

**NEVADA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (N.S.R.C.)
MEETING MINUTES
February 11, 2020**

Department of Employment Training & Rehabilitation
500 E. Third Street, Carson City, NV 89713
&
Vocational Rehabilitation
3016 W. Charleston Blvd. Suite 200 Las Vegas, NV 89102

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kacy Curry
David Nuestro
Julie Bowers
Jean Peyton
Shelley Hendren
Rachel Jefferies
Judy Swain
Mary Brabant
Joshua Baker
Rebecca Rogers
Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Allison Stephens

GUESTS/PUBLIC:

Jack Mayes, Nevada Disability and Law Center
Brian Robertson, Market Decisions Research
Steven Cohen, Public

STAFF:

Justin Taruc, Deputy Attorney General
Janice John, Rehab. Div. Deputy Administrator
Javier Fernandez, VR Liaison to N.S.R.C.
Sheena Childers, Southern Acting VR District Manager
Mechelle Merrill, VR Bureau Chief
Mat Dorangricchia, Northern VR District Manager
Dale McWilliams, VR Training Officer
Marla Robinson, Administrative Assistant
Jacob Getz, Administrative Assistant
Laura Thompson, VR Counselor
Laura Fink, VR Counselor

1. **CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, AND VERIFY TIMELY POSTING OF AGENDA**

Kacy Curry, Chair called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m. Javier Fernandez NSRC Liaison called the role.

Mr. Fernandez determined a quorum was present and verified that the posting was completed on time in accordance with Open Meeting Law.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

3. **COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

Shelley Hendren, Division Administrator began by asking Javier Fernandez, NSRC liaison to provide an update on council membership.

New council members were introduced. Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner, DETR Director representing Workforce Investment Board. Rebecca Rogers a Disability Advocate. Allison Stephens from Nevada PEP representing Parent Training & Information Representative. Mary Brabant from Goodwill representing Business, Industry & Labor. Joshua Baker a Disability Advocate. Current vacancies include Native American Section 121 from the Rehabilitation Program, Client Assistance Program, 3 Business and Industry vacancies.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 20, 2019 MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Curry began the discussion by asking if there were any corrections, modifications or changes to the November 20, 2019 meeting minutes. No changes, corrections or modifications were made. A motion was made by Julie Bowers to approve the minutes as written. Motion was seconded by Judy Swain. All in favor, none opposed, Joshua Baker and Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner abstained, motion carried, minutes approved.

5. **PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE FFY2019 CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY, CONDUED ON BEHALF OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM BY MARKET DECISIONS RESEARCH (MDR)**

Brian Robertson, from Market Decisions Research began his presentation by reviewing that 1,420 surveys were completed in 2019. The 3 populations surveys were:

- General VR Consumers: 1,116
- Youth in Transition Consumers: 174
- Older Individuals who are Blind Consumers: 130

The surveys were done with consumers with cases open during September 2018 to August 2019, or with cases closed within that time frame. Cases were further stratified by case benchmarks indicated by NV VR/OIB.

- In Services IPE to 6 months
- In Service 6 to 12 months
- In Service 18+ months
- Closed cases

Data collections was conducted from January to December 2019. Data collection occurred in three trimester waves (January – April, May – August, September – December). All data was collected by telephone from MDR's data collection facility. The overall response rate was 25%. Results are weighted to reflect population characteristics (age, gender, etc.). Results accurately reflect the views of your three service populations.

Core Metrics Summary

The core metrics are the broad measures of the VR consumer experience:

Key measures of the consumer experienced that can be compared across concepts, across groups, and trended year to year. All comparison of results across VR agencies using similar metrics. Some are domains, which are calculated by combining several questions. Others are individual questions. Nevada has 11 core metrics.

The consumer experience core metrics all use a common 0 to 100 scale.

The most positive result is bound to 100. The least positive result is bound to 0. Each metric is the average

of all scores.

The higher the score the more satisfied the consumer or the more positively they view their experience.

A score of 100 would represent an extremely positive experience among VR consumers. A score of 0 would imply an extremely negative experience.

What are the VR Consumer Experience Core Metrics?

Overall Satisfaction and Expectations: A global measure of the consumer experience with Nevada VR/OIB Program.

Experience with Services Provided by VR: This measure focuses on the services provided by the VR or OIB program and the range of services available in each program.

Experience with Staff and Counselors: Consumer's experience working and interacting with Nevada VR/OIB Program staff and their counselors.

Communications with VR Staff: This measure also looks to consumer's interactions with staff but is focused specifically on communications between the consumer and staff. That this is separate from other experiences with staff underscores the importance of communications in the way consumers rate their experience with Nevada VR/OIB Program.

Consumer Control and Involvement: How consumers perceive their involvement in the process and control over the choices and goals.

Outcomes and Meeting Goals: How well consumers perceive the services provided by Nevada VR/OIB Program help them meet their goals.

General VR

Trends to Watch

Positive Aspects of the Consumer Experience

In general, VR consumers have a positive experience and, are satisfied with staff and counselors, and are satisfied with the services they receive.

Among all areas of the experience, General VR consumers rate their experience with staff and counselors as the most positive aspect of their experience.

The number of consumers reporting they experienced a problem is generally trending downward.

Rural consumers report a more positive consumer experience than the north and south districts. They are more satisfied with: Getting questions answered and communication with VR staff and counselors, Services they receive and how promptly they are provided, Helpfulness of staff, and Experiencing fewer problems.

Those **under age 25** report the most positive consumer experience with Nevada VR. This includes: Satisfaction with the services and how promptly they are provided, Involvement in choosing a vocational goal, and Believing that the services would help them become financial independent.

