

Wyoming



State Rehabilitation Council

2025

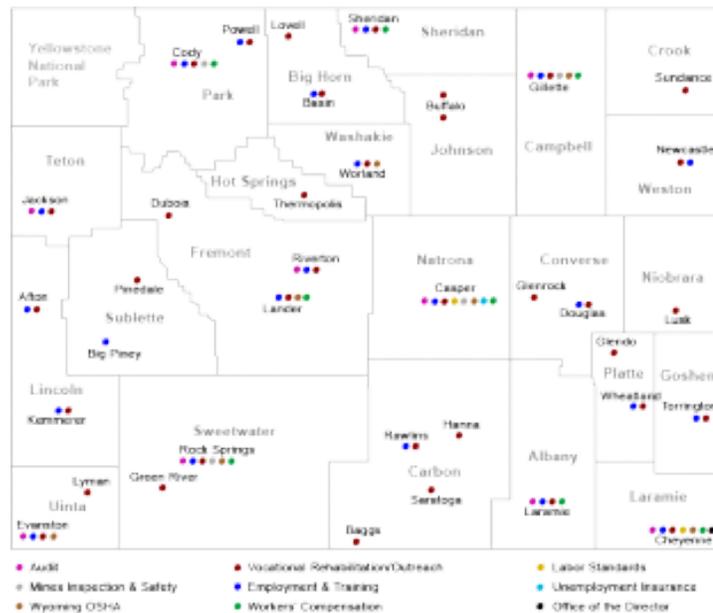
Annual Report



The Wyoming SRC currently is comprised 17 members including VR consumers, Community Rehabilitation providers, Disability Advocacy groups, AIVRS representatives from the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribes, the State Workforce Board, VA counseling services, CAP, SILC, and the Parent Information Center. We are actively recruiting additional members from the WY Department of Education, Business, Industry, and Labor, and additional consumer representative groups. Upon completion of pending appointments, Council membership is expected to increase to 19 members.

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State of Wyoming Department of Workforce

Services **STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**



Director Liz Gagen

Administrative Office
5221 Yellowstone Road
Cheyenne, WY 82002



Governor Mark Gordon

Dear Governor Gordon and Commissioner Allen,

It is an honor to serve on the Wyoming State Rehabilitation Council. Our organization is tasked with providing greater access to the voice of those seeking and supporting the employment of individuals with disabilities in our state when developing policies and practices of Vocational Rehabilitation in our state. This has been a primary focus of our Council this past year. We have worked tirelessly to increase access to the voice of our consumers, current and prospective employers, and our VR field staff in developing our recommendations and reviews of VR services in our state.

The full Wyoming SRC Council met 4 times in the 2025 year using the virtual platforms of Zoom and Google Meets. Two council meetings were joined hybrid. One of those meeting was with our State Independent Living Council.

As has been the case in recent years, the SRC has faced challenges in recruiting and retaining members, and many individuals currently serving on the Council are recent gubernatorial appointees. While this turnover has impacted continuity and overall Council effectiveness, it has also resulted in a notable and positive shift in membership composition. Specifically, the SRC has experienced an increase in members who are individuals with disabilities and individuals who are current or former recipients of vocational rehabilitation services. This growth has strengthened the Council's ability to elevate authentic consumer perspectives and ensure that the voices of those directly served by the vocational rehabilitation system are more fully represented in SRC deliberations and recommendations. Despite ongoing recruitment and retention challenges, the Council continues to fulfill its statutory responsibilities and advance its work in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Junge, Chair 1/25-10/25

Kelly Meyer, Chair 10/25-12/25

Paige "Zola" Hansen, Vice-Chair 10/25-12/25

SRC Mission and Purpose

It is the mission of the Wyoming State Rehabilitation Council to review, analyze and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's delivery of effective rehabilitation services which lead to employment and independence of Wyoming Citizens with disabilities.

