

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council

Full Council Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2025
9:00 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.

Beyond Vision

1540 S. 108th Street
West Allis, WI 53214

Microsoft Teams Meeting Option

[Meeting Link](#)

Meeting ID: 282 296 909 044 **Passcode:** aW97Kp22

To join by phone only, call (608) 571-2209 **Phone Conference ID:** 784 732 199#

Committee Members Present: Dick Straub, Jacci Borchardt, Kathy Meisner, Natalia Graf, Liz Kennedy, Alicia Reinhardt, Lori Karcher, Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Jolene Wanek, Ann Franz, Jenny Felty, Lindsey Kreitzman, Megan Bisonette, Oyinkansola Owanifari, Rachel Fellers

DVR Staff Present: Meredith Dressel, Jennifer Bscherer, Anna Eggebrecht, Allison Gordon, Sarah Kuehn, Houston Jamison, Jenna Fogarty, Alissa Braatz, Kay Olson, Tania Hanford, Patty Noland

Guests: Eve Karcher, Lydia Hartlaub (*DRW/CAP Attorney*)

Roll Call and Introductions

Announcements

- Bathroom location and sign-in

Quorum Check

- Have quorum

Approval of Minutes – February 2025

- Liz motion to approve, Lori second, passed.

Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals:

Council Engagement Committee

- New terms start July 1st - there are several members that are planning to re-apply for a second term and some have indicated they are not interested in re-applying. One person is resigning due to a new job. Working with DVR BSC's to do outreach to businesses to fulfill that spot. We are hopeful that we have someone interested.
- Reminder that it is an expectation that every member participates on one committee.
- Elections for the Executive Committee membership is today. There is an opportunity to switch committees at the full WRC meeting.
- Benefits of being in-person and networking with each other. Lunch is a great time to do those connections.

Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee/Policy Review and Administration Committee

- Met in April and reviewed DVR Due Process Policy language. Received feedback on the Policy Manual Public Input. Reviewed the CSNA Report.
- Met to review the CIE Plan for SFY 2026-28

Services to Business Committee

- Discussed a possible businessperson to fill the seat on the WRC.
- Talked about some steps to move forward in doing outreach to business.
- Discussed language to describe the Services to Business Committee to potential new committee members.

Executive Committee

- Plan the quarterly meeting agenda.
- Chairs provide monthly subcommittee reports
- Discussed terms for members to discuss the ability to re-apply for a second term. Will address a bylaw change to say that members can stay in their seat for 2 full terms. The bylaws do not say "full".
- Overview of DVR budget including State and Federal dollars. DVR has received a cost-of-living increase.
- Global strategic planning discussion.
 - How do we make improvements to what we are doing?
 - There are different ways to take on the strategic planning process. Typically, you bring in a facilitator, do an analysis of current state, and then create a plan to move forward.
 - There is funding to bring on a facilitator to do the strategic planning process. Kyle suggested Lee Schultz as a potential facilitator. Meredith emailed Lee to see if he is interested and what his cost would be, he has not responded. DVR is capped at \$5,000 to pay the facilitator to avoid additional procurement work to hire someone.
 - Kay will share the Oklahoma Strategic Plan. Helpful to review so we could have a skeleton to work from.
 - Is the WRC committed to going through the process as it will require additional work?
 - Jacci, Liz, Rachel, Kathy, Jolene, expressed support and interest.
 - Motion to begin the Strategic Planning efforts discussion in the Executive Committee for WRC, Alice, second Rachel – passed.
- Motion to approve the appointment of Dr. Alice Belcher to the Services to Business committee – Jolene, seconded by Liz - passed.

Career Pathways Grant Update – Meredith Dressel, DVR Administrator

- DVR was awarded the grant in 2021 for 5 years. Grant ends Sept. 2026, we have 1 year left to spend the funds. DVR has Enrolled 1,071 individuals. Currently have 752 individuals still participating in the grant. Largest areas of enrollment: WDA 3, then 5, then 6, then 2.
- Meredith will provide enrollment for each pathway. Manufacturing, Construction, IT, Healthcare
- 267 have left the grant, 170 were employed with the majority in the field of health care. Average wage is \$21/hr. and working. 31 hours a week.

- Most of the funds have been spent on training for the participants. There were adjustments made to the grants for training due to changes in federal financial aid that changed the calculation, so DVR changed our training grant calculation. The funds are limited, so DVR reviews the expenses on a regular basis to ensure we are providing the funds in the most equal way possible.

Ticket to Work, Partnership Plus and Social Security Overview - Tania Hanford, DVR Program and Policy Analyst

- Jen shared that many individuals are scared to work off benefits and don't access services available through Ticket to Work. Tania shared that there is a link to success stories in her presentation. Sometimes hearing others success, eases their worries about working over SGA.
- Natalia shared that work incentives are outlined in a benefits analysis report from a Benefits Counselor. There is an opportunity to work over SGA and not lose benefits.

WRC Officer Elections

- Today we will be electing a Chair, Vice Chair, and Member At Large.
- Nominations are as follows: Dick Straub – Chair, Liz Kennedy – Vice Chair, and Rachel Fellers – Member at Large. Dick shared the candidates' nomination letters.
- Elect completed and all candidates were elected.