Less positive aspects of the consumer experience

The **least positively** viewed domain is Communications between VR Staff and counselors. Customer control and involvement. Outcomes and meeting goals. Southern District consumers are less positive about their experience in general. Consumers age 26 and older are less positive than consumers over 26. Consumers whose cases were closed unsuccessfully are less positive about their experience. Difficulties

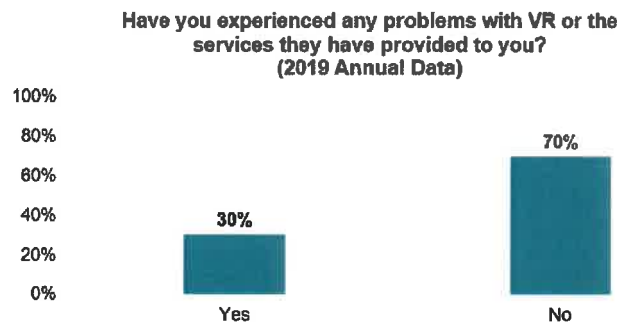
with the application process. Satisfaction with employment is trending downward. Among those experiencing problems, few think VR is working to resolve the issue.

Nevada VR Consumer Experience Core Metrics for General VR - Trends

Domain	Sept - Dec 2018	Jan - April 2019	May - August 2019	September - December 2019
Overall Satisfaction and Expectations	75	75	67	77
Experience with Services Provided by VR	77	77	70	77
Experience with Staff and Counselors	87	87	83	88
Communications with Staff	75	75	70	75
Customer Control and Involvement	79	79	78	80
Outcomes and Meeting Goals	81	80	76	82
Ease of the application process for VR services	77	77	77	74
Accessibility of the VR office for someone with your type of disability	92	91	89	90
Satisfaction with current employment	79	81	79	75
Would you tell your friends with disabilities to go to the VR program for help? (% yes)	91%	94%	92%	92%
Did you experience any problems with VR or the services they have provided to you? (% no)	69%	71%	83%	73%

Problems Experienced

30% of consumers reported experiencing a problem with VR or other services they were provided. Of those experiencing a problem, only 33% indicate that VR worked to resolve the problem.



Types or Problems Experienced by General VR Consumers

Type of Problem or Issue	% Experiencing	Did VR work to resolve this problem?	
		Yes	No
VR counselors or staff was unprofessional, rude, did not care	30%	24%	76%
Issues communicating with staff or counselors, difficulty reaching staff or counselors	29%	17%	83%
Difficulties in finding employment, few job options	20%	25%	75%
VR program was not effective in helping customer or helping customer meet goals	16%	21%	79%
VR Counselors or staff did not provide the help I needed, broke promises, customer had to do all the work	16%	26%	74%
Waiting to receive services, have not received services	12%	30%	70%
Needed more support or services, had to fight to obtain services, needed more guidance	11%	21%	79%

Percentage among those experiencing a problem.

Feedback from General VR Clients

Consumers were asked to provide additional feedback when they were not positive in their assessment. These are the results: Not satisfied with VR. VR did not meet expectations. Disagreed that VR helped or met their goals, they did not feel welcome, they found something difficult, they did not find VR accessible. (Feedback was collected throughout the survey in response to 21 questions). Consumers could provide more than one response.

The following table summarizes the most common responses from 785 consumers that provided additional feedback. This is 70% of general VR consumers.

	%
Issues communicating with staff or counselors, difficulty reaching staff or counselors	51%
Difficulties with paperwork and forms, need help in completing forms, need alternate formats	35%
VR counselors or staff was unprofessional, rude, did not care	25%
VR program was not effective in helping customer or helping customer meet goals	24%
VR Counselors or staff did not provide the help I needed, broke promises, customer had to do all the work	24%
Needed more information about programs and services, did not provide enough information	24%
Not assigned a counselor, switched counselors, counselors need to spend more time with customers	23%
Needed more support or services, had to fight to obtain services, needed more guidance	21%
Waiting to receive services, have not received services	20%

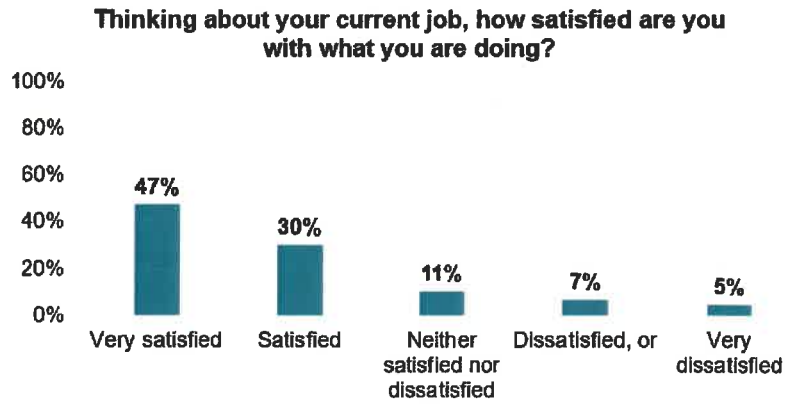
Employment and Job Satisfaction

Nearly half of General VR consumers are working.

Finally, these last few questions ask about what you are currently doing. Are you currently...?
 (2019 Annual Data)

	%
Working full time, that is, more than 35 hours per week	22%
Working part time	26%
Currently looking for a job	36%
In school or receiving job training	25%
Keeping house	25%
Currently unable to work, or	12%
Volunteering your time	12%

77% of employed consumers are satisfied with their jobs.



**Why are you not satisfied with your current job?
 (2019 Annual Data)**

	%
Bored with job, been at job too long, burnt out, need change	36%
Low pay, does not meet financial need	16%
Job is physically demanding	15%
Not a career move, only temporary job	15%
Too few hours	14%
Job does not provide benefits, does not provide good benefits	14%

(YIT) Youth in Transition

Trends to Watch

In general, Youth in Transition have a positive experience and are satisfied with staff and counselors and with the services they receive.

Experience with VR staff and counselors is the **most positive** aspect of their experience. Trending upward over time.

North consumers report a more positive experience than south and rural areas.

Black or African American consumers report a more positive consumer experience than others about the services they receive and their experiences with VR staff and counselors.

Those under age 19 report a more positive experience than consumers over 19.

Less Positive Aspects of the Consumer Experience:

Least positive domain is Communications with VR staff and Counselors. It is at its highest historical level.

