

State Rehabilitation Council

Quarterly Meeting

Friday, March 4, 2011

New Mexico DVR San Mateo Office

5301 Central NE, Suite 1600

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108

Committee Meetings – 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Quarterly Meeting - 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

SRO Meeting 4:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Members present:

Bernadine Chavez
Ava Gutierrez
Yvonne Hart
Richard Dennis Jirón
Andrew MacRae
Sarah Michaud
Rosemarie Ortiz
Marcia Prophet
Gilberto Romero
Louise Williams

Members absent:

Jeffrey Diamond
Alex Martinez
Treva Roanhorse

Guests present:

Lavern Lizer for Treva
Roanhorse

DVR Staff present:

Ralph Vigil
Krista Martinez
Rich Smith

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Ms. Bernadine Chavez, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. She welcomed everyone to the Quarterly meeting of the NMDVR State Rehabilitation Council. Ms. Krista Martinez called the roll. There was a quorum.

II. Action Items

A. Approval of Agenda

Chairperson Bernadine Chavez asked Council members to review the agenda. Ms. Louise Williams motioned to accept the agenda as written. Mr. Richard Jirón seconded the motion. The motion carried.

B. Approval of Minutes – December 10, 2010

Chairperson Bernadine Chavez asked Council members to review the minutes from the December 10, 2010 meeting. Members asked that acronyms be spelled out. Ms. Louise Williams motioned to accept the minutes as written. Ms. Ava Gutierrez seconded the motion. Mr. Richard Jirón abstained. The motion carried.

III. SRC Chairperson's Report – Bernadine Chavez

Chairperson Bernadine Chavez reported that February 22nd was Disability Rights Awareness Day (DRAD) at the State Capitol. Mr. Andrew MacRae reported that on Monday February 21st participants stayed at the Courtyard Marriott. Funds were made available from the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC) through The Arc of New Mexico for interested parties to travel to Santa Fe and participate in DRAD day events. On Monday there were workshops available where legislative information was shared and a lot of advocacy took place. On Tuesday, people met at the Roundhouse where different disability agencies and interested parties had exhibits and tables with information available to the public. Awards were given to Senators Tim Jennings and Mary Kay Papen for their work for persons with disabilities. An estimated 200+ people were in attendance. Ms. Yvonne Hart stated that the theme for this year was the "Face of Disability". Photos were taken of those persons who self identified with disability. Big posters were made so that they could be seen in the Governor's office and the Legislature.

Chairperson Bernadine Chavez reported on activities that have taken place during the current legislative session. Senate Bill 158 was introduced. This bill would have eliminated some agencies and advisory councils including the Governor's Commission on Disability and the Brain Injury Advisory Council. The bill was amended to retain both entities but appears to have failed. House Bill 91 was a bill sponsored to transfer approximately \$300,000 of specialized funds from the Brain Injury Fund to the state general fund to meet the current state of spending. It is currently in Committee.

Ms. Chavez reported that the 2010 SRC Annual Report was completed and was sent to the Rehabilitation Services Administration, Governor Susana Martinez and Department of Education Secretary Hanna Skandera. She thanked Sarah Michaud and the State Plan, Report and Outreach (SRO) Committee and Rich Smith for their work on the SRC Annual Report. The SRC met the federal requirement of the submission of their annual report. The SRC goal is to make the Annual Report a living and breathing document that belongs to the SRC. As the SRC moves forward, there will be more involvement from each member as goals are identified and recommendations are given to the agency. By the end of the year, the SRC will have a product that really belongs to the

SRC and that can be used to educate the public about DVR. Mr. Richard Jirón requested that an electronic copy of the SRC annual report be sent to all members.

IV. Director's Report – Ralph Vigil

Mr. Ralph Vigil, Acting Director for the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, reported on various areas including the state budget, the federal budget, order of selection, current staff vacancies and office closures.

For Fiscal Year 12 (FY12), which begins July 1, 2011, DVR kept a flat budget amount from the current fiscal year including the cuts experienced early in the fiscal year. There was a \$7,000 reduction. The funds going to the Centers for Independent Living were greatly reduced. The Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) recommendation was to reduce the General Fund dollars and not those funds with a Federal match. This resulted in a loss of around \$125,000 to four centers. The Executive recommendation was more favorable and had no reductions. The LFC recommendation was adopted. The House has passed their funding bill and is awaiting Senate and Executive review. Another probable change is to state employee Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) contributions. General fund budgets are likely to be reduced by approximately 1.5% which will then be paid by the employees. The State will continue to monitor state revenues throughout the fiscal year.

