

WSRC QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES*Thursday, February 13, 2025**9:00am-1:04pm*

Members Present: Katrina Simmons, Recipient of Services Representative, Tacoma
Danna Summers, SILC Representative, Kenmore
Lesa Dunphy, DVR Counselor Representative, Ex-Officio, Colville
Jill McCormick, Parent Advocate, Puyallup
Jennifer Bean, Council Chair, Client Assistance Program, Bellingham
Jennifer Tabiando, CRP Representative, Lynnwood
Aimee Elber, Disability Advocacy Representative, Spokane
Michele Stelovich, Labor Representative, Everett
Alexandra Toney, OSPI Representative, Olympia
Matt Newton, Business Representative, Tacoma
Dana Phelps, DVR Director, Ex-Officio, Lacey

Members Absent: Edward Nicholson, Business Representative, Vancouver
Laurae MacClain, Tribal VR Representative, Nespelem
Noelle Green, Recipient of Services Representative, Olympia

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

Visitors:

Aaron Dickson, Angela Merritt, Ann Martin, Ben, Ben Martin, Beth, Cami, Christina Frye, Dee Quintanilla, Deona Koberstein, Doug Burkhalter, Elizabeth Gordon, Eric Boggan, Jamie Grund, Jamie Rasmussen, Jana Finkbonner, Janet Vaupel, Jeannine Chandler, Jennie, Jessica Loseke, Kathy Powers, Kristin Nguyen, Kristina Zawisza, Lauren Peterson, Leni Marshall, Linda Padgett, Liz, Mandy Kipfer, Mari Heusman, Maria Buxbaum, Mary Crago, Megan Grundbrecher, Melinda Bocci, Mina T, Mike Gorday, Mona Fuerstenau, Monique Patel, Naomi Siegel, Pablo Villarreal, Rebecca Jansson, Rena Van Meter, Renee Silva, Rich Robinson, Robb St. Lawrence, Ronnie Oswald, Shawn Walsworth, Sonya Sanders, Stacie Nuckolls, Stacy O'Quin Kidd, Steven Potter, Tammy Bowen, Yvonne Bussler White, Zandra Leitch, Sonja Muir

Call to Order— Meeting called to order at 9:01am by Jen Bean, Council Chair

Motion: Approval of November 2024 quarterly meeting minutes

First: Michele Stelovich **Second:** Jill McCormick

No edits, no abstentions. **APPROVED**

Executive Committee

- The council was awarded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Beloved Community Award as a Community Partner. The ceremony was held in Olympia on Jan. 7 and attended by council members and staff. The council was nominated by DVR Director, Dana Phelps.

Foundations of VR: Shelby Satko

- Shared core values of vocational rehabilitation
- Provided overview of VR and SRC's placement in both federal and state government structures.

DVR Director Updates: Dana Phelps

- Order of Selection updates
 - Continue working to get State Plan amendment approved by RSA.
 - Once we do have approval to close categories, we will need to make changes to the case management system and send out updated communication to customers prior to closing categories, which will take a couple weeks.
- Heart of VR Initiative
 - Ann Martin leading the initiative to maintain focus on improving customer focus and customer service.
 - Includes greater emphasis on helping customers with credential attainment to access high quality employment.
- State Budget Challenges
 - WA State facing between \$12-\$16 billion shortfall over the next four years.
 - Drop in revenue combined with, i.e. a growth in caseloads and a growth in long-term care needs.
 - DVR is subject to the state's hiring freeze, but has exemptions in place to hire VR counselors, VR supervisors, and rehabilitation technicians.
 - DSHS will see a 6% reduction in funding. All departments within DSHS were asked to identify potential cost savings.
 - Includes freezes on purchases and staff travel, unless the travel is 100% federally funded. This would *not* impact customer purchases.
- Waves Case Management
 - Receiving higher level tech support from DSHS Technology Service Division
 - This technology leader is putting tech practices in place that will help stabilize Waves and other technology systems through better change management, release management, and testing.
 - DSHS technology leaders and DVR executive leadership met with the Well Sky.
- Legislative Update
 - The 2025 legislative session is underway. DVR analyzing 41 bills.
 - DVR has not identified any bills with major impact on our programs.
 - School-to-Work funding was reduced by \$810K for FY2025.