Satisfaction with employment has declined.

South district consumers were less positive than consumers in the north and rural areas.

The percentage of consumers reporting a positive experience tends to decrease with increasing age.

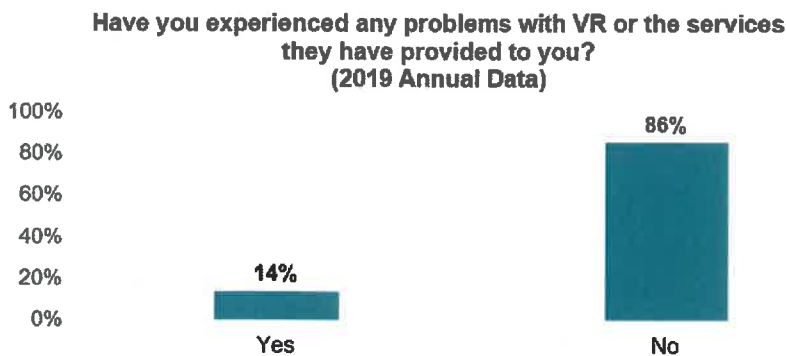
Some consumers report challenges with the application process.

Some report difficulties accessing VR officers, those in service 6 to 12 months.

Domain	Sept - Dec 2018	Jan - April 2019	May - August 2019	September - December 2019
Overall Satisfaction and Expectations	81	77	82	77
Experience with Services Provided by VR	80	79	83	84
Experience with Staff and Counselors	94	90	91	95
Communications with Staff	77	75	77	81
Customer Control and Involvement	84	82	85	82
Outcomes and Meeting Goals	88	89	90	88
Ease of the application process for VR services	78	73	76	69
Accessibility of the VR office for someone with your type of disability	88	88	94	90
Satisfaction with current employment	75	80	85	68
Would you tell your friends with disabilities to go to the VR program for help? (% yes)	98%	97%	94%	100%
Did you experience any problems with VR or the services they have provided to you? (% no)	78%	83%	86%	77%

	% Receiving Service	% Finding the Service Valuable
Job exploration counseling or career counseling	63%	95%
Work based learning experiences including a job, internship, or volunteering	43%	96%
Counseling on opportunities to attend college, learn a trade, or get a professional certification after high school	58%	100%
Workplace readiness to help get ready for the challenges of work	51%	99%
Instruction in self-advocacy to help you live the life you want including peer mentoring	63%	95%

14% of youth consumers reported experiencing a problem with VR or the services they were provided. Of those experiencing a problem, only 28% indicate that VR worked to resolve the problem.



Types of Problems Experienced

Type of Problem or Issue	% Experiencing
Issues communicating with staff or counselors, difficulty reaching staff or counselors	38%
Difficulties in finding employment, few job options	21%
Needed more support or services, had to fight to obtain services, needed more guidance	17%
Not assigned a counselor, switched counselors, counselors need to spend more time with customers	14%
VR counselors or staff was unprofessional, rude, did not care	12%
Needed more help finding work, need to help customers find work, customer had to find a job on their own	11%
VR program was not effective in helping customer or helping customer meet goals	10%
Customer Involvement In and/or control over his or her VR experience	10%

Percentage among those experiencing a problem.

Feedback from Youth in Transition

Consumer Feedback: Not satisfied with VR. VR did not meet expectations. Disagreed that VR helped or met their goals, they did not feel welcome, they found something difficult, they did not find VR accessible. The following table summarizes the most common responses from 103 consumers that provided feedback. This is 59% of Youth in Transition consumers.

	%
Difficulties with paperwork and forms, need help in completing forms, need alternate formats	41%
Issues communicating with staff or counselors, difficulty reaching staff or counselors	36%
Needed more information about programs and services, did not provide enough information	26%
Not assigned a counselor, switched counselors, counselors need to spend more time with customers	17%
Waiting to receive services, have not received services	16%
VR Counselors or staff did not provide the help I needed, broke promises, customer had to do all the work	15%
VR counselors or staff was unprofessional, rude, did not care	14%
Needed more support or services, had to fight to obtain services, needed more guidance	10%
Needed more help finding work, need to help customers find work, customer had to find a job on their own	10%

(OIB) Older Individuals Who are Blind

Trends to Watch

Positive Aspects of the Consumer Experience

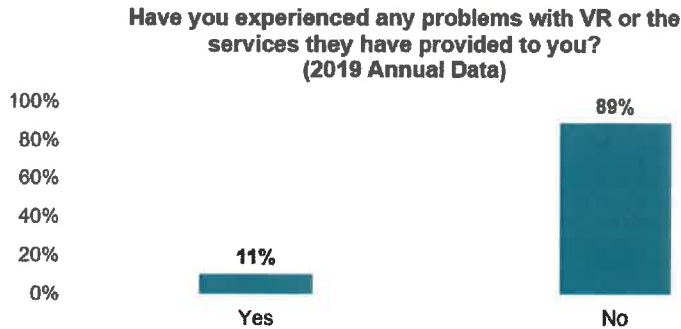
In general, OIB program consumers have a positive experience and are satisfied with staff and counselors and with the services they receive. OIB consumers report the most positive consumer experience of all three populations. The most positive part of their experience is working with VR/OIB staff and counselors. Being actively involved and in control of their experience. Having achieved or will achieve their goals. A positive perspective on outcomes. North and rural areas are more positive than the south area.

Less positive aspects of the consumer experience include

Some consumers in the OIB program report challenges with the application process. Experience with staff and counselors has trended down slightly since May- August 2019. Still the most positive aspect of their experience. Outcomes and meeting goals has trended down slightly since May-August 2019. Some report difficulties accessing OIB program offices. This is most pronounced in the north and rural districts.

