

**State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Employment and Community
Partnerships Committee Meeting Minutes**

January 12, 2022

Members Present

Scott Lindbloom
Adam Robson
Judith Castro
Dave Cheesman
Ceci Hartke

Members Absent

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Call to Order and Introductions

Scott Lindbloom called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

Approval of November 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Scott Lindbloom moved to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2021 SRC Employment and Community Partnerships Committee meeting. Dave Cheesman seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Committee Activities Discussion

Scott Lindblom stated he was volunteering to build a business for individuals with disabilities so individuals could obtain work experience. Adam Robson stated he was still waiting for information from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) regarding their training sessions for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors, and he would share that with the committee. Adam Robson noted that DDD had training in place and were currently working on the relationship between DDD and VR. Dave Cheesman agreed that DDD and VR were working on building that relationship, and there might not be a lot for the committee to contribute. Adam Robson added that DDD expressed concern that the committee could potentially add work to that process. Scott Lindbloom stated that in Colorado, VR, DDD, and

the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) worked together and provided outreach to the community and inquired whether Arizona VR could do something similar. Dave Cheesman stated the council would not be able to incorporate other entities into VR, although he agreed with the importance of offering work experience to individuals.

Adam Robson stated the committee had also discussed potentially developing guidance for VRCs to develop self-employment plans and to help counselors to understand the process. Judith Castro agreed that the committee should focus on VR and not on other agencies, which could be confusing. Ms. Castro noted the committee had previously provided input regarding the Self-Employment Policy and could now focus on helping counselors to have more confidence in developing self-employment plans. She noted that if counselors were better trained in the process, they would be more likely to help their clients to develop self-employment plans. Ceci Hartke inquired regarding the turnover rate of counselors and if that was an issue. Dave Cheesman stated the staff turnover rate had been lower lately, due to the tiered salary level and salary increases for counselors. Mr. Cheesman noted that referrals had decreased also due to the pandemic and did not require as many counselors to handle the case loads. Judith Castro agreed and noted there was less staff turnover in rural cities compared to larger cities, where there were more job opportunities. Adam Robson inquired whether the committee could do anything to increase VR referrals. Judith Castro stated that staff in Yuma used to attend more events in person and were able to provide more outreach. She noted that staff now tried to find opportunities to present to clinics virtually, to provide outreach. Judith Castro stated the committee could develop information that could be distributed to doctor's offices and clinics in an effort to reach out to other entities.

Ceci Hartke inquired regarding the past efforts or activities of the committee. Adam Robson stated the committee had developed an Employer Handbook, which took about a year to complete. Adam Robson noted that if the committee did develop a flyer or brochure, the committee would need approval from VR, or the committee could develop an Infographic that could be distributed. Judith Castro stated that she partnered with Mike Leyva and the Arizona Western College to develop information about self-employment plans, and she could share that Power Point with the committee. Adam Robson stated that would be a great starting point for the committee and inquired whether Mike Leyva would be able to attend a meeting to give a brief presentation regarding the information. Judith Castro stated she would contact Mr. Leyva regarding his availability to attend a meeting. Adam Robson inquired whether the committee preferred to focus on training for VRCs to develop self-employment plans, or to develop supplemental information that could help VRCs to be more confident in developing self-

employment plans. Judith Castro stated that she contacted Mike Leyva and would let the committee know whether he would be able to attend a meeting. Dave Cheesman stated that VRCs did struggle to develop self-employment plans as most counselors did not have business experience and did not understand how to develop business plans. Judith Castro agreed that VRCs were not trained to develop self-employment plans and would benefit from additional information regarding that process.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SRC Employment and Community Partnerships Committee TBD. Agenda items are as follows:

- Self-Employment Training Discussion

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

A call was made to the public with no response forthcoming.

Adjournment of Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.