NEVADA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
STATE PLAN COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Department of Employment, Training & Rehabilitation

January 10, 2012

Vocational Rehabilitation
1325 Corporate Blvd.
Reno, NV

MEMBERS PRESENT
Maureen Cole
Robin Hall-Walker
Sheena Kaufman
Jack Mayes
Scott Youngs, Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT
Steve Chartrand
Kate Osti

GUESTS:
Marcia Ferrell, transcriptionist

STAFF:
Janice John, Deputy Administrator, Program Services
Melaine Mason, Deputy Administrator, Operations
Mechelle Merrill, Rehabilitation Chief
Bill Boster, Rehabilitation District Manager
Dee Dee Bossart, Rehabilitation Supervisor
Melissa Starr, Management Analyst I
Beth Talcott, Administrative Assistant

EXHIBITS:

- 2012 Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) approved State Plan
- 2013 State Plan requirements planning chart
- 2010 Statewide Needs Assessment Report
- 2010 Statewide Needs Assessment Summary Report
- UNR General Client Satisfaction Survey 2011, report
- UNR Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) Satisfaction Survey 2011, report
- UNR Transition Student Satisfaction Survey 2011, report
- General Client, OIB and Transition Student Executive Summaries
- UNR Customer Satisfaction Survey, Power Point Presentation
- 2012 State Plan Goals, Strategies and Indicators
- FFY 11 and FFY 12 to date Goals Progress Data Tables

I. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**
No public comments were made

II. **ROLL CALL AND CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM**
Scott Youngs called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m.

Melissa Starr read the roll call and verified that a quorum was present.

III. **VERIFICATION OF POSTING**

Melissa verified that the posting was accomplished on time and according to open meeting law.

IV. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Scott welcomed all those attending and asked everyone to state their name and employment associations.

V. **DISCUSSION/REVIEW OF STATE PLAN AND REHABILITATION ACT/REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (RSA) REQUIREMENTS**

Maureen Cole noted everyone present had received their meeting packets with time to read through all the materials. She said the requirements for the State Plan as required by the Rehabilitation Act 1973 and the part that was shaded was an excerpt from the Division's 2012 State Plan as of how they had addressed the goals, strategies and indicators.

These are the items that the division had an opportunity to make some revisions to in the upcoming year. We use 2011 data in 2012, to make a plan for 2013. The State Plan committee has looked towards the direction the Division would go, and some of the activities the Division did engage in, in response to each one of these requirement elements, how we did on those elements and to decide whether we need to tweak these items, or the course with what we have. There are both indicators and measurements that the Division uses to gauge how well we have accomplishment those goals or worked toward those goals. This is where the division recommends some changes to the state plan if that is the pleasure of the committee.

Jack Mayes commented the packet information was appreciated as it contained history and not just the goals and indicator abstract information. Jack asked if the committee would go through the Needs Assessment, client, transition and Older Individuals who are Blind reports.

Scott and Maureen discussed the progression and inclusion of agenda items five through seven as being inter-related with one another.

VI. **DISCUSSION/REVIEW OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT SCOPE OF WORK AND REHABILITATION ACT/RSA REQUIREMENTS**

VII. **DISCUSSION/REVIEW OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY INSTRUMENTS AND REHABILITATION ACT /RSA REQUIREMENTS**

Beginning with the General Client Satisfaction Survey:

Jack said he printed the executive summaries from the Satisfaction surveys as they contained good information including what clients enjoyed receiving the common services of counsel based

assessment, assistive technology, the transition vision devices. Assistive Technology was of some concern in the past.

Maureen added with regard to assistive technology we have in our Rehabilitation Automated Information system Of Nevada (RAISON) which is the electronic case management system we use, the Division have added in a couple of data elements at a closure of a case, and one of them was assistive technology needed or offered. The counselor has to check it yes or no, and if no you have to go to a box and justify that. Those services, the cases cannot close until those items have been addressed. So the counselors have all been trained on that. You do not obviously go it's the end of the road, but it kind of moves the assistive technology issue more to the forefront of everybody's thinking. I think down the road we will see a much better utilization of AT than perhaps we have in the past.

Jack remarked; which is great, because I think that has been one of the problems Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has not done a good job of telling its story and its successes.

