

State Rehabilitation Council
Quarterly Meeting
Friday, March 22, 2013
Silver City Public Library
515 W College Ave.
Silver City, New Mexico 88061
Quarterly Meeting - 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.



Members Present:

Bernadine Chavez
Sarah Michaud
Andrew MacRae
Alex Martinez
Yvonne Hart
Peter Shams-Avari
Chandra Majumdar

Members Absent:

Jeffrey Diamond
Richard D. Jirón
Treva Roanhorse
Louise Williams

Guest/s

Agnes Maldonado

DVR Staff Present:

Ralph Vigil
Tracy Alcaraz
John Fullinwider
Richard Smith
David Joyce

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Ms. Bernadine Chavez welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M.

Ms. Chavez asked Ms. Tracy Alcaraz to call the roll.

II. Action Items

Mr. Shams-Avari has been designated proxy for Mr. Jirón

A. Approval of Agenda

Mr. MacRae motioned to approve the agenda, Mr. Martinez seconded the motion. There being none opposed and no abstentions, the motion passed

B. Approval of Minutes – March 22, 2013

The March 22, 2013 minutes approved with suggested changes. Mr. Martinez motioned to accept the minutes as written, Ms. Hart seconded the motion. There being none opposed and one (1) abstention, the motion passed.

C. Approval of Open Meetings Act

Council motioned to approve the Open Meetings Act. There being none opposed and no abstentions, the motion passed.

D. Mr. Fullinwider went over and reviewed the MOP Revisions. Ms. Chavez also shared with the council the MOP Revision comments from Mr. Jirón.

III. Acting Director's Report – Mr. Ralph Vigil

- Federal News- The House approved HR. 803 (the SKILLS Act) with a final vote of 215 “Yes’s” and 202 “No’s.” Fifteen members did not vote, and it is believed that a few Democrats voted for the bill. While making predictions in the current political environment is difficult, it is very unlikely that the bill will make it through the Senate. After reviewing with sister agency, the Commission for the Blind, the impact in New Mexico will be negligible at this time. This is because the state is still drawing down less federal dollars than are available, even after applying the cut. A concern remains about the long term impact of available federal dollars, should the Division be able to realize additional state match.
- Order of Selection- There is no waiting list for any of the priority groups at this time. All priority groups are open with no one going on the waiting list at this time. The agency is still under an Order of Selection (OOS), and is projected to remain under an OOS at least through June of 2014.
Budget reviews continue to take place to determine if all of the priority groups can continue to remain open.
- Legislative/Budget Update- The agency essentially received a level budget for FY 14. There will be a minor vacancy rate applied which will not have much impact to agency staffing. Level funding will mean that next year’s budget and operations will closely resemble this year’s. It is anticipated that if the agency has to resort to it, waiting lists will remain small as will waiting times. The agency will meet this year’s goal of decreasing the agency’s vacancy rate from 23% to less than 10%.
- DVR Fair Hearings- For the current federal fiscal year (FFY), four (4) requests have been received. Three have been withdrawn. One (1) remains open. There is also a civil case that is a carryover from the last two FFY’s.

IV. SRC Chairperson's Report – Ms. Bernadine Chavez

- Disability Rights New Mexico has lost funding from Social Security to help beneficiaries with barriers to employment. We are hopeful that the funds will be re-instated by the end of March.

- There is a Ticket to Work job Fair at the annual Southwest Conference on Disabilities in October. We are looking for agencies to help with the job fair and recruit participants. DVR is one of the sponsors.
- The Chair extends the Councils appreciation for the work done by the annual report committee in getting the report out. Please utilize the report for the purposes of educating the public about DVR and the SRC.
- There will be a forum sponsored by RSA for the Chairs of each SRC in June. Both Ms. Chavez and Ms. Michaud will be attending.

V. 121 Program Report - Ms. Sarah Michaud

- The JVR hosted its 15th annual Disabilities Awareness Conference on March 20th. Thank you to the agencies that attended to share information – including DVR and DRNM. We had almost 300 people in attendance to learn about disabilities and tribal VR services, and a great speaker who talked about obesity as a disability.
- JVR is sponsoring a Job/College Fair on April 17th, which will be open to anyone looking to gather information on employment or educational opportunities.
- The national Tribal VR conference will be held in Albuquerque in April 2014. All the local tribes will be assisting with the planning, and we would love to have SRC involvement and support with this event.
- Tribal VR is still pushing for legislation that would provide TVRs with permanent funding, since we are competitively funded currently. We are also looking to see what the final impact of sequestration will be on the grants. Right now, we haven't gotten final word but we are hearing that they might delay the competitions for refunding and new grants again this year – which creates a greater competition pool when things do start up again. Additionally, we are looking at the federal legislation proposals going before congress to try to gauge their impacts on VR services and TVRs.

VI. Committee Meetings

The Committee members didn't meet as the SRC award nominations were being presented to the council.

VII. Committee Reports

Mr. MacRae asked Ms. Alcaraz to present the SRC Award nominations to the council.

VIII. SRC webpage – Richard Smith

Mr. Richard Smith reported that he will work on the website and delete any old agenda's, reports, etc.

IX. Comments from Public/DVR Staff/Members

- Ms. Hart asked Mr. Joyce what the employment outlook was like in Silver City.
- Mr. Joyce shared a story regarding a participant that was assisted with DVR services in acquiring a job in his field of passion.

X. Other Business

The next SRC meeting will be held on June 7, 2013. The location is yet to be determined. Future SRC meetings will be discussed at the June 7th meeting.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.