rehabilitation Providers, which was good, but this policy did not support customers.
    - It created delays for customers and has not been a successful policy.
  - o DVR supports rescinding this policy. Awaiting communication to the field.
- Equipment Policy workgroup
  - o Committee is coordinating with Robb St. Lawrence on this workgroup.
  - DVR equipment has a repossession process lot of times this isn't worth the effort to try and get the
    equipment back.
  - o The new policy will streamline the process for DVR staff and customers.
  - o Thanks Rob for your work on this.

#### Partnership Subcommittee – Erica Wollen – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) Ivanova
  - o Virtual advocacy days being conducted virtually and will continue during special session.
- Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)
  - o Next meeting is 8/30 on Zoom. Topics will include mental health, DEI, equitable access, and outcomes.
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
  - Several districts have announced distance learning only in the fall.
  - o Transition Collaborative has been moving forward.
  - Special Education guidance has been posted.
- State Independent Living Council (SILC)
  - Submitted plan for Independent Living, but it hasn't been approved yet.
  - o September trainings for staff.
- Workforce Board
  - o 360 review. Working on several grants. Reimagine Workforce Grant worth \$20 million all hands on deck there.
- Tribal VR Update
  - 11 Tribal grants 6 have submitted their grant requests, should get response in September
- WA Assistive Tech Act Program
  - Short term lending is available again through iCanConnect
  - o Recent DVR sponsored trainings had 188 participants
  - Working on new DVR contracts for training
- Behavioral Health Advisory Council
  - New Executive board in November 2019.
  - o Improvement of effectiveness of reviews for the adequacy of funds allocated by the state.

#### **DVR Updates** – Rob Hines – refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Customers
  - Case expenditures and customer referrals/outcomes have gone down.

- o Technology gaps DVR is looking at broader approach to get devices, i.e. mobile or computers, into the hands into customers. Lends itself to the new Equipment Policy.
- o Workplace safety for customers now part of the vocational assessment process and on all plans.

#### Budget Updates

- Historic low, but won't have final numbers until August.
- o DVR staff and Councils are not subject to state furloughs due to all wages being paid by federal funds.
- Even with budget reduction, DVR has carryover funds to pay for case services and will be able to make match this year.
- Concerned about next biennium.

## Eligibility Determination Pilot

- Results were mixed. The project Identified process improvements including workflow and reducing time to eligibility, templates, but no solution will work "whole cloth."
- o There were inconsistencies in how eligibility was being determined in Region 2 vs. Regions 1 and 3.
  - Chief of Field Services will need to work with leadership of Regions and determine the solution to make sure the process is consistent.
  - More equitable services across the board is the hope.

# Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI)

- o This will be a focus area for new DVR Deputy Director, Terry Redmon.
- o Reviewing Roadmap to Diverse Recruitment, strategies presented by DVR's current EDI Manager.
- DVR held listening sessions for staff and provided feedback from sessions to leadership and DSHS Equity Diversity Council.
- Developing an anti-racist declaration.
- DVR hasn't had a formal EDI plan in the past and believes this is an area where resources should be directed.
  - Formal EDI program and EDI Manager to spend time and improve EDI for staff and customers.

## COVID-19 Updates

- DSHS Safe Start Initiative: Rob is on the Executive steering committee for the initiative determining what is required and what the environment needs to look like for staff to return safely to work providing services. Ann Martin working almost full time on it. It's a huge lift.
- o Teleworking through 2020.
- DVR continues to monitor information and guidance coming out of the Governor's office.
- Expect state agencies will not be able to exceed 20% capacity in the office when it's time to return to
  offices.
- Electronic signatures DVR continues to work on this
  - There are ways to get "wet signatures" and some situations where electronic signatures have been accepted.
  - Need consistent approach that can be accepted by the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO).
- DVR is maintaining current levels of partnerships with outside agencies and in some circumstances increasing some communication and collaboration, i.e. OSPI for transition students.
- Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) temporary rate increase of 50% through August 31.
  - o An extra \$500,000 has been paid to Community Rehabilitation Providers during this time.
  - o DVR needs to confer again with Community Rehabilitation Providers about options after August 31<sup>st</sup> and knows this doesn't solve all the problems the pandemic has induced.
- Response to WSRC's Recommendation for Rescinding Non-CRP Job Placement Policy
  - Policy background: It was an emergency decision made quickly for budget purposes. There was fallout and DVR leadership agrees this is a good time to rescind the policy and follow the recommendation of the WSRC.
  - o Developing the WorkSource partnership is a top 3 priority for new DVR Deputy Director Terry Redmon.