Domain	Sept - Dec 2018	Jan - April 2019	May - August 2019	September - December 2019
Overall Satisfaction and Expectations	87	85	88	86
Experience with Services Provided by VR	88	90	91	90
Experience with Staff and Counselors	95	96	97	94
Communications with Staff	87	89	88	86
Customer Control and Involvement	86	88	89	87
Outcomes and Meeting Goals	85	85	91	87
Ease of the application process for VR services	83	67	77	67
Accessibility of the VR office for someone with your type of disability	90	86	84	86
Would you tell your friends with disabilities to go to the VR program for help? (% yes)	99%	100%	97%	97%
Did you experience any problems with VR or the services they have provided to you? (% no)	96%	75%	88%	89%

11% of consumers reported experiencing a problem with the OIB program or the services they were provided. Of those experiencing a problem, only 17% indicate that the OIB program worked to resolve the problem.



Type of Problem or Issue	% Experiencing
Waiting to receive services, have not received services	26%
Counselors or staff was unprofessional, rude, did not care	18%
Issues communicating with staff or counselors, difficulty reaching staff or counselors	12%
Program was not effective in helping customer or helping customer meet goals	11%
Needed specific equipment or adaption	11%
Difficulties in obtaining specific services, had to find services on own, need to improve services	11%
Difficulties in finding employment, few job options	10%
Counselors or staff need more training, more supervision, need to be more qualified	10%

Percentage among those experiencing a problem.

Feedback from Older Individuals Who are Blind

Consumers were not satisfied with VR. VR did not meet expectations. Disagreed that VR helped or met their goals, they did not feel welcome, they found something difficult, they did not find VR accessible. Feedback was collected throughout the survey in response to 21 questions. Consumers could provide more than one response.

The following table summarizes the most common responses from 73 consumers that provided additional feedback. This is 56% of OIB consumers.

	%
Difficulties with paperwork and forms, need help in completing forms, need alternate formats	30%
Waiting to receive services, have not received services	30%
Issues communicating with staff or counselors, difficulty reaching staff or counselors	29%
OIB program was not effective in helping customer or helping customer meet goals	21%
Location of OIB facilities, need additional offices, expanded operating hours	19%
Needed transportation assistance, did not receive needed transportation assistance	14%
Needed more support or services, had to fight to obtain services, needed more guidance	11%
Needed more information about programs and services, did not provide enough information	10%

Positive Consumer Experiences

A large majority of consumers of VR/OIB services are positive about their experience and are satisfied with the services they receive. The most positive aspect of the consumer experience is working with VR staff and counselors. The number of consumers reporting they experienced a problem is declining. By age, those under age 25 report the most positive consumer experience with VR. Northern and rural consumers generally report a more positive experience.

Areas of Focus for Quality Improvement

The area of the consumer experience viewed least positively is communications with VR staff and counselors.

True of all three service populations. Common to all states when MDR conducts VR consumer experience surveys. Consumer feedback focuses on staying connected and the time it takes to contact their counselor: Counselor did not return calls, emails or follow-up. Calls, mail not returned for days, weeks, had to wait too long for return call. Better communication needed. Get voicemail, never answers the phone. Staff did not return calls, emails or follow-up. Hard to remember, find phone number, who to contact.

Consumers in the South district are in general less positive about their experience than other parts of the state.

Generally true of all three service populations. Lower scores across most consumer experience metrics. They report experiencing more problems. Issues communicating with staff or counselors, difficulty reaching staff or counselors. Needed more help finding work, need to help customers find work, customer had to find a job on their own. Needed more support or services, had to fight to obtain services, needed more guidance.

All three populations report difficulties with paperwork, they need to fill out forms, needing assistance, and/or needing forms in alternate formats.

Some consumers report difficulties with the application process. OIB are the most likely to report challenges or difficulties. Among the Youth in Transition, issues are most prevalent among African Americans, Asians, American Indians, and those of two or more races. (Common concerns: Hard, somewhat difficult, complicated. Need more information about services offered, not enough information provided. Lots of paperwork, too long, make it shorter. Time lag to get services, appointments. Having to find information, too much information. Need help in filling out forms).

A small percentage report difficulty accessing VR offices.

Most prevalent among OIB consumers. Distance to the office and/or a lack of transportation are key issues. Some mention difficulties with the physical structure of VR offices. Distance, too far away. Transportation in general, do not have transportation, need transportation, lots of waling to get to office, distance from bus or train. Locations changed or moved; office not easily accessible. Mobility in building or office, hard getting around. Access, and exit with doors, difficult, need signs.

Other areas to be aware include

Among General VR and Youth in Transition, older consumers are less positive. Consumers whose cases were closed unsuccessfully are less positive about their experience. Satisfaction with employment is trending downward.

Moving Forward

Data collection will continue in three Trimester data collection periods. January through April, May through August, September through December.

Data collection will still be primarily handled by telephone. Consumers will be provided additional methods by which to complete data collection. Online, mail/paper.

Consumers may request an email invitation to an online survey or a mailed paper version of the survey. If a consumer cannot be reached by telephone or has a bad number, they will be sent an email to complete the survey online if an email address is available.

Recommended items for removal and follow-up

What could VR do to improve the services it offers to you and others? In thinking about your experience with VR what worked well for you? What has been the most challenging part of your experience?

MDR would also recommend conducting additional follow-up regarding paperwork and forms. A significant percentage of consumers mention difficulties with paperwork and forms, needing help in completing forms, and needing alternate formats in their feedback. A significant percentage also mention difficulties with the application process. We would recommend gathering additional detail to better understand what is meant by difficulty.

The presentation was concluded.

A 15-minute break was taken

6. **REVIEW OF THE 2ND FINAL DRAFT OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED STATE PLAN**

Ms. Hendren provided an executive summary overview of the changes listed below:

Pg. 11-14 d.2.A, B, C, D Interagency agreements with education/Transition planning/outreach

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has regular meeting with representatives from the Department of Education. VR delivers presentations at regional meetings for Special Education Directors and VR's line staff participate in training events for regional educators. In partnership with the NDOE, the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) Partnership agreement is in its fourth year of a five-year technical assistance grant. In addition to attending the annual Capacity Building Institute, we have provided technical assistance to local high schools to develop goals and objectives to improve outcomes in two primary areas: expansion of service delivery of Pre-ETS; and increasing participation of students with disabilities in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs statewide. Hired by the Lyon Co. School District with braided funding, an on-site transition coordinator serves as the single point-of-contact for VR's regional transition coordinator, facilitating the development of tailored Pre-ETS offerings. Expanding on the success achieved by this model, VR has entered into contracts to similarly hire an embedded transition coordinator with braided funding in WCSD and Douglas County School district (DCSD) beginning July 1, 2020.