Statistics and percentages were reported and after some calculations came up with 20 percent of the individuals served related to services received have accredited Vocational Rehabilitation with their employment. Then specifically some of the improvements clients suggested, more counselors with disability experience, customized job screenings, disability verification, and updates following from counselors, and he wondered if the Division has discussed these suggestions internally.

Maureen affirmed the Division has had these discussions. She said the statics are fair in that someone's perception is their reality. So if we are not telling the story of how well qualified our counselors are, then those perceptions are not necessarily based on fact.

Further on in the survey reports, there was a comment the Division should hire more individuals with disabilities as counselors, and I do not think anyone would argue with that however the Division has to hire off a list and we cannot discriminate and say we will hire you because you have a disability, we are not going to hire you because you do not. The Division does not want to get into that, the Division does make the best efforts possible, although there is always room for improvement, in trying to recruit people with a diverse background and experience.

Nevada is not the highest paying state nor has the highest benefits as other states and we have an economic climate right now that is not really conducive to families coming here. Most people, if they have a spouse or significant other are looking at how that other person is going to further their career and if they cannot find employment here, the counselors will not come here either, so we are really on an uphill slope that way.
But specifically to the qualification of the counselors, they are all well qualified. We have very high standards and nobody gets in without those standards or a clear path to get to those standards within a certain period of time. A counselor can enroll in a course of study, and with supervised training move up to the fully qualified training level, and they

often accomplish this.

Jack asked if one of the Division's counselors would identify a client that would make a good Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor, is there a track that they could get into to become a counselor.

Mechelle Merrill responded Yes, absolutely that can happen. Nevada does not have a local training program there is no university in Nevada that puts out rehabilitation graduates so this would be a distance situation. Both Mechelle and Janice John concurred that this possibility has not taken place as of yet.

Jack stated counselors from different cultural backgrounds can only help to reach those individuals with different cultural backgrounds and to help marking through word of mouth the positive attitudes and functions of the Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. He has experience this by hiring a Hispanic staff member, who has helped to positively market the services of the Nevada Disability Advocacy and Law Center (NDALC).

Jack then asked about the follow-up procedure. Maureen responded part of the Divisions problem is the way the rehabilitation act requires us to work on cases. Once a case is closed, and we really cannot spend resources on that individual unless they are willing to reopen their case. So it puts the onus maybe fairly or unfairly on the client to come back to us and say 'yeah, my case has been closed for a year but I'm struggling with this.' Then the Division can reopen that case, and address those needs. But we do not have a formal way of checking back with that individual, 6 months or year down the road.

Janice suggested adding a comment to the survey telling the clients if you are having any concerns please contact the VR office.

Older Individuals Who are Blind (OIB) Satisfaction Survey:
Jack stated the one theme he kept reading was the "Do not tell" theme. Clients do not know what options are available and if they do not ask the Counselor does not need to provide the information. He would like to encourage information given out throughout the time the client and counselor are working together towards a goal.

In the response to the survey one individual reported they couldn't read a test that was given to him, Jack was concerned why an accommodation had not been made.
Janice John responded with the older blind program, the goal is not employment. So I am actually not even sure why we would have assessment testing going on, normally the services we are going to provide are going to be low vision aid devices that will help them in their home, so why the aptitude test.

Maureen said or someone who has not worked for a while and received the suggestion to poke around the resource center came across a test and tried to take it without asking for an accommodation. Without a clear understanding of the situation, one can only make assumptions. Communications on both parts are essential.

Transitions Services Satisfaction Survey:
Jack was concerned over the statement in the Executive Summary in regards to conducting more surveys in February through April for clients who received services between October of 2010 and September of 2011.

Maureen commented Dr. Dahir has discussed doing the Satisfaction Surveys every quarter rather than annually. Melissa Starr added the next survey will cover the first quarter through April 2011, then May 2011 through September 2011. The report will still say October 2010 through September 2011 that is the whole fiscal year.

Jack voiced concern on the percentage of Transition Students who would not refer others to the Vocational Services. Janice said she wonders about the students with disabilities, they have a hard time identifying themselves as a student with a disability, so why would they advertise of market to other individuals this would be a disclosing issue.

