

NH State Rehabilitation Council

NH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

MEETING MINTUES

June 20, 2024

21 South Fruit Street, Room 100, Concord, NH and

ZOOM Teleconference Meeting

Attendees: Lorrie Ripley Chair, Nathalie Fortier, Brandy Quinn-Richards, Heidi Duprey, James Ziegra, John Richards, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, alternate for DRC, Ben Adams. Andrea Kanab

Guests: Brian Robinson, Katie Klinko, Market Decisions

Members Excused: Lisa Gerrard, Scott Lagios, Dawn Breault, Jessica Laurie

Staff: Richard Sala, Sue Roma, Tina Greco, Beth Keller, Joy Sabolevski

Interpreters: Lori Meyer and Laurie Shaffer

The meeting of the SRC was called to order by Chair Ripley at 1:00 pm.

A roll call was made of those present and determined that a quorum for this meeting was not met.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Approval of the minutes of the SRC meeting of April 2024 were tabled to the next meeting in September due to lack of quorum.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR: Richard apologized that he will not be able to stay for the entire meeting due to his needed work on the budget before deadline but wanted to update the Council on several points.

There is good news as VRNH's State Plan has been approved by RSA. As of July 1, 2024, VR will no longer be in an order of selection.

Richard further reports that the agency has been working hard on eligibility and IPE development. We still are not where we want to be but are moving in the right direction as in the first quarter there was a 10.4% increase in time from application to eligibility. With this increase we should also see an increase in the time to plan development. The 10.4% increase represents a 78.9 percent against target for eligibilities and almost 60% for IPE development. As counselor turnover eases, the goal is to get people ready for work sooner and better these numbers.

The STOUT contract is still active, and Richard is thinking of expanding it to the Concord Regional Office. If successful, he would eventually like to expand it to all offices if money is available to do so.

Working through the budgeting process, VR is being careful to spend all the dollars we need to this fiscal year and not leave anything on the table without spending frivolously.

The agency is also working on an application for a Disability Innovation Grant, due to RSA on July 1st. This grant allows applicants to submit applications on one of five topic areas in order to create a 21st Century workforce of youth and adults with disability. NH has a need for technology, especially in the deaf and hard of hearing community. Hopefully we will get the grant but if not, it won't change Richard's vision of where we want to be. We will work on getting the needed dollars elsewhere.

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Richard and his team are working on an adaptive driving package for Governor and Council. The work is almost complete. The SRC will keep informed of the progress in this area as it moves along the process.

The service complaint procedure is on Richard's radar. Since he began in January, he has been involved in 4 or 5 cases of customers who were having difficulty navigating the VR process. Of these cases, 4 have have been resolved with just a phone call with the involved parties before getting to the fair hearing process. He is encouraging customers and staff to reach out if an appeal is filed and time has gone by with no resolution. He is willing to work with both parties to dislodge whatever is holding up customers from moving forward in their plan for employment.

Richard was asked a question about priority areas for contracts. He replied that the agency needs a better way working with vendors. We don't have a uniform invoicing method nor a way to ensure that the deliverables are monitored to accurately reflect the work that is done under the contracts. He is working with his finance team in drafting a job description for a vendor management position to make this occur and will report out at a later date on its progress.

If Council has any questions or concerns on any matter related to VR, they should feel free to reach out to Richard via phone or email at any time to discuss.

Update on 2024 CSNA: Brian Robertson and Katie Klinko from Market Decisions were present remotely today to update the Council on their work on the 2024 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. The CSNA will assist VRNH to determine the current state of available programs for individuals with disability being served by VR or others. It will also identify the characteristics of individuals in NH who are not being serviced but would benefit from services if they were aware of their availability. Project members will include the following groups to interview for 2024:

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and those with disabilities that have not been served or who are underserved by VR
- Individuals with disabilities serviced through other components of the statewide workforce investment program
- Youth with disabilities and students with disabilities

Unfortunately, the presentation from Market Decisions was cut short due to the State of New Hampshire's internet connectivity issues. Those SRC members also attending remotely were not able to continue participating in the meeting.

The chair of the SRC made a decision to end to June meeting early due to the internet issues. Agenda items not covered will be brought forward to the September meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 pm.

The next regular meeting of the SRC will be:

September 26, 2024

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Room 100 Walker Building & ZOOM option

21 South Fruit Street, Concord, NH, 03301