At the federal level, there is a potential for federal government shut down. The House passed a bill that introduced significant reductions. The Senate supported that bill which keeps Federal government running for another couple of weeks. Although Vocational Rehabilitation does not face a huge reduction, programs such as Supported Employment could possibly be eliminated. This means that approximately \$244,500 program costs would have to be absorbed by the agency. The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation continually monitors all activity which includes the possibility of reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and/or the Rehabilitation Act.

DVR currently has a 20% vacancy rate, with a 21% vacancy rate in the counselor ranks. The Quail, Las Cruces, Rio Rancho and Roswell offices have experienced a support staff shortage. DVR will request permission to fill support staff positions after the current legislative session ends. In the meantime, the challenge of processing authorizations and payments and other documents is being met by various methods. Current support staff are helping to cover offices with no support staff and some rehab techs who have received their degrees are doing some case service work.

Order of Selection was implemented in New Mexico on February 14, 2011. Due to budget cuts, DVR lost \$3 million which was previously offset by stimulus monies. Since the stimulus monies have been spent, DVR had to set up a mechanism to slow down spending. This slow down of spending is what Order of Selection does. It enables DVR to control how much it is spending. Criteria was established on how New Mexico defines disability and training was provided to field staff. Ms. Judy LeJeune headed up a work group including client data unit staff and field staff. They developed the

following criteria: Category 1 consists of persons who are most significantly disabled, Category 2 consists of persons who are significantly disabled, and Category 3 consists of persons with a disability. Applicants not currently being served will be placed on a waiting list. Applicants will be removed from the waiting list by priority group in the order of date of application. As of March 2nd, there were 792 on the waiting list. On average, 200 IPEs are written per month. Between February 1st through 14th, there were 392 IPEs written. The work group has forecasted that by April 1st DVR will probably release some people off the waiting list. Category 1, Most significantly disabled (MSD) will most likely be opened up and released first. Category 2, significantly disabled (SD) is the largest population with Category 3, persons with a disability (D) being the smallest population.

Mr. Vigil reported that information regarding Order of Selection is available on the DVRGETSJOBS website. Ms. Chavez clarified that for applicants not in category one, Information and Referral will refer them to other employment entities. Mr. Vigil stated that Counselors are making the disability determination decisions and Program Managers will take a lead in any appeals. Ms. Yvonne Hart asked if there was a mechanism to deal with a participant on a waiting list experiencing a progression in disability. Mr. Vigil stated that the Program Manager will be critical for moving an applicant to a different priority group with good justification. He also stated that a reminder letter will go out within six months asking applicants if they want to remain on the waiting list.

Ms. Chavez thanked Mr. Vigil for his report and requested that DVR provide the SRC with some statistical information at future meetings.

V. SRC Committee Structure – Bernadine Chavez

Ms. Bernadine Chavez reported on the SRC Committee structure. She stated that at the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) review meeting in April of 2010, RSA staff stressed that they want to see partnership and collaboration between the SRC's and the VR agencies. The SRC's structure, the economic climate and the changes within the agency has been discussed at previous SRC meetings. The current SRC meeting structure has included holding Committee meetings in the morning and the full Council meeting in the afternoon. However, several members have recently not been participating in Committee meetings. The SRC needs to look at improving its structure, function and member commitment. The SRC also needs to look at Governor Martinez's and DVR's priorities as well as the RSA mandates. It needs to stick to its mission and focus on its goals.

Several suggestions were made and comments were made about other Councils and Commissions. The New Mexico Commission for the Blind and some states have done away with Committees and have instead set up work groups. Suggestions were made to hold a full day Council meeting and to change the business meeting to the morning session and Committee meetings to the afternoon session. The SRC should consider holding Committee meetings in separate spaces such as DVR field offices or offices of

DVR and SRC partners to enable concentration on Committee work. The SRC should also be able to communicate regularly regarding its Committee and full Council work. Committee work should be informal and flexible. Everyone recognized that their time is precious and everyone wants their work to be meaningful and valuable. The SRC needs to find a format that works so that it can deal with emerging issues. All members, in consideration of their personal circumstances and workloads, need to commit to seeing it through.