The State Rehabilitation Council's purpose is to function as a partner with Vocational Rehabilitation to review, analyze, and advise the agency in its efforts to support the employment of individuals with disabilities in our state.

In partnership with DVR, the SRC assists in the development of the State goals and priorities, evaluates the effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation program, and submits annual progress reports to the RSA Commissioner in accordance with Section 101(a)(15)(E).

The SRC advises DVR regarding activities authorized to be carried out under Title I (General Rehabilitation) and assists in the preparation of the: State Plan and its Amendments, Applications, Reports, Needs Assessments, and Evaluations.

To the extent feasible, the SRC conducts a review and analysis of the effectiveness of consumer satisfaction with the functions performed by DVR, Vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities and employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes.

The SRC prepares and submits the Annual Report to the Governor and the Commissioner on the status of the VR programs operated within the State and makes the report available to the public.

We coordinate activities with other Wyoming councils and boards to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served.

The SRC provides for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between DVR and the SILC (Centers for Independent Living) within the state.

And the SRC performs such other functions consistent with the purpose of Title I (General Rehabilitation) as the SRC determines to be appropriate and are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council

2025 SRC Accomplishments

The 2025 year represented a period of transition and stabilization for the Wyoming State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). The Council continued to address challenges related to member recruitment, retention, and consistent participation, while also onboarding several new members across required representation categories. To support statewide access and accessibility, the SRC conducted its work through a combination of in-person, hybrid, and fully virtual meetings, with American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and other accessibility accommodations provided to ensure meaningful participation by all members.

Despite capacity challenges, the SRC made measurable progress in strengthening Council operations, increasing consumer representation, and supporting the work of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Key accomplishments in 2025 include:

- **Increased consumer representation on the Council**, with more than half of active members meeting the federal requirement of representing individuals with disabilities or current or former VR consumers, strengthening the authenticity of consumer input across SRC discussions and recommendations.
- **Improved accessibility of SRC meetings**, including the consistent provision of ASL interpretation, which enabled several Council members to participate fully and actively in Council and subcommittee work who otherwise would have faced barriers to engagement.
- **Held four quarterly Council meetings**, including multi-day hybrid meetings with structured subcommittee work sessions focused on membership, outreach, and policy review.
- **Stabilized Council leadership**, completing officer nominations and elections and supporting leadership transition through mentoring to maintain continuity and compliance with SRC bylaws.
- **Advanced membership oversight and recruitment**, including processing new applications, coordinating appointments with the Governor's Office, addressing resignations, and identifying the need for enhanced new-member orientation and training outside of regular Council meetings.
- **Conducted quarterly reviews of VR dashboards and performance data**, examining service delivery trends, employment outcomes, and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) participation to inform SRC advisement and recommendations.
- **Provided targeted policy and program input to VR**, including feedback related to needs assessment planning, Pre-Employment Transition Services expansion, vendor and provider processes, client guidance tools, and corrective action plan outcomes.
- **Expanded collaboration with partner agencies**, including the State Independent Living Council

(SILC), Workforce Services, the Department of Education, the Client Assistance Program (CAP), tribal VR programs, and community rehabilitation providers.

- **Strengthened consumer feedback efforts through the Client Satisfaction Survey, with 106 responses received to date.** This represents a significant level of engagement for a single survey effort and reflects improved outreach, accessibility, and awareness of the SRC. Sustaining this level of participation will further increase the SRC's ability to gather meaningful consumer feedback and inform recommendations to Vocational Rehabilitation.
- **Maintained transparency and public access,** ensuring all meetings were publicly noticed, accessible, recorded, and supported with published minutes and materials.
- **Provided fiscal oversight of SRC resources,** prioritizing expenditures for interpreter services, member travel, accessibility supports, and outreach activities while monitoring rising operational costs.