Mechelle added part of the answer is in the period of time that this survey was conducted it was before the Division had a specific Transition Counselor set up at Shoppers Square in the north. Since this is a northeastern response. She believes that is one that we will accept is the north services were not as effective as they were in the south, now the Division expects to see a vast improvement.

Scott asked if anyone had information to add to the Needs Assessment.

Maureen began in the Division's Needs Assessment, the Division is addressing those identified needs, are working toward resolving those issues. The frustrating thing the Division sees year after year is the issue of transportation and particularly in the rural areas, in this economy it seems like it is getting worse instead of better. I do not know if we have a good response to that, because it is really an issue that is larger than Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). I know when we were out in the Elko area, and we were talking about transportation, which is really a barrier to employment out there, if you live anywhere outside of Elko, Spring Creek or any of those outlying areas, there is a bus that comes by about 8 o'clock in the morning, and goes home about 4 in the afternoon. If you work 8:00 to 5:00, that's of no service to you at all and there is no alternative.

There was a discussion between Jack, Scott, Mechelle, Robin Hall-Walker and Sheena Kaufman about the possibility of a disabled client being helped to provide transportation to fill the gap. The idea is supportable as long as it is for a for-profit business and that business will be able to sustain maintenance on the vehicle(s) and insurance. In the past these have been barriers to keeping individuals self-employed.

Jack mentioned another concern having to do with available data sources. There is a statement that says patterns of increasing number of applicants is evident in the South and North, while the rural areas have demonstrated no growth despite an increase in the population. This pattern suggests the need to explore the reasons applicant growth is not taking place in the rural areas.

Bill Boster interjected; it is difficult -- one of the difficulties in the rural areas is the travel time for a counselor, especially in the Elko office when you're going to Wells, or you're going to Jackpot, places like that. And you're out of the office for all day.

Janice said another point to think about in those areas, as you pointed out, they're moving with employment, and they may not need our services. So while people coming into the office, they're coming in and already have jobs related to mining, so didn't need our services. So I think that's a little bit of a sign, too.

Jack added, the other thing was two underserved groups are Hispanics and Asians, I mean I know that the Asian community in Las Vegas is just huge. Jack asked if the Division have any Asian outreach in the South.

Janice replied, I do not think that we have done a good enough job on that area. We have Hispanic folks that go through the Hispanic employment conferences yearly and we always have a table and we have folks that participate in that, so we do a lot of outreach. And we have gone to Hispanic chamber of commerce as well, and would like to see more done in the Asian communities. The last event someone went to said the Asian, Hispanic are coming together, it had some kind of a function that would be a good place to market the Division

Sheena Kaufman added a few items regarding underserved groups in the North and South and Rural areas. She said she was not sure if the part of the survey where it talks about individuals with less severe disabilities was not particularly sure if that can be attributed to the Division or counselors over coding to get to a significantly disabled or most significantly disabled. I know that in the south there are a lot of cases that are just kind of assistive technology, not long-term based cases, and those are just disabled coded cases. A lot of the time when we spend on cases and how long it takes for us to provide services, we end up thinking and coding significantly disabled when it is six months, in terms of the time about for the services to be provided.

For example, I had a couple clients who came and just needed hearing aids in that case they do not need multiple services over an extended period of time but I may have coded them significantly disabled because it takes six months to get them hearing aids from the provider. So I think that may be an issue on that issue. Sheena was not sure if that was true in the North or in the Rural areas but in terms of timing of services that may contribute to not having a lot of less severe disabilities.

Scott Youngs asked if there was a template for coding the most severe disabilities, and if there was a time frame for clients to receive services or assistive technology.

Sheena responded, when we code clients we look at functional limitations in terms of six different areas, we also try to estimate how many services the client will need and if they will require them over an extended period of time. The time frame is usually six months. And multiple services that have to be at least two major services.

Maureen stated the coding matters in terms of statistical accuracy and for planning purposes. There is a pretty good element of subjectivity in doing it. To speak to the larger issue of consistency, that is something that the Division has been hearing about since the Needs Assessment came out a few years ago, it is something the Division is really working on actively to try to implement that consistency across the state, while recognizing that there are different needs, pushes and pulls on the programs in different areas. But in terms of how do we analyze a client's situation, and come to a relatively similar decision about that is a training issue, and we have been working on that.

