

**Draft**

## **Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**

### **Full Council Meeting Minutes**

November 7, 2024

#### **Attendance**

##### **Members Present**

Lisa Livesay

Ceci Hartke

David Carey

Adam Robson

Bibiana Ronquillo

Paula Seanez

Martin Appel

Jaime Gonzalez

Lenny Ovidia

Julie Oliver

Janette Lopez

George Garcia

Linda Fischer

Kristen Mackey

##### **Members Absent**

Diana Gomez Reyes

Melissa Wojtak

Zane Lambros

## **Staff Present**

Lindsey Powers

## **Guests Present**

Mathew Nevarez

Crystal Poetz

Stephanie Johnson

Bryan Gogg

Nelly Rivera

Lindsey Stevens

## **Minutes**

### **Call to Order and Introductions**

Lisa Livesay, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

### **Approval of August 8, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Lisa Livesay moved to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2024 SRC Full Council meeting. Ceci Hartke seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

### **SRC Chairperson's Report**

Lisa Livesay stated the SRC had been trying to recruit new members for some time and she was pleased to see new members appointed and attending the meeting. Ms. Livesay stated that all new members had received membership materials although they were welcome to reach out to any council members with any questions regarding the council. Lisa Livesay briefly reviewed the SRC's Mission, Vision, Operating Principles and Goals as outlined in the SRC New Member Manual. Lisa Livesay stated the Executive Committee could hold a meeting and invite new members to discuss the different committees and answer any questions before members decide

which committee to join.

### **SRC Annual Report**

Lindsey Powers reviewed the draft SRC Annual Report and requested any feedback or suggestions from the council. Paula Seanez suggested including graphs or tables to represent the data included in the report. Ms. Seanez also inquired how the disability groups were grouped together. Janette Lopez suggested the Table of Contents include hyperlinks to be more accessible for all readers. Ms. Lopez inquired regarding the office locations as well. Kristen Mackey noted that some of the office terms had changed, and several units might be located in the same office. Adam Robson suggested including verbiage regarding office locations and adding the Department of Economic (DES) Office Locator webpage. Paula Seanez motioned to approve the SRC Annual Report with the suggested changes. Lisa Livesay seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

### **SRC Officer Elections**

Lisa Livesay stated the Officer positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Sergeant at Arms positions were open for elections. Ms. Livesay stated that she would like to nominate David Carey as the Chair position if he accepts. David Carey stated that he would accept the nomination. Lisa Livesay inquired whether there were any other nominations from the floor. Adam Robson motioned that David Carey be elected as Chair of the SRC. Paula Seanez seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Lisa Livesay stated that Ceci Hartke had served as the Vice Chair, which supported the Chair and could fill in as the Chair if the Chair was unavailable for meetings. Paula Seanez motioned that Janette Lopez be elected as the Vice Chair. Janette Lopez accepted the nomination. Adam Robson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Lisa Livesay stated the Sergeant at Arms position was responsible for ensuring the overall meeting procedures and supporting the Chair and Vice Chair positions. Paula Seanez motioned that Lenny Ovidia be elected as the Sergeant at Arms. Lenny Ovidia accepted the nomination. Adam Robson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

### **RSA Administrator's Report**

Kristen Mackey stated that Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) was

still under a head count cap, which would continue until the new budget was released in June or July. Lisa Livesay inquired whether the head count cap would affect Pre-Employment Transition (Pre-ETS) services. Kristen Mackey stated it would impact the ability to spend funds due to a decrease in staff costs. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA was taking a deep dive in exploring why clients exited the system without employment. She noted the agency would test different methods for 3-6 months in order to identify which strategies worked. Ms. Mackey stated RSA had not received the Federal monitoring report yet, although she would share that information with the council. Kristen Mackey stated the Managed Service Provider (MSP) had been recognized nationally as a great model for managing human services within VR. Ms. Mackey stated the agency was able to increase the 2 services and 21 Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP)s to 20 services and 109 CRPs, under the MSP. She noted the MSP contract managed services, allowed the agency to bring on new staff, and negotiated rates for providers.

Kristen Mackey stated the performance measures for the Program Year 2023 were: employment rate, 53%, median earnings \$4,706, clients still employed 41.6%, credential attainment 24.7%, measurable skills gain – no data. Ms. Mackey noted that RSA met and exceeded every performance measure. Lisa Livesay inquired whether RSA would receive technical assistance regarding any of the indicators. Kristen Mackey stated RSA would not receive technical assistance on any indicators that met or exceeded expectations, although the agency was seeking assistance regarding credential attainment and measurable skills gain. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was continuing with implementation of the new case management system, Informed, and was in the process of user testing. She noted the agency would develop training materials and would offer virtual and in-person training for staff prior to implementation in July 2025. Kristen Mackey inquired whether the council had any feedback regarding electronic appeals forms. Linda Fischer stated that it would be beneficial to offer alternate formats for individuals. Janette Lopez inquired whether the training materials would be accessible. Kristen Mackey stated the training materials had been tested for accessibility and the agency had provided suggestions as well. Kristen Mackey stated RSA continued to work on the 4 core pillars, which included enhancing client outcomes. She added the agency had also started a pilot program for supported customized employment, which included 9 clients and 3 providers. Ms. Mackey stated RSA was pleased to hold an RSA Staff Conference on October 8<sup>th</sup> at the Talking Stick Resort,

which was a successful and well attended event. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was also working with a third party to develop marketing materials that would have a streamlined branding look that would be consistent with all agencies and programs. Paula Seanez inquired whether the Federal monitoring visit indicated any areas for concern. Kristen Mackey stated there was concern regarding the Transition School to Work (TSW) contract language, the fiscal documentation and reporting within RSA, and further definition of "most significantly disabled".

