

## **State Rehabilitation Council**

Quarterly Meeting

Friday, June 24, 2011

Jemez Community Resource Center

129C Canal Street

Jemez Pueblo, New Mexico 87024

New Member Orientation – 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Quarterly Meeting - 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

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### **Members present:**

Bernadine Chavez  
Jeffrey Diamond  
Ava Gutierrez  
Richard Dennis Jirón  
Andrew MacRae  
Alex Martinez  
Sarah Michaud  
Rosemarie Ortiz  
Marcia Prophet  
Treva Roanhorse  
Gilberto Romero  
Louise Williams

### **Members absent:**

Yvonne Hart

### **Guests present:**

Alice Rogers, Jemez VR Council  
Co-Chair  
Denise Tierney, Jemez VR  
Council member  
John Barncastle

### **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 1:13 p.m. She welcomed everyone to the SRC Quarterly meeting. Ms. Sarah Michaud, Vice-Chairperson, welcomed everyone to Jemez. She announced that she was pleased to host the meeting and invited members of the Jemez Vocational Rehabilitation Council to attend and observe a New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation State Rehabilitation Council meeting. Ms. Chavez welcomed and introduced Mr. Jeff Diamond as the newest SRC member and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Krista Martinez called the roll. There was a quorum.

## **II. Action Items**

### **A. Approval of Agenda**

Chairperson Bernadine Chavez asked members to review the agenda. Mr. Jeff Diamond motioned to accept the agenda as written. Ms. Rosemarie Ortiz seconded the motion. The motion carried.

### **B. Approval of Minutes – March 4, 2011**

Chairperson Bernadine Chavez asked members to review the minutes from the March 4, 2011 meeting. Ms. Louise Williams motioned to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Alex Martinez seconded the motion. Mr. Jeff Diamond abstained. The motion carried.

### **C. Approval of 2012 NM DVR State Plan**

Mr. Ralph Vigil, Acting Director for New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, reported that this year's State Plan has very few changes, the biggest being the implementation of Order of Selection. The Agency went out for public comment.

Ms. Treva Roanhorse motioned to accept the state plan. Mr. Andrew MacRae seconded the motion. There was a review of the State Plan documents and discussion followed with recommended changes. Ms. Roanhorse amended her motion to accept the state plan with recommended changes. Mr. MacRae seconded the amended motion. The motion carried.

Mr. Vigil stated that he missed Mr. Jirón and appreciated all his hard work over the years working on the State Plan. He thanked Mr. Rich Smith and Ms. Krista Martinez for their help with this year's hearing and organization of documents. He acknowledged that staffing issues, responding to a Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) review and entering into an Order of Selection all delayed action on the State Plan. He also mentioned that a Comprehensive Needs Assessment is traditionally done tri-annually, usually during the summer and fall months. The assessment will be implemented this year but it will be completed later than usual.

Entering into an Order of Selection has had definite implications for the agency and has forced NMDVR to look at production expectations. Some of NMDVR's goals have been decreased in accordance with capacity at this point.

There were some minor changes to the Manual of Operating procedures in order to remain in compliance with Federal Regulations. NMDVR had a review by RSA in April of 2010. RSA reviewers took a look at the Agency's Order of Selection language and

the criteria used for eligibility. NMDVR has done some clean-up of the language but there are some central themes that have remained constant.

Mr. Jeff Diamond asked if some of the vacant positions in the southeast offices such as Carlsbad, Roswell and Hobbs that are also short staffed will be filled anytime soon. Mr. Vigil said that some will be filled. In the first round of hiring, at least two will be in Roswell – one support staff and one counselor to handle Artesia.

In the State plan, a 22% vacancy rate at the agency and in counselor ranks was listed. The Agency goal is to reduce that to less than 15%. Although NMDVR will not be at an optimal level of staffing, with Order of Selection they will be more in line with capacity and services will be more manageable. NMDVR is looking at all kinds of factors including demographics and office operations and seeing where costs can be reduced and services to the public can be maximized.

Ms. Sarah Michaud reviewed the SRC sections of the State Plan (4.2). She was very pleased to see the response about considering reconstituting the Native America liaison program (NALP) when the budget allows. It is very important purpose to reach out to the 19 pueblos in New Mexico. She mentioned that the language should probably be changed to reflect that both directors of the Section 121 American Indian and Navajo Nation Rehabilitation Programs in New Mexico are serving on the SRC.

Mr. Vigil stated that the language can be corrected. He thought the original intent was to note the partnership and that two directors currently serve on the SRC. He reiterated that NMDVR values their relationship with partners who are serving the Native American community. Ms. Bernadine Chavez stated that this should be tracked as a formal recommendation to the Agency in the SRC Annual Report. Mr. Vigil and Ms. Chavez stated that the NMDVR and SRC support having as many representatives from 121 programs as possible.

### **III. SRC Chairperson's Report – Bernadine Chavez**

Ms. Bernadine Chavez thanked Mr. Ralph Vigil for giving her the opportunity to go to the CSAVR conference. She attended the Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils meeting on Sunday before the conference. She reported that it was good to meet members of other SRCs where she discovered that some SRCs meet monthly, others meet quarterly. She was interested to see the makeup of the SRCs, how they do their by-laws, the way they do their business and how they support and partner with the VR agency.