Public Comment

- No public comment
- Dick started discussion regarding why WRC seems to not be getting as many public comments as in the past. Inquired if CAP has had success in getting more public comment.
 - CAP noted they have more one-on-one conversations with consumers and this helps with getting public comment.
- Asked about outreach to communication for getting public comment. Noted as individual with disability may not know that this counsel is available if they only learn about WRC through their DVR counselor. Addressed different ways to present public comment, such as in writing. Addressed lack of business engagement as well, may help to discuss businesses roles and how they could engage with the committee.
- Dick also mentioned other disability related committees throughout the state and if WRC should interact for collaboration.
- Future agenda item, learning more about other disability counsels and follow up on having them present to WRC.

DVR Administrative Update - Meredith Dressel, DVR Administrator

- Reviewed Program outcomes, budget, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and RSA Negotiated Measures. See attached PowerPoint.
- DVR did get cost of living increase for federal award for next FFY. Touched on State match.
- Meredith processed some concerns with reaching RSA Negotiated Measures. Reference statistical adjustment model which will hopefully help with DVR reaching these measures. Noted measures are based on past performance and predicting the future.

- Completed Time Study, currently reviewing and analyzing results, hopefully have more information around results in June 2025.
- Service Provider Qualification: DVR is considering a certification process for service providers delivering supported employment services.
- Rebranding Process is moving forward, there are focus groups coming up to gather more information. Goal is to have this wrapped up by Nov 2026
- Touched on Project SEARCH program.
- DVR BSCs are doing a connection, meet and greet, with SSM Health/Sodexo. Discussing positions and application process. This will be followed up with a hiring event.
- National Employment Team (NET) to connect DVR BSC with the corporate individuals at Walmart to do some training around how to best work with, resources and connecting with DVR consumers and individuals with Autism. This meeting will have Wisconsin representative and individuals from other states.
- DVR Internal Groups:
 - Policy Academy update
 - Quality Assurance update – WRC may be interested in the repeat consumer and unsuccessful QA reviews when report is completed. Suggested results may go to one of the WRC subcommittee.
 - START
 - AsTec
 - SenseAbility
 - Workplace Wellness
- Reviewed Appeals and Hearings.
- DVR Senior Leadership Team Visits – once a year they meet with each districts staff.
- (Competitive Integrated Employment) CIE two-year plan SFY 2026-2027. May 27, 2025 will have public input session, WRC members should get a invite to this meeting.

CSNA Response Review - Meredith Dressel, DVR Administrator

- Lot of information on slides, see attached.
- Touched on Milwaukee Action Plan, survey plan to tap into local underserved population, how can DVR improve? Recommended additional engagement with consumers about how they are feeling about the services they are receiving. WRC requested to see report of responses from consumers.
- Touched on using Teams to text consumer, we did not get approval. DVR is looking to rebuild our consumer case management system; texting will be an option for the new system.
- Looking to continue Career Pathways Discussion, not specifically related to the CPA grant, to help move consumer into successful careers.
- WRC asked about AI and labor mark. DVR hasn't looked specifically at AI with labor mark, but is following and doing ongoing review of the labor market. Including, labor market hot jobs.
- WRC asked about specialized caseloads, DVR is looking to follow up on this on a local level.
- Wrapped up discussion as ran out of time, will follow up in Aug to review remaining slides, ended on staff training needs.

CAP Report - Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Advocacy Specialist for Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW)

- Client Assist Program (CAP) is also a grant which is serviced through DRW. DRW is doing a rebrand. Working on making website more accessible and concentrate on plain language. Streamline intake process.
- DRW is also doing a reorganization and some of the grants DRW was receiving have been changing or getting cut.
- Reviewed Fiscal Year data.
- Different types of supports: Information and Referral cases and Full cases.
- Compared to 2023 (31 Info and Referral and 47 Full Case) and 2024 (43 Info and Referral and 45 Full Case), this includes DVR and all other cases. Also reviewed specific services requested.
- Touched on high levels for appeals when issues cannot be resolved at lower level.
- If it says "case lacks merit" this doesn't mean person concern isn't valid. Likely that the policy was reviewed and applied correct.

Review Action Items and Identify Future Agenda Topics

- Strategic Planning efforts discussion in the Executive Committee for WRC.
- Dr. Alice Belcher appointed to the Services to Business committee. Dick Straaub elected as WRC Chair, Liz Kennedy elected as Vice Chair, and Rachel Fellers elected as Member at Large
- Meredith will provide enrollment for each career pathways: Manufacturing, Construction, IT, Healthcare
- Future agenda item: learning more about other disability counsels and having them present to WRC.
- WRC interested in Quality Assurance final report on repeat consumer and unsuccessful closures.
- WRC requested to see report of responses from the Milwaukee Action Plan consumer survey.
- Follow up with CSNA report in Aug 2025 meeting to review remaining slides, ended on staff training needs.
- Next meeting Aug 21, 2025 – Virtual Meeting. Nov 2025 meeting will be in person.
- Vision Forward offering webinar on Resume writing in June 2025: free, open to everyone, more info to follow.
- Alice last name has change. Will be updated via email.

Adjourn

- Jacci motion to adjourn, Alice second. Meeting adjourned at 2:33pm.

*Public comment is limited to the time listed on the agenda. Comments can be sent at any time to: DVRWIRehabCouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

*Comments sent to that e-mail box will be read to the full council at the next meeting unless a specific subcommittee is listed. If a specific subcommittee is listed, comments will be sent directly to them and reviewed at their next committee meeting.

A Statement of Mission

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council, working on behalf of Wisconsin residents with disabilities, will review, analyze, and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities in providing quality services to persons with disabilities.