VR participated in the annual Nevada Student Leadership Transition Summit (NSLTS) which is a two-day summit geared toward increasing graduation rates; participants' exposure to postsecondary options and available resources; and improvement of students' understanding of the requirements for a successful transition to a world beyond high school. The 2019 NSLTS conference was attended by over 225 individuals across 28 teams from 13 school districts. Participants included high school students, teachers, transition facilitators, young adult facilitators, young adult panelists, adult facilitators, and conference planners and coordinators.

Summer camp partnerships included with Western Nevada College in Carson City, Alpine Academy in Reno, Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno, and Odyssey Charter School in Las Vegas. In June 2019, we added a new summer camp provider, Bloom Consulting from Austin, Texas. They ran 2 additional camps for Nevada. The community-based Career Exploration Camp continued for its ninth year. About 35 students had the opportunity to work at multiple sites to job shadow and do hands-on work. This weeklong program included classroom instruction on employment soft skills, culinary skills, mobility/bus training, and actual hands-on work at job sites.

Staffing:

In southern Nevada, serving the Clark County School District (CCSD) are five rehabilitation counselors and two rehabilitation technicians that work as two full-time dedicated teams. These teams coordinate transition services to CCSD, which has 49 comprehensive high schools in addition to charter schools and 15-20 alternative and prison schools. Serving the northern Nevada school districts, which covers seven counties and 26 high schools, are two dedicated transition teams and 5 mixed outreach teams.

VR is now fully staffed with a team of 3-part time contracted and one full time state employee performing transition coordination services statewide. This team of 4 individuals conducts outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services. They provide a bridge from the local schools to VR staff to ensure all students with disabilities have knowledge of transition and Pre-ETS services.

Pg. 15-16 e. Cooperation with private non-profits

Service contracts have replaced provider agreements. Fee schedules are roughly based upon the Medicaid reimbursement rate, when appropriate. This section lists a variety of service providers for VR clients with whom we've entered into Service contracts.

Pg. 18-20 g.1. Coordination with Employers

VR reaches out to businesses through its Business Services team through contact lists developed from participation at job fairs, business development expositions, the economic development forum, the local and state workforce boards, human resource associations, regional workforce consortia, chambers of commerce membership/participation, and statewide economic development efforts. These contacts are capitalized upon for one-on-one relationship that can be leveraged into employment opportunities, and pre-employment training sites.

VR's partnership with the newly completed Sephora Distribution Center in Las Vegas is currently providing its work readiness training program for the DSU's clients seeking employment in warehousing/distribution. Sephora has hired 13 candidates from 3 classes to date. VR collaborated with Sephora to provide the soft skills curriculum that Easterseals Nevada (now called "Capability Health and Human Services") delivers to participants at Sephora's Distribution Center.

VR is in partnership with the DIPACO company has launched an assembly and packaging work readiness training program for VR clients. This program is a paid work experience program that is four weeks at 40 hours per week with the program running at total of 160 hours. DIPACO is a worldwide manufacturer and distributor of diesel fuel injection parts. 11 participants have completed the program thus far and are employed by DIPACO.

VR is in partnership with Amazon and Pride Industries launched an employment program that provides opportunities for people with disabilities at the Amazon Sort Centers, Prime Now locations, and Whole Foods locations. All jobs are in an integrated environment at Amazon locations and onboarded clients are Amazon employees with a starting wage of \$15.00 per hour. So far, 12 participants have been hired by Amazon.

VR developed a format for MGM Properties, Eldorado Resorts, The Service Companies and McDonalds franchisee groups for streamlined hiring of individuals with disabilities. This format has additionally increased retention of employees with disabilities at these businesses. VR sets up prescreening interviews between the businesses' Diversity and Disability Coordinators and the applicants. Topics discussed with the applicants includes their resumes and job history, hobbies and interests, most recent jobs, barriers to employment, assistive technology, accommodations and job coaching. Through this process, the Diversity and Disability Coordinator can better identify employment opportunities for these applicants for maximum success and retention. To date, a total of 38 individuals have been hired through this process.

Through the VR's employer engagement, soft skills have been identified as the number one training need for job applicants. VR is providing soft skills training for all VR clients, as needed. The training includes: Company Vision, Mission and Values; Teamwork; Problem Solving; and Critical Thinking. This helps to prepare job seekers in professionalism, communication and attitude. VR has developed inter-local contracts with UNR, CSN, Great Basin College (GBC), and private vendors for statewide delivery of the soft skills curriculum, which was created from the U.S. Department of Labor's "Skills that Pay the Bills" curriculum. To date, soft skills have been delivered to a total of 649 participants statewide.

VR has created Job Seeking Skills/Work Readiness Workshops which are delivered monthly in southern, northern and rural Nevada. The workshops include resume building, job searching/application assistance, interviewing tips and job retention tips. 152 participants have completed the workshops thus far.

VR's top ten employers are listed on pages 19-20.

Pg. 20-21 g.2. Transition services/Pre-ETS

VR has 74 community-based assessment employer sites statewide that provide work exploration opportunities and job shadowing to all consumers, with unique sites developed for transition students. Sites include opportunities in clerical, automotive repair, floral design, retail, warehousing, food service, hospitality, janitorial, and childcare.

Recognizing the unique needs of transition students, and in collaboration with CCSD and WCSO, the DSU has four Project SEARCH sites: Sunrise Hospital and Centennial Hills Hospital in Las Vegas, where students are exposed to the world of medical, clerical work and customer service work; the Regional Transportation Center (RTC) in Las Vegas, where students experience various activities from clerical to vehicle maintenance; and the Renaissance Hotel in Reno, where students experience various activities from housekeeping to banquet services. Each site can serve up to 10 students, for a total of 40 students each school year.