Mr. John Fullinwider, NMDVR Program Manager who works out of the Rio Rancho office, and Ms. Bernadine Chavez did some "hill" visits which was very interesting. Ms. Chavez described the conference as a worthwhile experience. She purchased a book put out by the Institute of Rehabilitation Issues which is a handbook for SRCs and VRs. She purchased one for NM DVR staff use. It gives some suggestions and gives examples of how other Rehabilitation Councils do business and look at their roles. She

stated that she would like to explore using this book with staff to make our work better. She thinks every chair and every agency should have a copy and should use it to improve how SRCs do business such as By-laws, committee structure and work and minutes.

The Coalition met with RSA Commissioner Lynnae Rutledge. Commissioner Rutledge was very supportive of the Council's work and thanked all SRCs and felt that the Councils were a very important part of the agency. She was the only Federal person at the meeting on Sunday and she talked with SRCs about their interaction with their VR Agency. Statewide Independent Living Centers (SILCs) were discussed. Expiration of terms and members continuing to serve were items she was clear about as they cannot be paid per diem if their terms have expired. Order of Selection was also discussed. It looks like most SRCs are trying to support the Agencies coming out of Order of Selection. The Councils discussed common problems such as their state's Governors taking too long to appoint members.

Ms. Chavez reported that she sent out a survey monkey request to SRC members and received eight responses. She thanked those that took the time to fill it out.

Mr. Jeff Diamond asked about the structure of NMDVR. Mr. Vigil explained that NMDVR is heavily federally funded and has received smaller budget cuts than other state general funded agencies. NMDVR is generally viewed favorably. Mr. Diamond also asked how to recommend persons interested in serving on the SRC. Mr. Vigil explained that the Executive Office has their own procedure. Mr. Gilberto Romero suggested that there should be a pool of people. He stated that he felt that his duty as a member of the SRC is also recruitment. Mr. Alex Martinez suggested developing a standard talking points list. There was a discussion about building around the points that will be addressed during this administration.

Ms. Treva Roanhorse made a motion that the three Committees revisit the SRC's goals and objectives and tie into the Executive's focus. Mr. Gilberto Romero seconded the motion. Mr. Alex Martinez suggested that the SRC highlight key points of annual report when approaching the Executive.

Mr. Richard Jirón stated that SRC members have a free training opportunity provided by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Ms. Chavez stated that at the Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils meeting, members from some SRCs stated that they have members sign contracts agreeing to these types of commitments and participation. After much discussion, Ms. Treva Roanhorse acknowledged that the SRC needs fully develop their plan first. She withdrew her motion.

Mr. Jeff Diamond made a motion to have a resolution that members should voluntarily complete the training by a certain date. Discussion followed regarding the training. After hearing other member's comments, Jeff Diamond withdrew his motion. Ms. Chavez asked Ms. Martinez to resend the RSA online training information. She also asked Mr. Alex Martinez, Ms. Louise Williams and Mr. Richard Jirón to review items for change on the by-laws and then list as an action item at the next meeting.

#### **IV. Director's Report – Ralph Vigil**

Mr. Ralph Vigil gave an update report on Order of Selection which was implemented in February 2011. There are currently 1431 on the waiting list. The data changes daily as anyone who wants to apply can do so. Once a person is determined eligible then they are assigned to a priority group. Training had been provided to counselors and staff in January on making diagnostic evaluations. Program Managers are doing much tracking and analysis to be able to manage resources wisely.

Members discussed their experiences in the field. Some participants receiving referrals seem to think that other entities will do what DVR cannot do right now. They don't seem to argue the issue of Order of Selection as there seems to be some level of acceptance. Members discussed a possible training issue with information and referral. Ms. Ava Gutierrez stated that an Information and Referral letter is sent out with the reason for the referral and what services will be provided. Both the client and referral source gets a copy of the letter. Mr. Richard Jirón stated that the clients will come to the referral agencies office with a different set of expectations.

Mr. Vigil discussed the reallocation process of unmatched funds to the states. The State VR notifies RSA that they cannot match their federal funds. Some states can access reallocation monies. CSAVR hopes that if not all monies can be matched that maybe a possible relaxing of match requirements (possibly affecting 121 programs) but allow money to still be spent in VR.

Mr. Vigil stated that the number of referrals is lower and the number of applicants has decreased. There may need to be a more aggressive outreach. As for the federal budget, there will be some cuts. Projects with Industry will be cut and training activities will be gone. The State budget is also experiencing a slight decrease.

NMDVRs target is to get everyone off the first priority waiting list. With future quarterly projections, there could still be future cuts. There will be a 1.75% state employee contribution increase which is still a cut considering there have been no pay increases for the past few years. Everything is established for this year and the Unemployment rate has improved. The Executive Branch has approved job fills which had been previously held up by Reductions in Force (RIFs) at the Public Education Department. NMDVR will be hiring a Program Manager to replace Nancy Schneider in the San Mateo Office. A Field Operations Director will be hired to replace Anthony Lujan. Several support positions will also be filled. Ms. Judy LeJeune is retiring in the fall and will leave a Field Operations Director position vacant. Roswell needs support staff. NMDVR will put in a new request in the next month or two. Overall, government has shrunk during Governor Martinez's administration.