Throughout 2025, the SRC remained committed to its statutory advisory role and increasingly centered the perspectives of individuals with disabilities and VR consumers. By intentionally investing in accessibility accommodations such as ASL interpretation, the Council strengthened participation, amplified consumer voices, and enhanced its effectiveness as a partner to Vocational Rehabilitation.

The RIPPLE Award

Reaching Incredible Places, Pursuing Leadership in Employment

The Wyoming SRC created the RIPPLE Award in 2018 to recognize Employers around the State who have gone above and beyond the goal of employing people with disabilities. Through a nomination process the SRC publicly recognized Employers and Employees for their dedication and support. One employer was recognized in 2025:

AmericInn of Casper WY



2025 Members of the Wyoming SRC

Once again, the Wyoming SRC has been in transition with many new members and changes in our Executive team.

Cheryl Junge served in the role of SRC chair for the 2025 year. Cheryl is the Coordinator of the ABLE Program, an 18-21 transition program in Natrona County School District. She has previously worked as a Pre-Employment Services (Pre-ETS) Trainer contracted by Vocational Rehabilitation and provided services in-person and virtually across the state. Cheryl comes from an extensive background in transition, providing transition services through the IEP process most of her professional career. She serves on the Outreach committee and resides in Casper, Wyoming.

Kelly Meyer serves on the SRC as a Representative of an Individual with a Disability. Kelly is a traditional provider through her own LLC, Star Valley Special Care Services (SVSCS), located in Lincoln County where services, opportunities, and access are additionally limited for Wyomingites with disabilities. SVSCS provides Home and Community Based services for individuals receiving support through Developmental Disability Waivers. SVSCS is additionally collaborating with DeafIS of Wyoming to support deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in rural areas of Wyoming. Kelly is a Wyoming Ambassador for Chromosome Disorder Outreach (CDO). Kelly now serves as Chair of the SRC, effective October 1, 2025. She serves on the Outreach committee. She is also a parent of an adult with a disability and primary care giver of a non-relative adult with a disability. Kelly resides in Afton, WY.

Connie Peterssen is the Client Assistance Program & Beneficiaries of Social Security Advocate for the Wyoming Protection & Advocacy System, Inc. and is a CAP ex-officio member for the SRC. She also serves on the Wyoming State Independent Living Council. Connie has previously assisted individuals with disabilities seeking employment through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation & Developmental Disability Waiver as an Employment Consultant for 15 years. Connie serves on the Review committee for the SRC and resides in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Krystyne Etheridge represents the Parent Information Center on the SRC. Krystyne joined the SRC in September 2025, replacing Lucas Freeman as PIC representative. She has worked as an Outreach Parent Liaison, a special education teacher, and caregiver for youth adults with disabilities. Krystyne resides in Cheyenne Wyoming.

Kim Sanford was named the WDE representative on the council in July 1. She is the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Supervisor and Special Education Supervisor for WDE and is a former special education teacher. Kim resides in Dayton, WY.

Charlotte Deming. Charlotte has been a VR counselor for 26 years. She is currently working on the newly obtained DIF grant. Charlotte is involved in both Cody and Powell High Schools serving Pre-ETS students ages 14-21. She also works with the general population and has several participants who are seeking services to retrain and return to the workforce. Connie serves on the Membership Committee and has started the work of recruiting employers to fill SRC vacancies. Charlotte resides in Cody, Wyoming.

Dylan Deal is a VR consumer serving on the SRC. Dylan works for Deaf Intervention Services Wyoming (DEAFLS) and is an advocate for the Deaf and hard of hearing community. He does data collection and entry, website content, and videography work. Dylan currently serves on the Outreach Committee and resides in Afton, WY.

Zola "Paige" Hansen is a representative of a disability advocacy group serving a cross section of individuals with cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities. Paige serves as a case manager for the Developmental Disabilities Waiver. Paige has also served as a deaf coach for Deaf Intervention Services in Lovell, WY. Paige resides in Lovell, WY.