DVR Fiscal Updates: Jamie Grund

- Legislative session is underway, and it is a long session.
- DVR must not exceed the official budget authority of \$82.8 million for SFY 2025.
- Revenue sources
 - General State Fund, Federal Basic Support 2025 grant, Federal Supported Employment grant, Federal Independent Living grant, and Social Security reimbursements.
- Basic Support 2024
 - We are now in the 2nd year of this grant
 - Carryover period (this ends Sept. 30, 2025)
- Basic Support 2025
 - We have received \$25 million
 - We still do not know our total amount for 2025, which makes planning and budgeting challenging.
- Delay in waitlist impacts
 - Fiscal's current data shows no significant changes from when we presented our budget to the federal government.
 - DVR fiscal will continue to monitor.
- DVR was able to draw down federal grant funds, and we currently have sufficient state funds.
- We could draw the 2024 grant, as it has already been awarded.
- School to Work
 - SFY 24- \$1,604,492
 - SFY 25-\$711,172
 - Starting to see payments come in
- Program income
 - SFY 24-\$4,289,222
 - SFY 25-\$1,026,765
 - Does not need to be matched with state funds
 - Does not increase our Pre-ETS set aside
- Change to reimbursement request
 - The social security administration changed the rules for VR programs. VR programs used to be able to submit reimbursement requests at any time and be able to resubmit requests. But now, we only get one year and one chance to submit for reimbursement.
- Pre-ETS
 - We are on track to meet our spending by March/April.
 - We will be able to start spending the 2025 grant.

DVR Planning & Performance Updates: Kristina Zawisza

- How do we use data to drive continuous improvement? Through strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and performance improvement.
 - Strategic planning examples: DVR State Plan, Strategic Plan, operation plans
 - Monitoring and evaluation examples: performance data and reports, case reviews, customer satisfaction survey
 - Performance improvement examples: problem assessment, improvement projects
- DVR uses an enterprise performance management system
 - Connects goals and strategies to desired outcomes.
 - Utilizes data visualization tools to make data easier to understand.
 - Supports shared understanding of our performance and areas to improve.

- Current system is called Results EMPS.
- Aiming to launch a new EMPS by the end of this year.
- Update on reports from Waves
 - Few management reports are available in Waves and further development or modifications cannot be made in a timely way.
 - Creating reports in-house requires proficiency in Waves.
 - Our top priority has been to complete the required quarterly federal report, RSA-911.
 - First report in development is the IPE and Eligibility Determination timeliness report.
 - Expected to test next week and launch by the end of this month.
 - Project deliverables
 - Working on redesigning IPE set up in Waves.
 - DVR field staff reporting numerous and significant barriers within Waves that make case management difficult.
 - Entering data into Waves during meetings with customers greatly interferes with the rehab counseling process.
 - Connecting with Montana VR to review their IPE process.
 - Discussing with IT to explore cost and possible ways to make improvements in Waves.
 - Looking at improving intake and assessment process in Waves
 - Develop intake and vocational assessment guides.
 - Workgroup created which includes representatives from field leadership and field staff in various roles.
 - Customer appointments
 - Evaluate options for appointment reminders to customers by email and/or text.
 - Outlook auto email feature discussed in first all staff huddle meeting.
 - Timeliness report
 - Design a report to track due and completion dates and timely completion by the end of February.
 - Other projects in 2025
 - 2025 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. Working with WSRC to oversee the planning and completion of this.