Mr. Vigil reported that NMDVR has responded to the RSA review report. There were no findings on the program side, only recommendations. There were findings on the fiscal side and questions on how NMDVR does business. Contracts were established between NMDVR and the Federal Education Group (Fed Ed Group) and Ted Mueller

for technical assistance. NMDVR received a minor extension until June 3<sup>rd</sup> when the draft report was submitted.

Members discussed the possibility of reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. Vocational Rehabilitation may be funded under Title V as opposed to Title IV as previously funded. There is a possibility of aligning programs, looking at common measures and the way resources are utilized.

## **V. NM DVR and SRC reporting – Ralph Vigil**

Mr. Ralph Vigil discussed the NMDVR State Plan and Annual Reports. Traditionally, they had been sent out to hundreds but now they are a smaller format being sent electronically. The Annual report is developed by Mr. Rich Smith and has evolved into a tri-fold format. It is traditionally started around July and completed in time to present to the Legislative Finance Committee in October. The SRC Annual report covers the Federal Fiscal year from October 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup> and is due to RSA within 90 days of the close of the Federal Fiscal Year, generally by December 31<sup>st</sup>.

The NMDVR State Plan with its various sections (including section 4.2 which includes comments from the SRC) is provided to RSA to provide assurance that NMDVR is meeting federal requirements. The draft goes out for public comment is finalized after receiving public comment and is submitted to RSA by the end of June. NMDVR will start the process earlier next year.

The Needs Assessment survey is an instrument used to gain information regarding statewide needs and has been traditionally married to the Consumer Satisfaction survey. NMDVR contracts with an entity to conduct the survey and assessment. Last time, service status was surveyed and this time closed cases will be surveyed.

The NMDVR strategic plan is generally compiled during the summer months. RSA felt that it should parallel the state plan. However, the state plan does not allow for deviation as the strategic plan does.

The Economic Impact Study studies the state's return on investment. Mr. Bob Grassberger from New Mexico State University conducted a cost benefit analysis which determined that for every \$1 spent, \$5.63 is returned to the treasury in the form of contributions to the economy and tax base. A National Study will be undertaken (CSAVR).

Members discussed training and reviewed the LIFT presentation provided at the last meeting. Ms. Chavez suggested that Mr. Diamond talk with Ms. Gutierrez and discuss her participation with the LIFT program. Mr. Vigil discussed the partnership NMDVR has with the TACE Centers and Jeannie Miller, Director, on various projects and trainings.

Discussion followed regarding where to focus advocacy efforts especially when the target moves. Members discussed developing talking points and the prohibition of lobbying but having the ability to educate the public. Some states are sophisticated in their approach such as Utah, which has a strong coalition. The Commissions for the Blind (CFBs) are strong nationally. The Federation for the Blind supports CFBs. The Utah SRC prides themselves on being the best SRC.

## **VI. Committee Reports**

Ms. Sarah Michaud reported on behalf of the Consumer Satisfaction, Agency Outcomes and Performance (CSAOP) Committee. She stated that the SRC Annual report needs to be a living, breathing document. She asked members to email her with comments, suggestions and ideas for improvement.

She reported that everything is in place for the Consumer Satisfaction Survey. The contractor just needs to be identified.

Ms. Bernadine Chavez reported that she will invite the Commission for the Blind and the Statewide Independent Living Council to a Stakeholders meeting to address transportation. Discussion followed regarding the ARC of NM and possibly bringing in other partners. It is hopeful that membership can be increased from these partners and possibly request resumes from those interested in serving on the SRC.

Discussion followed regarding research on doing future web calls and determining if it is more cost-effective. Ms. Rosemarie Ortiz reported that the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) offers WebEx free until December but there are charges for teleconference calls. She offered to send the information to Ms. Chavez. Ms. Louise Williams suggested researching free conference call.com. Ms. Treva Roanhorse mentioned that they do videoconferencing in Arizona. Mr. Richard Jirón suggested researching how these methods are open to the public and recommends consulting the Open Meetings Act.

## **VII. Schedule next four SRC meetings**

The next four meetings were scheduled as follows:

September 23 in Albuquerque  
December 2 in Roswell  
March 2 in Santa Fe at the State Office  
June 15 in Farmington

## **VIII. Comments from Public/DVR Staff/Members**

There were no comments.

## **IX. Other Business**

Ms. Bernadine Chavez named an AdHoc Committee to discuss an award to an NM DVR employee. Ms. Rosemarie Ortiz, Ms. Marsha Prophet, Mr. Andrew MacRae and Ms. Bernadine Chavez will review criteria and employee performance to determine an award recipient.

Mr. Richard Jiron restated that the SRC membership would like to see the development of a dedicated SRC webpage.

## **X. Adjournment**

Mr. Gilberto Romero motioned to adjourn. Ms. Treva Roanhorse seconded the motion. There being no dissention and no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.