## CRP Accreditation

- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) Accreditation has been a contract requirement since 2008 and DVR acknowledges it has been monetarily burdensome, especially for smaller agencies.
- o Several other options to look at as a possible substitute.

- Collaborating with the internal auditing division of DSHS this is an area of risk and DVR is looking forward to working with them to help solve this problem.
- Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
  - o Rob is now the Region 10 (Washington/Oregon/Idaho/Alaska) representative of CSAVR and also sits on the Executive Committee.
  - He hosts conference calls with Region 10 Vocational Rehabilitation agencies by looking through the lens
    of what the Region is experiencing and by encouraging successful collaboration with partners.
  - Washington DC hill legislation push began in July.

# Region 2 Update - Ann Martin & Carl Johnston - refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Recruitment
  - o Pretty much fully staffed in Region 2.
    - Hiring 2 Transition positions and able to fill positions as needed due to hiring freeze exemption.
  - Kent is fully staffed for the first time in a long time.
    - It is one of the busiest offices in the region; triple the referrals of any other offices in the region.
  - Staff challenges moving to teleworking has been really big adjustment as DVR has historically been a
    paper-driven organization. Counselors are home without their case files. Medical, plans, eligibilities are
    all on paper with signature requirements, etc.
    - Staff have different levels of comfort with technology. Some really enjoy telework and others find it challenging and isolating.
    - Those with children/caretaking needs have challenges/barriers to getting work done as well.
    - Supervisors are trying to be creative by holding coffee sessions/social connection virtual meetings with staff and with other offices, which is keeping staff connected across the state.
    - All counselors got Zoom this last week. Hoping this will increase frequency and quality of communication with customers. This will be more user friendly platform.

#### Serving customers

- Ann acknowledged some feedback from Customer Listening Sessions was surprising and concerning.
  - Need to take this information back to counselors to address the concerns raised.
- Customers were supposed to be reached out at the beginning of the stay at home order and asked what they needed technologically – chair, computer, keyboard, mobile, etc.
- This month staff have been directed to reach out again to see what customers need for support in using technology, so they don't get left behind in this new virtual environment.
- o Sending messages to DVR Supervisors/staff to keep moving forward with customer cases and to seek employment based on their level of comfort and informed choice.
- Different parts of the region are in different phases of reopening, which can make consistency of DVR services a little more complicated.
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
  - Had to shift planned in-person employment activity for spring to virtual services, i.e. work readiness and workplace learning.
  - o Some summer workshops were able to continue, like construction, in Region 2 and Region 3.
    - All services were provided virtually to learn those skills. Providers sent home materials to build bird house on their own.
  - o No real work-based learning experiences this spring. DVR is working with providers for how to provide these services in new school year. Shifting more to work readiness and skill building.
  - o Hiring 2 more Transition Consultants one for King and one for Snohomish north.
    - Part of role is for more direct services (virtually) for transitions students not eligible for individualized services.
  - Tania for the Pre-ETS virtual services, were there difficulties in reaching/serving students? Is there data on how many or what percent were served?
    - Answer: Carl Johnston DVR could try to get data. School Districts had troubles with providing education, so Transition was a secondary priority. Hopefully, fall will be different and customers can connect remotely so they don't just opt out of Transition services.