Another method of Pre-ETS service delivery is partnership with vendors to provide youth camps during summer and other school breaks. To date the DSU has provided Pre-ETS camp experiences to over 550 students.

The CCSD's transition staff offer a regional conference bi-annually to the community called Students Talking about the Real World (STAR). The STAR program is designed to educate families, students and professionals about transition services available in Clark County, and VR participates in this program. Its transition counselors provide information about VR services to assist students transitioning from school to adult life.

In January 2019, VR's collaboration with the Office of Special Education, Nevada Department of Education made a statewide purchase of an online job exploration platform called the VirtualJobShadow. The partnership is committed to providing access to every secondary student with disabilities in Nevada. As of September 2019, 2,000 student accounts have been created.

Pg. 23-25 i.1.A.i and iii Personnel

In FFY 2019, VR served 4,595 individuals with disabilities. With 48 full-time equivalent (FTE) rehabilitation counselor positions (excluding 2 public service intern positions) serving the VR program in Nevada, the ratio of rehabilitation counselors to program participants was 1/90.

Nevada's minimum qualifications for a vocational rehabilitation counselor I or II is a bachelor's degree, and for a vocational rehabilitation counselor III or supervisor is a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation counseling, health, social or other related behavioral science degree program. Vocational rehabilitation counselor IIIs and supervisors must also have the documented ability to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam, at a minimum.

The average caseload size per counselor for FFY 2018 was 84. It was 76 for FFY 2019, as new counselor positions have been added. The current staffing levels are sufficient for the number of participants seeking services, as evidenced by the average caseload size. Additionally, the DSU has considered other factors including service to students with disabilities who are "otherwise eligible," the growth of consumers with the most significant disabilities (as these are more time-consuming cases), and the administrative requirements of WIOA.

Based upon projected growth of the labor market, new applications are projected to increase from 2,498 in FFY19 to 2,524 in FFY20 and 2,549 in FFY21.

iii. on page 25 lists all of VR's current positions by type and includes current vacancies and projected vacancies.

Pg. 34-35 i.4.B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge

Within state of Nevada, Department of Personnel, non-supervisor staff are required to take thirteen (13) mandatory employee development courses. Supervisory staff must take these 13 courses and eight (8) additional courses. In addition to internal trainings and educational opportunities, VR encourages staff to identify and request external training opportunities.

VR has participated in the following recent conference training opportunities: California State University Northridge (CSUN)/assistive technology conference; CSAVR fall and spring conferences

National Council of State Agencies for the Blind; Employment and Disability Forum; Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance Summit; BLAST (National Association of Blind Merchants and National Federation of the Blind); Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE); National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP); Capacity Building Institute, with NTACTION; The Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR); get Aware Live Conference; Governor's Workforce Development Board Retreat; Nevada Transition Conference.

Pg. 35-36 i.5. Personnel to Address Communication Needs

The northern and rural districts have four bilingual staff members that provide services to the northern region of Nevada. The southern district has four bilingual (Spanish speaking) staff members, including one Administrative Assistant who is a receptionist at the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation's main office. In addition to Spanish, the DSU has staff that can provide translation/interpretation services for our clients who speak a variety of languages such as Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, Mandarin Chinese and French as the Department of Education, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR) maintains a list of employees proficient in their respective languages. If VR's personnel are unavailable, the services of vendors are purchased, as needed.

VR now has a team serving Deaf and hard of hearing consumers in the southern district. This includes two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (one who is Deaf) both who are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and a paraprofessional Rehabilitation Technician (who is also Deaf). Deaf consumers are addressed in ASL when on our premises. Additionally, each member of this team serving the Deaf has a video phone to communicate with deaf consumers. In a Northern rural office, the VR has one rehabilitation counselor who is certified in American Sign Language.

VR maintains a relationship with a Nevada sister agency, the Aging and Disability Services Division which provides free Certified Hearing Interpreters (CHI) to any Nevada government agency. There are two interpreters available in the south and two in the north. The CHIs are also available to interpret for rural Nevada individuals, when requested.

VR has developed a policy regarding effective communication with individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Staff members have been trained in effective communication, and this topic is re-addressed annually for new staff.

Pg. 37-41 j. (all) Statewide Assessment

This is all information from our Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), which has been presented to the Council on multiple occasions. A new CSNA is currently underway. It will examine FFY2017-2019, and be presented to the Council later this year.

Pg. 41-43 k.1., 2A and B Annual Estimates

VR projects it will increase the number of individuals determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services in proportion to the State's projected population growth. VR served a total of 4,595 individuals in FFY19. New clients made eligible in FFY19 totaled 2,498. New clients are projected to increase to 2,524 in FFY20 and 2,549 in FFY21. This is a 1.02% increase year over year.

Client services expenditures from Section 110 funding totaled \$7,629,505 in FFY19. Supported employment grant expenditures (follow-along only) totaled \$68,177 in FFY19. VR served a total of 511 individuals with the most significant disabilities (SE clients). VR is projected to serve 516 in FFY20 and 521 in FFY21.

Pg. 44-46 l. (all) State Goals and Priorities

Goals and priorities to carry out the VR program include:

- Increase partnerships with employers to develop work readiness training programs.
- Increase the use of business services representatives (internal or workforce/One-Stop partners).
- Create and implement marketing strategies.
- Educate employers about incentives for hiring individuals with disabilities.

- Increase access to quality job development services.
- Identify key employers for recruitment efforts and for work readiness training programs.
- Work with the Office of Workforce Innovation for a New Nevada (OWINN) and the Department of Employment Training and Rehabilitation's Research and Analysis Bureau to identify growth occupations with strong labor markets and areas of industry need.
- Work collaboratively with WIOA partners to send clients to appropriate training programs to get the specific education, credentialing, licensure, etc. to fill high demand/high growth occupations.
- Update interlocal and service contracts (Memorandums of Understanding-MOUs) with education and workforce.
- Increase the use of social media outlets to inform businesses and the public about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities.
- Collaborate on the creation of career pathways.

