

**Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council
Annual Strategic Planning Meeting
October 8, 2015
Minutes**

Council Members Present: Jack McMahan, William Ginn, Jackie Millspaugh, Jane Ciorba, Rick DeRennaux, Audrey Farnum, Ginger Jagers, Diana Garrett, Terrisha Osborn, Katie Woodward, Melinda Freundt, Jean Jones

Members Absent: Bill Dunham, Joe Cordova, Melinda Dobbs, Brenda Fitzgerald, Nancy Landrum, Erika Ochoa, Tina Spence, Kim Osmani

Others Present: Larry Hartzell, Doug Boone, Rob Gragg

Council Support: Linda Jaco Director of Sponsored Programs OSU Department of Wellness, Renee Sansom, ORC Programs Manager and Haley George ORC Grant Coordinator.

Call to order and Roll Call: Jack McMahan, ORC Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. The roll was called and a quorum established.

Consumer Comments/Announcements: None

Welcome and Introductions

Comments from Director Joe Cordova:

- My major focus for VR is to improve quality outcomes for our participants such as: increasing hourly wages for our participants, increasing expectations of staff and participants regarding attainable careers, improve quality of services and training that will lead to higher quality outcomes for participants.
- We want the people with disabilities we serve to believe they received the best quality of service DRS has to offer – in turn they will be our best advocates for the program.

Division Administrator VR Mark Kinnison:

- Continue to focus on wage increases and optimal employment for Oklahoman's with disabilities. In 2015 VR experienced a rise in successful closures as well as wages.
- Focus on Business relations throughout the state. Successfully set up and complete National Employment Team and Talent Acquisition Portal training with counseling staff. Increase the Business Advisory Council, and look at developing a Business Leadership Network in Oklahoma.
- Continue to look at ways to cut down on paperwork and provide staff with all the tools necessary to assure success.

- Develop a Vocational Evaluation tool that better meets the needs of job seekers and staff.
- Increase efforts regarding our work with DOC and Veteran Job seekers.
- I hope to meet with Tom Patt soon to explore a systematic employee compensation plan for VR staff.
- Encourage staff to consider joining professional organizations.
- Hire an Assistive Technology Coordinator that will also work with Business Services in some capacity to development good relationships with businesses in Oklahoma.
- Increase collaboration with Oklahoma Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs to assure our efforts are assisting as many Tribal members as with disabilities in returning to or obtaining employment.
- Focus on Pre-Employment Transition Services that will enhance our Transition program and will enable transition youth to gain work skills and employment.

Division Administrator VS Doug Boone:

- Continue our focus on preparation for success, in order to produce quality employment outcomes. Visual Services will stress the development of efficient skills of blindness and effective interventions for visually impaired job seekers. This will include, where appropriate, encouragement to our blind applicants to invest the time and energy to deal with blindness through attendance at a long term training center, of their choosing.
- Work to develop a computerized system which links job ready applicants with current (local) employment opportunities – including daily up-dates of job seekers and status of position openings. When accomplished, our Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and job developers will be in a better position to help fill the staffing needs of employers, with qualified and motivated employees.
- Develop a marketing “portfolio” consisting of letters of testimony from employers, regarding the positive employment success they have experienced by hiring employees who are blind or visually impaired. This will become one more tool for our placement staff to use when meeting with potential employers.
- Improve outreach to Blind Veterans, to assist in meeting their rehabilitation and employment needs.
- Continue to encourage staff participation in state and national conventions of both consumer organizations, to help them understand issues and variables experienced by blind individuals. It is also intended to help staff see beyond a person’s loss of vision and identify with job seekers as real persons, with goals and aspirations.
- Increase cooperation and dialog with Oklahoma Tribal V.R. Arrange for in-services with the various tribal VR programs, on the topic of effective rehabilitation of persons who are blind and visually impaired. Especially in rural environments.

- VS is beginning a search for a Transition Facilitator, to help assure our blind and visually impaired youth are equipped with the skills/techniques they need to compete for and obtain employment, prior to graduation.
- It is our intent to develop pre-employment Transition Services for youth ages 14 and 15, including outreach to parents through educational seminars, regarding opportunities for success when their student has competitive skills of independence. We intend to also conduct an intensive 1 week skills building training for these youth in 2016.
- Encourage Transition age youth, who participated in the 2015 Transition Independence Program (TIP) to expand upon the skills for independence they learned in Edmond last summer. We will be encouraging the students and their parents to consider committing to participation in an intensive transition program, of their choice, offered by the training centers with which we contract. It will greatly expand both their skills and self-confidence!
- Continue to share with VS staff, perspectives on blindness, which foster greater expectations for success by our job seekers.
- Continue to seek ways to better serve our rural populations, especially in the panhandle area of Oklahoma.

Committee Breakouts:

- Planning and Program
- Policy and Legislative
- Transition and Employment

Report out to the group:

See attached edited documents

Adjourn 12:15 p.m.

Next Quarterly Meeting Thursday, November 19, 2015