Gabriela Gajeda is a consumer of VR services. Gabriela Gajeda was newly appointed to the Council in September and is looking forward to contributing to this organization. Gabriela Gajeda resides in Green River, Wy. She is on the Membership Committee.

John Wall is the SRC liaison for the State Independent Living Council (SILC). John joined the council 9/1/2025. He is a former consumer of VR services and a representative of an individual with a disability. John serves on the Membership Committee.

Neil McGill is the Project Director for the Eastern Shoshone Tribe's Red Feathered Eagle Vocational Rehabilitation Program. He has a MSW (Clinical Tract) from Walla Walla University, BSW Salish Kootenai College, Post Master's Specialty in Addictions, and is currently taking Post Master's Specialty in Marriage and Family Therapy courses with North Central University. Neil has worked for Red Feathered Eagle since March 3, 2016, as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, and was appointed as the Project Director January 13, 2020. Neil serves on the Review committee and resides in Shoshone, Wyoming.

Leann Brown is the Program Director for the Northern Arapaho Rehabilitation Program. She previously worked as the Lead counselor with Tribal VR services and as a Transition counselor working with youth with disabilities. Leann has a degree in Elementary Education and currently serves the SRC on the Review committee. Leann resides in Riverton, Wyoming.

Amanda Bruno (Rubi) serves on the SRC Membership Committee. Amanda is the coordinator of the Transitional Work Program at the Sheridan VA. This program provides real life work experiences to veterans with disabilities and provides the opportunity for current work history to enter competitive employment. Amanda has prior experience as a VR counselor in WY as well. Amanda is on the Membership committee. She resides in Sheridan, WY.

Holly McKamey Simoni, MRC CRC CPM is the Workforce Programs Administrator / UI Director for the State of Wyoming. Holly has worked for the Department of Workforce Services for 18 years. She represents the Workforce Investment Board role on our council and serves on the Review Committee. Holly resides in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Tanja (TJ) Mechem MRC, CRC is the Programs Manager for the State of Wyoming Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. She joined the SRC in 2023 as the Vocational Rehabilitation liaison to the Council. Ms. Mechem has over 20 years of experience in human services and has been employed with WYDVR for the past eight years. She has held the roles of VR Counselor, Program Consultant, Area Manager, Policy, Training, and Innovation Manager, and was recently promoted to Programs Manager. TJ resides in Torrington, WY.

Nicky Harper, MSW, LCSW, CRC is the current Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator for the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Nicky is in her 16th year with the Division. She is an ex-officio member of the SRC and resides in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Robbie Milonas is the Administrative Assistant for the SRC. Robbie is a Program Analyst for the Department of Workforce Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. She has been with DWS/VR for over eight years. Among her duties, Robbie manages the Business Enterprise Program that helps individuals with disabilities start their own businesses. Before coming to DWS/VR, Robbie worked in the staffing business for 26 years. Robbie resides in Cheyenne, WY.

The Wyoming SRC continues to address vacancies within the Business, Industry, and Labor representation category. During 2025, the Governor approved the appointments of Tehla Bates Stayer and Cody Esterly to the Council, strengthening employer and workforce perspectives. Both appointees are completing final appointment requirements, including execution of the Oath of Office, in coordination with the Governor's Office. The SRC will continue recruitment efforts to fill remaining vacancies consistent with statutory membership requirements.

The Governor's Office issued letters to Genesis Lucero and Jolene Cummings notifying them of their immediate removal from the Wyoming State Rehabilitation Council for failure to meet participation requirements of the Council.

Following these changes and the completion of pending appointments, the Wyoming SRC will have 19 active members, representing an increase of four members compared to the previous year. This growth reflects continued progress toward strengthening Council capacity and maintaining required representation to support its advisory role.

Throughout 2025, the SRC continued to strengthen its membership following a period of transition, with a renewed focus on representation, accessibility, and meaningful participation. Investments in accommodations such as ASL interpretation supported active engagement by members with disabilities and reinforced the Council's role as an effective advisory body.