VR will place focus on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities; minorities with disabilities, especially the underserved groups of Hispanic and Asian individuals; individuals with mental health disabilities; and transition students.

Pg. 47-49 o.1. Strategies

All strategies to achieve goals which were approved by the Council are listed here.

Pg. 49-51 o.2. How AT will be provided

VR provides assistive technology assistance on a statewide basis. VR's southern district office has an on-site assistive technology staff position. This position is responsible for providing evaluations, assessments, training and support services to participants to assist them in obtaining and maintaining employment. Counselors statewide also have the option of referring participants to Kratu, Inc. to provide assistive technology equipment and/or services unavailable internally. Over the last year, VR has contracted with the Colorado Center for the Blind, which provides access to Nevada's Rehabilitation Counselors to a residential program that assesses and provides assistive technology services to VR participants.

In field practice, the VR counselor takes into consideration the need for assistive technology at each stage of the rehabilitation process. This may mean referring the participant for an evaluation in their home, or at their current or prospective work environment for consideration of the provision of AT.

Pg. 52-53 o.4. Methods to improve and expand VR services for transition students

VOICE, JEEP, Career Connect, summer camps, Next Step in Carson City School District, initiatives with Lyon County School District, soft skills and work readiness training all are included here. All have been discussed previously.

Pg. 53-60 o.6, 7, 8.A. Strategies to improve performance

In addition to the strategies outlined in I., please see additional strategies below:

- Increase the use of business services representatives (internal or workforce/One-Stop partners). Co-locate staff in One-Stop locations. (As of January 2020, all the DSU's workforce services reps. (WSRs) are now co-located with other partner WSRs at the Maryland Parkway Job Connect office in Las Vegas, and at the Reno Town Mall One-Stop location in Reno).
- Increase access to quality job development services, including creation of the DSU's own FTE staff job developers. (As of February 2020, the DSU has its first ever FTE staff job developer positions. The pilot includes one job developer in the north and one in the south. Both are supported by rehabilitation technician IIs, with oversight from a statewide manager. This is a pilot that VR hopes to expand in the future).
- Provide businesses with disability awareness training, including "Windmills."
- Educate businesses about rehabilitation technologies/assistive technologies and peer supports.
- Consider self-employment and home employment options for individuals with disabilities.
- Provide access to resources in support of self-employment, including business plan development.

- Increase the utilization and promotion of the 700–Hour program for state employment of people with disabilities. Consider statute changes to enhance this program.
- Identify federal employment opportunities, leveraging the requirements in the regulations for Sec. 503 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Promote VR programs and the hiring of individuals with disabilities at local and state board meetings and elicit feedback from members for developing policy and programs for people with disabilities.
- Utilize employment data from EmployNV, Aware VR and from DETR's Research and Analysis Bureau to strengthen VR's workforce activities and inform decisions.

Pg. 60-63 p.1. and p.2. A. and B. Evaluation of VR program goals

These are the NSRC goals and VR's performance in FFY19:

Goal 1: Successful employment outcome goal was 822. Outcome was 681.

Goal 2: Increase participation of transition students' goal was 1,014. Outcome (new applications to VR) was 495.

Successful outcomes (employment or postsecondary ed.) for transition students' goal was 400.

Outcome was 157.

Students receiving Pre-ETS goal was 1,898. Outcome was 904.

Goal 3: Increase participation of SE client's goal was 786. Outcome was 511.

Successful employment outcome goal for SE clients was 166. Outcome was 106.

Goal 4: Successful employment outcome goal for individuals with mental health disabilities was 330.

Outcome was 203.

Goal 5: Maximize resources. This does not have a goal, per se. The Council hopes to see this total increase year over year. In FFY19, VR brought in additional federal funds with match that it generated (not including general fund) in the amount of \$6,869,010. This was from non-general fund match sources totaling \$1,859,084.

Except for Goal 5, these goals were not met due to high rehabilitation counselor vacancy rates and the time and effort involved in recruiting and training new staff and ensuring their understanding and proper implementation of the many changes mandated within WIOA. Additionally, the DSU implement a new case management system, Aware VR, which greatly impacted staff's ability to meet goals. Aware VR went live in April 2019 and took 2 years to fully implement. Lastly, Nevada has struggled with receiving appropriate training on customized employment and retaining staff and partners with that expertise to better serve SE clients.

Pg. 64-65 q.1. Quality and scope of SE services

VR continues to work with the Pathway to Work, which gives individuals with existing JDT Medicaid waivers an opportunity to experience workforce training at community work sites. Currently, there are three employers participating in this program: Rio Hotel, Get Fresh and Centennial Hills Hospital. In SFY 2018, 41 individuals benefitted from this program.

Additional programs working with youth exist in southern Nevada through collaboration between the CCSD, Opportunity Village, Inc., the DSU, and the Desert Regional Center. The school district pays for student's ages 18–21 years old to participate in soft skills and vocational training in a program called Job Discovery I and II. When the students graduate to phase II, they are referred to the DSU to begin formal job development and placement activities.

Internally, one rehabilitation team has focused its efforts on SE participants. This team has developed unique relationships with SE employment support providers and meets on a regular basis to staff client cases and ensure closer follow-along. This model has proven very successful and is under consideration for future expansion.

7. **OTHER REPORTS**

Ms. Curry reported that the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is collaborating with other councils to determine community needs for independent living and the council is working on the state plan.

David Nuestro reported on the October 2019 National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, Inc. (NCSRC) and Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) conference that he and Kacy Curry attended. They learned about what other state councils are doing for example: The Consumer Satisfaction Survey, Strategic Planning, RSA 911. They were given a thumb drive with information. They also reviewed what council members duties are within each state and collaborating with others states on how to assist Vocational Rehabilitation.

Kacy Curry reported there were some interesting topics including: Transportation, Training and Employment venue. Network of community businesses. Supported Employment.

8. **REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (RSA) MONITORING REPORT**

This item was tendered to for the next NSRC meeting scheduled for May 12, 2020.

