

**State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Employment and Community  
Partnerships Committee Meeting Minutes**  
November 2, 2021

**Members Present**

Scott Lindbloom  
Adam Robson  
Judith Castro  
Dave Cheesman  
Ceci Hartke

**Members Absent**

**Staff Present**

Lindsey Powers

**Guests Present**

Fiona Donohoe

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**Call to Order and Introductions**

Scott Lindbloom called the meeting to order at 10:03 am. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

**Approval of October 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Scott Lindbloom moved to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2021 SRC Employment and Community Partnerships Committee meeting. Dave Cheesman seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**VR/DDD Discussion**

Adam Robson stated the committee had recently started meeting again and was trying to identify some activities or goals to focus on. Adam Robson stated the committee had discussed Supported Employment and potential education for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors. Mr. Robson stated the relationship between VR and the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) had improved, there was still a disconnect between the two agencies. Adam Robson stated he spoke to Margaret Corcoran, the Employment Coordinator with DDD, who expressed her concerns that the committee might advocate for additional responsibilities, which the committee was not interested in. Adam Robson stated that Ms. Corcoran had since retired and

her interim replacement was Kelly Thomas, who would be sending additional findings or data to Adam Robson regarding an educational tool the agency was using.

Fiona Donohoe, Statewide Developmental Disabilities Coordinator, stated the relationship between VR and DDD had improved, although there were challenges such as the high turnover rate of Support Coordinators and the new processes the agency was trying to implement. Ms. Donohoe stated another challenge was in identifying how to disseminate information to the agencies as well as the general community. Fiona Donohoe stated the agencies has started offering collaborative presentations, which had received positive feedback, although the agencies would continue to modify the presentations as needed. Scott Lindbloom inquired whether VR or DDD worked with Human Resource departments in northern Arizona and stated the agencies would benefit from those collaborations. Fiona Donohoe stated that Tempe had a program, Tempe's Best Program, which discussed Best Practices for businesses interested in hiring individuals with disabilities. Ms. Donohoe agreed that agencies needed to look at the issue from multiple angles. She noted that one of the biggest challenges was with day programs or assisted living centers creating roadblocks for individuals to participate in VR services. Ms. Donohoe stated that parents were also hesitant to allow their children to participate in VR services and to become more independent. Fiona Donohoe stated VR was focusing on improving VR counselors' understanding of Supported Employment and Customized Employment, and how they could be used more effectively. Fiona Donohoe stated that VR was also working with the Arizona University Center on Disabilities (UCEDD) to help with training and outreach to vendors and the community.

Dave Cheesman agreed with the benefit for Supported and Customized Employment and noted that supervisors needed to understand the processes in order to mentor counselors. Mr. Cheesman stated that sheltered workshops and center-based training were being phased out and staff should consider competitive employment. Fiona Donohoe agreed that the whole community needed to work together to make that shift towards competitive employment. Scott Lindbloom inquired whether there were school programs for individuals with disabilities, where individuals could take classes to learn a trade. Fiona Donohoe stated that VR was able to pay for an individual to go through an apprenticeship program. Ms. Donohoe stated she was also on a workgroup with Transition Team staff and noted that individuals with developmental disabilities had historically low enrollment in those programs, which could be utilized more. Adam Robson stated that DDD recently initiated some policy changes and held a public comment meeting, in which there were some changes to the youth day program and the ability to split time between a day treatment center and employment. Fiona Donohoe stated her recollection that the main goal was to focus on competitive

employment and/or for an individual to obtain subminimum wage for no more than one year.

Adam Robson stated the committee would not be responsible for building relationships with schools, which would be VR's responsibility, although the committee would need to identify a potential goal. Fiona Donohoe stated that field staff would benefit from working with UCEDD, which could offer more information regarding working with the DD population. Ms. Donohoe stated her hope that more individuals would be able to participate more with VR with the support of their families or guardians. Ceci Hartke agreed that there needed to be a paradigm shift, and for parents/guardians to support their children's VR and employment goals. She noted that parents were more receptive to advice from other parents of children with disabilities, which did help to encourage that process. Dave Cheesman noted that many parents were afraid of their children obtaining competitive employment. Mr. Cheesman stated his understanding that there was a Standard Work, which included the need to contact other agencies or individuals before closing out a client's case for lack of contact. Adam Robson stated the new protocol that VR staff reach out to other agencies before closing client cases, although he was unsure whether it was working. Dave Cheesman stated his understanding that it was not in a policy, although staff should be making three attempts to reach a client. Scott Lindbloom stated that VR would benefit from offering volunteer opportunities for individuals to obtain employment experience. Judith Castro agreed with the importance for Supported Employment training due to staff turnover and noted the importance for an understanding of subminimum wage also. Adam Robson stated his preference that the committee does not spotlight subminimum wage, but for staff to consider competitive employment. Fiona Donohoe agreed that there needed to be a shift towards competitive wages and customized employment models and how to disseminate that information to the general community such as assisted living centers and partners.

Dave Cheesman stated that agencies would benefit from showing success stories, which would highlight the successful employment of individuals. Judith Castro stated the Department of Economic Security (DES) would share videos of individuals obtaining employment. Fiona Donohoe stated there was a recent collaboration with schools, in which Abel Young, Statewide Transition Coordinator, would record the video and share with his contacts. Scott Lindbloom inquired whether VR or DDD provided training in northern Arizona. Fiona Donohoe stated that VR and DDD were planning to provide training in northern Arizona in the new year. Adam Robson stated the video collaboration might address all of the issues the committee had brought up, and the committee would be interested to view it. Mr. Robson stated the committee would likely meet to discuss any committee goals and would like to invite Fiona Donohoe to attend another meeting for any further

discussions. Fiona Donohoe agreed and noted that she would be able to forward the recent Quarterly Fact Sheet to the committee.

### **Agenda and Date for Next Meeting**

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

- Committee Activities Discussion

### **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

### **Public Comment**

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

### **Adjournment of Meeting**

Adam Robson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Dave Cheesman seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.