Questions/Comments

- Question from Matt Newton: Will WSRC be included in the planning process for these project deliverables?
 - Answer: Yes, the council will be included.
- Comment by Aimee Elber: It would be a good idea to re-evaluate after a year of services to see what works and what improvements can be made. Have a built-in feature in Waves that would prompt the VRC to complete this. Ensure clear communication to include spelling out acronyms, accessibility considerations.

Customer Satisfaction & Program Evaluation Subcommittee: Shelby Satko

- Customer Satisfaction Survey
 - Overall customer satisfaction is holding at 66%.

- We anticipate being able to compare survey responses to case service records by early next year.
- Listening sessions to be held with Port Angeles DVR customers in March.
- Workforce and business relations
 - Started information gathering. Staff met with DVR Policy & Strategies team and shared council input to inform the development of a Business Relations Strategic Plan.
 - Council Business Representatives, Matt and Ed, and Shelby will meet with the project team at the end of this month.
- Comprehensive statewide needs assessment

Policy & Planning Subcommittee: Lesa Dunphy

- SRCs are important because they support customers and DVR leadership in many ways.
- Described the scope and importance of the DVR State Plan.
- The Rehabilitation Act authorizes and empowers SRCs.
- WSRC recommendations
- We resubmitted a previous formal recommendation about counselor reassignment best practices.

Partnership Subcommittee: Alex Toney

- Transition Map
 - Available on the WSRC website and has been shared widely via community partners, school personnel, DSHS social media, etc.
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction updates
 - OSPI is preparing to undergo a federal special education monitoring visit later this year in October.
 - These observations occur every six years.
 - Working with federal partners to complete activities
 - Launching a more comprehensive platform to collect secondary transition data.
 - Transition planning document
 - Consent form to share student info with agencies whose services students are eligible to receive
- Tribal VR updates: Jana Finkbonner, North Intertribal VR Director
 - Trainings completed through AIVRTTAC, the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center. <https://aivrttac.org/>
 - This year is the 50th anniversary of the Navajo VR program's inception. A celebration at the national CANAR conference is being planned to celebrate. Tribes are required to have a cooperate agreement signed annually. Waiting for edits and expect to have it signed/approved soon.
 - The DVR Tribal VR Administrator. When there's talk about different types of monitoring. That position was key to making sure the Tribal voice is heard in those strategic planning-state plan, strategic plan, CSNA.
 - Tribal names need to be corrected in Waves.
 - NW Indian College. Courses offered for a TVR degree. Provides the 301 class.
 - CANAR
 - Meeting with CANAR to develop a plan to move.
 - The new CANAR president is Emma de la Cruz.
 - Getting sustainable funding is one priority.

- Tribes are not a part of the social security reimbursements
- Tribes working on Pre-ETS tool lit.
- TVRs are not allowed to reallocate unspent funds like state VR programs can.
- TVR has a 77% success rate at closure.
- State Independent Living Council updates
 - Executive Director position in recruitment.
 - Interviews will begin soon, and Shelby will participate on the interview panel.
- Special Education Advisory Council updates
 - Next meeting in May.
 - Special Education Advisory Council Community Forum February 25th, 2025, from 5:30-7pm The SEAC wants to hear from students and families! Join us to discuss High School and Beyond Plans and goals for transitioning to adulthood for students with disabilities. Registration is required.
 - Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)
- Developmental Disabilities Council
 - Recently included WSRC staff in a project management staff training
 - Busy with legislative season.

Public Comment

- None provided.

Council Wrap up

- Jen Bean: Focus on improving services for customers. Great to hear how DVR is focusing on improving the IPE process and intake process. Inequity of funding for Tribal VR programs on a national/federal level.
- Jana Finkbonner: Expressed that Tribal VR feels that they are being heard, and appreciation for working so well together as a team with DVR.
- Matt Newton: Open to supporting projects to improve intake and assessments.
- Dana Phelps: Stay the course, continue working together.

Meeting adjourned at 1:04pm