9. **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TRAINING**

Dale McWilliams, VR Training Officer began his presentation by providing an overview of Effective Communication. To ensure individuals with a vision, hearing or speech disability can communicate effectively. When to provide auxiliary aids and services. To consider the nature, length, complexity, and context and method(s) of communication and understand who is protected. It is the senders' responsibility to ensure a message is interpreted correctly. Two things go into a communication. First is the transmission of the message, expressed in a form that the recipient may understand. The second is an understanding of the message, how to decipher the message.

The term Effective Communication is defined as communication between two or more people wherein the intended message is successfully delivered, received and understood. Communication is a two-way process in which a message flows from sender to received and back again. Communicating with persons with disabilities relates to section 504 and title II of the Rehabilitation and American's with Disabilities Acts (ADA).

Effective communication promotes understanding. Understanding leads to informed choice. VR's policy together with the federal regulations focuses on individuals making informed choices based on the information collected. It is very difficult to make an informed choice based on information which has not been supplied in a clear and accessible way.

Section 504 provides equal opportunity for every eligible individual with a disability to engage in programs, offered by an agency receiving Federal financial assistance. Programs receiving federal assistance cannot deny a qualified individual service based on a disability and a qualified individual with disabilities must be given the opportunity to participate in and benefit from services equal to those offered to individuals without any disabilities. There is the potential either VR or the SRC could discriminate against an individual based on a disability. While section 504 requires individuals with disabilities be provided the opportunity for the same level of benefit, they are not guaranteed the same results.

Title II add to section 504 by requiring all state and local governments to take steps to ensure that their communications with people with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. This requirement is referred to as "effective communication" and it is required with the **exception of where a state or local government can show that providing effective communication would definitely alter the nature of the service or program in question or would result in an undue financial and administrative burden.**

A qualified individual is an individual who meets the qualifications or requirements to participate in a particular program. Applicants, the public, a companion, a council member are all examples of a qualified individual.

A reasonable modification for the purpose of effective communication would be the provision of interpreters, braille, speech synthesizers, or other auxiliary aids and services. Auxiliary aids and services may take many forms depending on the needs of the individual. Some examples include: UbiDuo, materials in braille, large print, electronic or audio formats, sign language interpreters, communication access real-time translation (CART) which provides word for word transcription of a conversation, event or meeting and displays it on a monitor or screen, and other devices or services that convert speech to text. It is important to keep in mind that what works for one person may not work for another. Usually the person who wants the help or service is the best source of information about which service will work best for them.

Subpart E of the ADA Title II also indicates that State and local government programs:

- Must furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services to afford equal opportunity in the program.
- Primary consideration as to which aids and services provided must be given to the request of the individual with a disability.
- Auxiliary Aids and services must be provided in an accessible format, in a timely manner, and respecting the privacy and independence of the individual.

An individual choice must be honored unless there is another equally effective means of communication available, or if, as stated, the option involves a fundamental change in services or an undue burden. It is critical that we communicate with the person before we conclude that another equally effective means of communication is available.

The ADA also discusses video remote interpreting services (VRI). VRI is particularly useful in situations where an onsite interpreter is not available such as an unanticipated last-minute meeting, emergency and medical situations and in some rural areas where interpreters are not available.

If used VRI services must meet the following guidelines:

- Services must be real-time full-motion high-quality with no lag in communication.
- Include sharply delineated images, and display face, arms, hands and fingers regardless of body position.
- There needs to be a clear audible transmission of voices and
- Adequate training in use of technology to avoid technological snafus that interfere with effective communication.

Subpart E also indicates that when communicating via telephone a text telephone (TTYs) or equally effective systems must be used. Many people consider video relay services and smart phone applications superior to text telephone. Telecommunications must be effective and in real time. Additionally, Subpart E states that we must be informed and signage as to the existence and location of accessible services, activities and facilities.

"Duties" an entity is not required to fundamentally alter its services or provide a particular auxiliary aid or service that creates an undue financial or administrative burden. However, the proof of burden that an action or auxiliary aid or service fundamentally alters services or creates an undue burden can only be made by the head of the entity or his or her designee, after considering all resources available. A written communication is still required.

A qualified interpreter's communication must be effective, accurate and impartial and the interpreter must

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possess the unique skills for the situation, including the specialized vocabulary the situation calls for. A certified interpreter who is well qualified to interpret in one setting may not be qualified to interpret in a different setting such as a court or medical setting if he or she is not able to effectively communicate the specialized vocabulary involved.

It is also important to keep in mind that signing, and interpreting are not the same thing. Knowing sign language in and of itself does not qualify an individual to be an interpreter. A qualified interpreter should be used. Family and friends should only be used in an emergency in which there is an imminent threat.

The VR policy in line with title II states that an individual shall not be required to bring their own interpreters to meetings. However, if the participant makes an informed choice to have their own interpreter, they may do so. Adults who are accompanying an individual can only be used to interpret if there is an emergency involving an imminent threat or if the individual who needs the sign language interpreter specifically requests the adult interprets for him or her, and the adult agrees. A minor child can only be relied on to interpret in an emergency involving an imminent threat. To legally interpret in the State of Nevada an interpreter must register with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Aging and Disability Services.

Lastly, other requirements related to providing effective communication include:

- The prompt identification of the auxiliary aid or service. Generally, this requires consulting with the individual to find out the individuals' needs.
- The aids and services must be provided in a timely manner.
- Retaliation is prohibited should someone claim that no effective communication has been provided.
- And an individual has the right to file a claim if they were discriminated against because of their disability.

The purpose of Effective Communication under Title II is to ensure the communication with people with disabilities are as effective as communication with others who do not have a disability.

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

11. **COMMENTS BY THE COUNCIL**

Item's to add to the agenda for next NSRC meeting scheduled for May 12th. Agenda item # 8, RSA monitoring report, NSRC orientation, Satisfaction Survey quarterly results from MDR.

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Edited By:

Javier Fernandez
Javier Fernandez, N.S.R.C. Liaison

Approved By:

Kacy Curry
Kacy Curry, Chair