Janice added the Division has a Quality Assurance (QA) team now has made a huge difference, now the team is training statewide not just for the south not just for the north so every counselor is receiving the same information. The team does assessments, and case reviews and they train to what they see in each case. If there is a concern or problem or consistent coding issues, the Division is going to address those. The QA team has provided several trainings this year, we are hopeful we will be looking much more consistent across the state with this type of training implementation.

VIII. DISCUSSION/REVIEW OF FFY 2012 STATE PLAN GOALS

Maureen Cole began, the exhibit you are looking at are the goals, the strategies and the indicators that we've used in the current year's plan, last year. These are some of the items that we will bring up for consideration by the committee for revision or the new state plan. Maureen said her recommendation would be to stick with the goals for a while longer, see if we're achieving those over a reasonable period of time. The strategies and indicators are items that can be reasonably tweaked for a short period of time. Working towards the larger goal takes some time and must exist before you begin to see the change you are heading towards.

Maureen stated the good news on this is the division sees some maturing on investments that were placed on transition students. Goal number one, is currently emphasizing is currently emphasizing potential of students with disabilities, and improved transition from school to work, and school to post-secondary education. This is a very worthy goal, and all the research tells us that individuals who are attached to the workforce early on are more likely to become life-long employees or business owners. The longer you wait for that attachment, the less likely is a happen. This is a national Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) goal and emphasizes serving transition students and getting them into quality employment, either directly out of school with some sort of training, or through a post-secondary program of education, and then on to employment. The division has devoted a lot of time and energy in to trying to bolster that program to engage kids, to engage the school district with the division, and to emphasize the importance of leaving school with a plan in mind. Maureen suggested the committee go through the strategies and see if they want to add or change anything in terms of the strategies, and then depending on how that turns out talk about indicators.

IX. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO ESTABLISH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FFY 2013 STAE PLAN GOALS

Scott asked the committee if they wanted to create a bigger scope in any major changes to the language of the goals. After much discussion from everyone present, the following is what was approved by the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council State Plan Committee.

Goal 1:

Emphasize the employment potential of students with disabilities, and improve transition from school to work and school to post-secondary education.

Strategies:

- Explore the utilization of social and Web-based media as a communication tool.
- Improve special outreach efforts to Transition Students, i.e. camps, Transition Summit Leadership trainings.
- Encourage participation of successful transition students in the referral and outreach activities of other students (peer support mechanism).
- Serve more Transition Students by developing referral mechanisms with secondary schools and post-secondary institutions.
- Comparison to states with similar population and demographics, and in accordance with the recommendations of the Needs Assessment.
- Identification of students that have fallen out of Vocational Rehabilitation programs.
- Creative marketing to schools and students.
- ~~Continue~~ Maintain Statewide "Transition Connect" Expansion Project.
- Increased communication between Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Special Education Teachers and 504 Coordinators.
- Educating teachers and parents regarding the Vocational Rehabilitation process, programs and referral services.
- Vocational rehabilitation representatives to participate with parent/teacher Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) conferences.
- Consider Assistive Technology in relation to this goal.

Indicators:

- Increase enrollment by Transition Students in the Program Services of the Division.
- The Division's performance regarding increased enrollment in FFY 2012 will equal or exceed FFY 2011 performance levels.
- Increase competitive employment outcomes for Transition Students. The Division's performance regarding increased competitive employment outcomes in FFY 2012 will equal or exceed FFY 2011 performance levels.
- Increase post-secondary educational services for Transition Students. The Division's performance regarding increased post-secondary educational services in FFY 2012 will equal or exceed FFY 2011 performance levels.

Jack Mayes moved to accept the changes to Goal #1 strategies.
Robin Hall-Walker seconded. Motion passed

Goal 2:

Extend outreach efforts toward diverse populations, specifically, eligible individuals with autism, developmental, cognitive and mental health disabilities.

Strategies:

- Continue marketing efforts with Mental Health hospitals, Mental Health service providers, SSI and State Welfare.
- Partner with Mental Health service providers and Community Rehabilitation Training Centers (CTC's).
- Partner with Department of Health and Human Services, State commissions related to populations concerned with autism, developmental disabilities, cognitive and mental health disabilities.
- Partner with advocacy groups.
- Consider Assistive Technology in relation to this goal.
- Participate in Disability Awareness Month activities.