Mr. Gilberto Romero commented that the purpose of Committees was intended for design and implementation to allow the SRC to look at an issue in depth. Ms. Bernadine Chavez asked for suggestions on how to encourage SRC members that never attend committee meetings to participate in future meetings. She mentioned that the Commission for the Blind utilizes a working lunch. They collect money from all members and send out for pizza. She stated that a survey will be sent out to all members soliciting their ideas, comments and suggestions for SRC improvement.

VI. Consumer Satisfaction Survey and Needs Assessment – Sarah Michaud

Ms. Sarah Michaud provided an update regarding the consumer satisfaction survey and needs assessment. The Consumer Satisfaction, Agency Outcomes and Performance (CSAOP) Committee is currently working to identify a vendor so they can move forward with completing the survey. The Committee met earlier to review the work done to create the survey instrument. They committed to using a version similar to New York's current instrument. They feel that it asks the necessary questions and builds on the previous survey while highlighting more of the specifics. They will continue to tailor the instrument to meet the specific needs of New Mexico.

Ms. Michaud stated that every SRC is required to do an Annual Report. The CSAOP Committee will make the report an ongoing topic of discussion so that the Committee is always aware of SRC goals and the Annual Report continues to be the SRC's living document.

Ms. Bernadine Chavez asked Mr. Ralph Vigil about the possibility of having a website or a place on DVR's website for the public to be able to access information regarding the SRC and its activities.

VII. Leadership Institute for Tomorrow "LIFT" – Leslie White

Ms. Leslie White, NM DVR's Staff Development Coordinator, presented a powerpoint presentation regarding the agency's Leadership Institute for Tomorrow "LIFT" program. Feedback received from a 2008 demographic survey of DVR staff revealed that many

current DVR staff are ready to retire. With current budget cuts, hiring freezes, furloughs and future potential budget cuts the agency thought it best to invest in its staff.

LIFT is DVR's voluntary career development and succession planning program. LIFT's philosophy is designed to balance organizational needs with individual career growth opportunities. The strategic goals were to ensure continued growth and advancement and job satisfaction for DVR employees and to provide the agency with a reliable supply of well trained qualified staff to provide the most effective services to New Mexicans with disabilities.

The core curriculum is Leadership and Staff Development, Project Management and Organizational Change, the Context of Rehabilitation Leadership and the Rewards of Rehabilitation Leadership. There are three tracks that staff can choose if they become a LIFT associate. They can choose to attend the Supervisory Academy, choose a degree program or they can choose individualized innovative growth opportunities.

The LIFT program received 34 applications for 22 slots for selected associates. A panel reviewed applications and made recommendations to Ralph. Each LIFT associate had a coach to help them develop an IDP if needed. The current coaches are the Steering Committee members. The next round of coaches will be the current cohorts which will ensure a self-sustaining program.

The whole program lasts about a year and a half. The University of Arkansas has been an awesome partner and Co-managers in helping LIFT succeed. The new LIFT website: <http://LIFT> has helpful information regarding the LIFT program. Ms. Leslie White thanked Mr. Ralph Vigil for his continued support. She stated that she has been very pleased with the program as it has exceeded her expectations greatly.

On behalf of the SRC, Ms. Bernadine Chavez thanked Ms. White for her presentation.

VIII. Comments from Public/DVR Staff/Members

Ms. Sarah Michaud reported that the Pueblo of Jemez is hosting their 13th Annual Disability Awareness Conference in the Pueblo of Jemez Youth Center from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on March 13th. She invited the entire SRC to participate. Lunch will be provided.

Mr. Gilberto Romero announced that his Public Health Updates radio program will air its last program at the end of April. He stated that he was grateful to DVR for being a partner for this program and especially thanked Mr. Ralph Vigil for his support during these hard economic times. He announced that he will be starting a new ½ hour weekly program called "Plain Crazy". He invited everyone to listen in.

Ms. Rosemarie Ortiz reported that the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC) is currently in the process of developing their 5 year plan. She stated that the DDPC will be soliciting ideas, concept papers and project ideas. She invited SRC

members to participate in a survey that will be sent out as the DDPC would appreciate any information received.

Ms. Bernadine Chavez reminded members that she would send out a survey regarding members ideas and suggestions for future SRC work and structure. She thanked Lavern for substituting for Treva and asked her to send Treva the SRC's regards.

IX. Other Business

Ms. Bernadine Chavez announced that the next meeting would be held in Jemez on Friday, June 24th.

X. Adjournment

Mr. Gilberto Romero motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Yvonne Hart seconded the motion. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.