Mathew Nevarez stated there had been 29 informal reviews, 20 mediations, 12 fair hearings, and 1 Director's review. Mr. Nevarez stated 14 out of the 29 informal reviews were overturned, which was typical. Mathew Nevarez noted that with the mediations, there were 5 service agreements, 3 no agreements, and 1 pending. Mathew Nevarez stated for fair hearings, 1 was resolved with the ALJ, 1 was in favor of the agency, 2 were in favor of the individual, and 2 were pending. Linda Fischer inquired whether the agreements were complete agreements or compromises. Mathew Nevarez stated he did not have specific information, although mediations were often compromises and informal reviews were VR Supervisor decisions. Paula Seanez inquired whether clients were contacted several times before they were considered "loss of contact". Kristen Mackey stated VR staff would make 3 attempts to contact clients using 2 different methods and would also contact other agencies if the client was receiving multiple services. Lisa Livesay inquired whether the data was recorded by region or demographics. Mathew Nevarez stated the data was currently pulled by region, although he could share that information. Mr. Nevarez reviewed the updated the Release of RSA Information form. Paula Seanez suggested keeping the language consistent regarding who the form was addressing. Lisa Livesay inquired whether clients would receive assistance filling out the form. Mathew Nevarez stated VR staff would assist any clients as needed.

Lindsey Powers provided a review of the Quarter 1 Client Satisfaction Survey data. Lisa Livesay suggested potentially meeting clients where they were at to obtain survey data. Linda Fischer inquired whether the surveys were only distributed electronically. Lindsey Powers confirmed the surveys were distributed electronically through Survey Monkey. Lenny Ovidia inquired whether the data numbers were consistent each quarter. Lindsey Powers stated the numbers were relatively consistent each quarter. David Carey suggested the VRC or VR staff let the clients know the surveys would be

sent, so they would know to be expecting them. Lenny Ovidia noted the Likert scale could be somewhat problematic regarding what constituted “strongly agree” vs “agree”. Julie Oliver agreed that the Likert scale could be difficult and suggested potentially offering open-ended questions. Kristen Mackey stated that DES used Survey Monkey although the agency could explore other survey options. Lenny Ovidia inquired whether the surveys could include drop-down boxes. Kristen Mackey stated Survey Monkey would allow drop down boxes, although they could affect accessibility. She noted that the response rate of surveys was consistent due to the small population surveyed.

## **Membership Organization Updates**

### **SILC**

David Carey stated SILC continued to provide Emergency Preparedness training across the state and provided monthly webinars. Mr. Carey stated SILC had the opportunity for Questions and Answers with Ruben Gallego, which had been a great experience.

### **American Indian VR Project**

Paula Seanez stated the AIVRS/TVR programs were competitive grants funded under Section 121 of the Rehabilitation Act. She noted that funding was 90% Federal and 10% tribal match. Ms. Seanez stated there were 88 active TVR programs, in which 8 were in No Cost Extension award status. There are AIVR programs located in 26 states and in Arizona, the funded programs were Navajo Nation, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Hopi tribe, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, Fort Mojave tribe, and Tohono o’ Odham Nation. She added the Memoranda of Agreements were current between all the AIVRS programs and AZ RSA. Paula Seanez stated the Navajo Nation held its Annual Disability Awareness Conference in conjunction with the Advisory Council on October 30, 2024 at Diné College with a number of participants attending the conference. Presentations included information on Navajo Nation laws related to disability, IDEA, parental rights, voting rights, traumatic head injury. Overall, the conference was a success. Paula Seanez stated the vacancies for Navajo Nation were: VRCs in Chinle and Farmington, Rehab Service Techs in Farmington, Kayenta, Chinle and Gallup, and 2 Job Development Specialist positions.

Paula Seanez stated the Navajo OSERS Director continued to serve as an advisor to the University of Montana, Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities on providing regional training for utilizing the self-employment tool kit, which could be found at [tvrselfemployment.org](http://tvrselfemployment.org). She noted that Navajo Nation VR Counselors and staff represented the program at the International Project SEARCH conference to be held in Albuquerque, NM. She added the Project SEARCH in Gallup had been successful in working with participants with cognitive disabilities and had been awarded the exceptional employment outcome award for the year. Paula Seanez stated that planning was underway for a Project SEARCH in Shiprock, NM (Central Consolidated Schools) and Window Rock Schools was a possibility. Ms. Seanez stated partnerships with the Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities continued with collaboration on work-based learning initiatives at several school sites on the Navajo Nation. She noted the Consortia on Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR) was scheduled for December 3-5, 2024 at Las Vegas, NV, in which Commissioner Dante Allen, RSA Commissioner was scheduled to conduct a keynote at the conference. AIVRS programs were encouraged to present their challenges and recommend how AIVRS programs can be funded on a permanent basis versus competitively.

## **CAP**

Linda Fischer stated that new staff were attending the Council meeting, and that a one would be chosen to be the new CAP representative on the Council.

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

The next meeting of the SRC Full Council will be on February 6, 2025 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.

## **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

## **Public Comment**

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

## **Adjournment of Meeting**

Adam Robson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Paula Seanez seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.