Indicators:

- Increase enrollment by eligible individuals with autism, developmental, cognitive and mental health disabilities. The Division's performance to increase enrollment by eligible individuals with autism, developmental, cognitive and mental health disabilities in FFY 2012 will equal or exceed FFY 2011 performance levels.
- Report indicators by region.

Robin Hall-Walker moved to accept the changes in both Goal number two and accompanying strategies as listed.

Jack Mayes seconded. Motion passed

Goal 3:

Extend outreach efforts toward ethnically diverse populations, specifically minority populations with disabilities represented in Nevada's workforce.

Strategies:

- Recruit bilingual and/or bicultural staff.
- Increase marketing and participation efforts with ethnically diverse populations and media, and specifically to Latino and Asian populations.
- Consider Assistive Technology in relation to this goal.
- Collaborate with minority groups with program development and program referrals.
- Participate in appropriate cultural activities or events.
- Ensure documents are available in other languages as needed.

Indicators:

- Increase enrollment by minority populations representative of Nevada's minority workforce. The Division's performance regarding increased enrollment by minority populations in FFY 2012 will equal or exceed FFY 2011 performance levels. Report data by race and ethnicity statewide.
- ~~Collaborate with minority groups with program development and program referrals.~~

Robin Hall-Walker moved to accept all changes and additions to Goal number three. Jack Mayes seconded. Motion passed

Goal 4:

Work together and share resources with state, private, non-profit agencies to leverage resources and coordinate benefit opportunities in order to maximize the overall employment outcomes.

Strategies:

- Document dollars utilized as comparable benefits.
- Identify sources of benefits on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).
- Identify federally matched dollars.
- Formalize third-party ~~In Kind~~ match.
- Strengthen relations to maximize matching fund opportunities.
- Provide In-service training ~~opportunity in-house~~ regarding ~~on~~ how to identify matching funds –opportunities~~and In Kind Funds~~.

~~Work with youth with disabilities, the Nevada Department of Education, local educationauthorities, parent organizations and families to encourage early discussions with students about the expectations of employment and their skills, abilities, and talents that will empower them to achieve self-sufficiency.~~

Indicators:

- Document dollars captured in collaborative efforts and document that the training is held.

Jack Mayes moved to approve goal number four with the revisions to the strategies. Robin Hall-Walker seconded. Motion passed.

Goal 5:

Emphasize the employment potential of applicants and eligible persons receiving ~~services and~~ Supported Employment services.

Strategies:

- Partner with other public and private State entities that provide Supported Employment.
- Expand communication and training to staff, State Rehabilitation Council members and consumers on Supported Employment.

- Consider Assistive Technology in relation to this goal.
- Identify and support best practices that encourage high-wage/career track employment.
- Utilize the VR Business Development Manager to improve Supported Employment services outcomes.

Indicators:

- Increase the number of supported employment consumers that close successfully, earning at least the federal minimum wage. The Division's performance regarding an increase in the number of supported employment consumers that close successfully in FFY 2012 will equal or exceed FFY 2011 performance levels.

Robin Hall-Walker moved to accept goal number five with the stated changes. Jack Mayes seconded. Motion passed.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Maureen Cole asked the Committee if they would feel comfortable having Melissa and the rest of the staff going through the written part of the State Plan, making the appropriate date and approved changes.

She asked of the State Plan attachment 4.8 B 3 is supposed to be a list of cooperative agreements with non-profit organizations, and we have, as someone else pointed out, quite a long list of folks. She was not positive that all of those listed are nonprofit organizations as many of them are our job developers are for-profit. So perhaps we update that information, because there may be other truly non-profit organizations that the division doing business with. Some organizations have changed their name or merged with other organizations, so we just would like to make those kinds of updates. We will then bring that draft to the full council at the May NSRC meeting if that is acceptable, we can certainly take that on.

Scott responded with affirmative nods from all those present, Maureen's proposal of cleaning up and updating the State Plan was acceptable.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

At 12 o'clock.

Edited By:

Melissa Starr, MA II, NSRC Liaison

Approved By:

Scott Youngs, Chair