- Talking to some of the contractors and consultants they're confident that more students are on board now, but enrollment did drop-off in the spring.
- Jen Broadband access maps (<a href="https://broadbandnow.com/Washington">https://broadbandnow.com/Washington</a>) are not accurate, how is DVR determining accessibility for students? How is that being looked at?
  - Answer: Carl Johnston it's a broad question having counselors spend more time one-on-one
    with customers to hear about accessibility challenges and barriers. DVR is also coordinating with
    partners to build relationships and teamwork to serve students in school. It's a learning
    experience for everyone.
  - DVR is trying to streamline processes to be more prepared when school starts in fall than they
    were when the pandemic began in Spring 2020.
  - Answer: Rob Hines DVR staff are having conversations with customers to figure out accessible technologies and finding the gaps,
  - DVR is currently looking at possible changes to the work and how services are provided i.e. mobile teams out in the community. This will mean a bigger cultural shift, beyond using virtual meeting platforms.
- o Jen <a href="https://www.digitalinclusion.org/">https://www.digitalinclusion.org/</a> as we make this shift and have distance learning, are the schools and agencies building capacity for those impacted by broadband access and how to use the technology and for English language learners?
  - Answer: Ann Martin the VRC's will reach out to customers to ask these questions.

#### School-to-Work

- The program is serving DD eligible transition students aging out of high school. The goal of the program is "Jobs by June" many School-to-Work students didn't get a placement due to everything shutting down in March.
  - All counties with School-to-Work contracts had challenges.
    - DVR's typically funds the final payment point at the end of the program when customers are stable in their jobs.
    - Nearly 75% of students didn't get their jobs so counties weren't getting paid
      - DVR agreed to pay for Community Based Assessments and pay counties for placements made but where job was lost due to COVID-19.
- King County was serving over 150 students and DVR is paying for 100 students who completed
   Community Based Assessments but didn't go further, 5 placements who lost jobs, and 20 students made it through to end to receive payment.
  - Transitioning students who finished their final year to DVR Job Placement Plans
- Snohomish 50 customers finished Community Based Assessments without moving forward, 2
  placements lost their jobs and 2 placements made it to stabilization.
- o School-to-Work contracts are ending in January 2021. DVR needs new agreements with counties that want to have School-to-Work contracts.
  - Will incorporate Job Foundations funding to help serve some of the harder to serve DDA students.
  - Planning for these contracts are in the works and hoping to finalize soon as those students are already being served.

#### Training

- 2 Regional Trainers in Region 2.
- New Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) training every month for any VRC's in an in-training position.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (VRI) training through Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER) has shifted their curriculum from in person to virtual format. Two trainings are wrapping up:
  - Foundations in Rehabilitation, i.e. history and law and code of professional ethics
  - Case Management the rehabilitation process, case and time management process.
- o VRI will soon offer medical aspects training. Hoping to start in November.

 Additional trainings being put together for field staff: remote counseling training and how to connect with customers remotely.

# Kent Office Update - Bianca Kolle - refer to WSRC Master PowerPoint

- Supervisor Transition
  - o Bianca has been in the Supervisor position for two months.
  - Looking to establish stability structure and consistency for the office, which will have a positive impact on services for customers.
    - Keep processes that are working, for others, develop new best practices and strategies and move forward.
  - o Bianca is appreciative of the supportive staff in the office who lead by example.
- Kent is currently fully staffed.
- Technology staff need to really assess the individual needs of customers.
  - o Developing how-to's or cheat sheets for secure email or how to access Zoom.
  - How to insert counseling conversations by connecting with people and building rapport not to make it clinical.
    - If training needs to happen, Bianca is open to discussion, and the Kent team is on board.
- Jen there is a technology relationship gap how people feel about technology or feel shame when they feel they should know more. Additionally, some families have hesitation/mistrust due to the possibility of their information being tracked, especially with immigration status. There is opportunity there but requires collaborative effort and trusted relationships with customers and families who need navigation help to move forward.

#### Public Comment -

- Jennifer Killian DVR's allowance for Community Rehabilitation Providers to forego CARF surveys/accreditation during this contract period is making a big difference to many agencies. Kudos to WA State DVR.
- Question: Merrily Bjerkestrand those who choose to avoid computers, possibly find them intimidating, but would rather use the phone. Are IPads and FaceTime a viable alternative? Not helpful at all with broadband issues however. Not a perfect solution but maybe an encouraging option for those threated by technology.
  - Answer: Bianca Kolle DVR is looking at how to support customers in the best way for them, which
    means considering all technology options.
- Lisa Floyd King County Behavioral Health and Recovery Division Customers have trust with community based organization to help get and stay connected to DVR. Providers often have more contact with people. Excited Region 2 area of DVR has been supportive of Zoom and allowing Community Rehabilitation Providers to initiate and attend the telehealth Zoom meetings. Encourage other Regions to also lean on Community Rehabilitation Providers and other community based organizations.
- Karen Williams Is there an opportunity for Community Rehabilitation Providers to be part of the School-to-Work contract revisions this fall?
  - o Answer: Carl Johnston DVR is open to suggestions. He's leading the effort. They want to hear from the counties and if Community Rehabilitation Providers have particular suggestions, email them to Carl.
- Merrily Bjerkestrand thank you for this opportunity this meeting has been helpful and informative. She is an Independent Living provider/partner/vendor. A lot of information from this meeting pertains to Community Rehabilitation Providers; is there information or resource for Independent Living services?
  - o Answer: Cassi Villegas contact the local offices in the region, or if you have any specific questions please connect with Cassi so she can get the exact information.
  - Merrily regarding continuity of forms, are there standardized forms to turn into DVR.
    - Answer: Cassi Villegas Yes, forms used are standardized across the state.
- Ann Martin Thank you to the Council for all the patience and hard work. Customer satisfaction survey report was especially powerful and helpful.

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

• Justin – Is DVR moving or pushing to move to paperless during the pandemic? With customers DVR serves some can't go into the office. He would like to see as much paperless as possible.

- Tania Quantify the gaps how do we reach people and how does DVR fill the gap?
- Michele School-to-Work and Job Foundations, how are those going to work together?
  - Answer: Carl Johnston Job Foundations is starting and will be statewide for those graduating in 2022.
     The role of Job Foundations is early engagement for DDA students who have high needs. Vocational planning starts a year before their last year of school.
    - For counties with School-to-Work contracts, DVR is assessing how to include Job Foundations and what does it look like for the contract?
      - Even if DVR isn't paying for the Job Foundations piece, DVR counselors and the whole Transition team needs to be involved in the whole process.
    - Ideally having a year head start through Job Foundations would help get customer employed, but the pandemic means the future is uncertain.
    - If Provider gets a placement early, they get bonuses and payments early. DVR is looking at how to incorporate this DDA funding into the DVR contracts.
  - o Ann Martin Hoping Job Foundations will remove the need for Community Based Assessments in most circumstances.
- Meeting structure discussion for virtual meetings:
  - Jen how to setup meetings that honors people's stamina and ability to engage and have dialogue necessary to talk through some of these things – racial, equity, intersecting identity.
    - How customers are accessing services right now is new and needs thoughtful engagement by the council. Need to continue to be engaged so we can move forward with priorities. Need to have space to actively continue to dialogue.
    - Shelby hearing council suggestion of splitting meeting up over 2 days, each day at less than 3 hours. Maybe hear updates on day one and then use the following day to focus on council discussion and dig into what was heard on day one.
  - O Tania maybe updates can be pre-recorded and sent to members so the actual council meeting can be more of discussion and reflection. Ivanova agrees.
  - o Laurae likes 2-day meeting for processing time and then discussion the next day.

#### ADJOURN 12:00pm

• Please hold November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> for the next Quarterly Meeting, which will be held virtually.