

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
SEPTEMBER 13-14, 2007
GOVERNOR'S INN – PIERRE

Public meeting: The Board hosted a luncheon with members of the PLANS (Persons Leading Accessible Networks of Supports) project at the Ramkota Hotel in Pierre from 11:45 AM – 1:30 PM on September 13th.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Monte Tschetter, Grady Kickul, Dr. Easton, Larry Tolzin, Dan Rounds, Kathy Hasebrook, Beth Haug, Brady Kerkman, Mary l'atala, Lyle Cook, Melissa Flor and Elaine Roberts. MEMBERS ABSENT: Shelly Schock, Ron Ronshaugen and Tom Kober. OTHERS PRESENT: Bernie Grimme, Mike Frost, Mike Herrlein, Colette Wagoner, and Ronda Williams.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Monte Tschetter, Vice Chairperson called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. Monte explained he would be chairing the meeting due to the absence of Tom Kober, Chairperson. Monte welcomed everyone in attendance and asked each person to introduce him or herself. More lengthy introductions were delayed to allow other members to arrive, to include newly appointed members. Monte reminded members of the meeting protocol, which accompanied the draft meeting agenda. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Grady asked that "Future Initiatives" be added under the Division Director's Report. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH THE ADDITIONAL ITEM, - MADE (M), SECONDED (S) AND CARRIED (C).** APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Monte asked for a motion to approve the Board's June 7/8, 2007 meeting minutes. Recommended changes were noted on pages 5 and 11. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CHANGED – MSC. MOTION TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES FROM AUGUST 21, 2007 – MSC.**

TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: A comment was made in regard to the public meeting held at noon. Monte asked that any comment regarding the luncheon be held until the public meeting agenda item. No other comments were provided.

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK (BLN) OVERVIEW AND UPDATE: Mike Frost and Mike Herrlein were available for this report. Frost explained that the Sioux Falls BLN (SF BLN) is an affiliate of the United States Business Leadership Network, a national endeavor promoting workforce initiatives that enable qualified individuals with disabilities to succeed in the workforce. The SF BLN provides services and activities to area employers, which promote best

practices relating to employment of people with disabilities, networking and professional development to have better access to the disability community, building effective relationships between employers and community partners, and encouraging employer disability recruitment outreach efforts. Frost also touched on the following items:

- Symon Awards luncheon will be held on October 16, which recognizes employers and employees with disabilities. The keynote speaker will be Erin Riehle, Director of Disability Services, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and will focus on Project Search.
- Riehle will also be the speaker for 'Bridges to Employment' training for human resource managers on October 17th. This will be a two-hour training designed to provide innovative solutions to the challenges employers face in a competitive workforce environment.
- Employer training will be held on October 23rd with a focus on recruitment.
- Participate in the Greenstar Symposium on October 25th, which will provide disability related educational workshops throughout the day.
- Mentoring Day will be two fold; the first part of the day provides youth with a choice of skills' building workshops (resume development, interviewing skills) and the second part of the day will provide mentoring or a job shadowing experience.
- 13 member steering committee;
- Disability Expo to be held March 2008;
- Hosting leadership round table discussions involving employers;

Mike Herrlein spoke about being a former recipient of vocational rehabilitation services and working his way up the career ladder at Wells Fargo. He talked about the need to share success stories with employers, promote the "can do" attitude and abilities of people with disabilities. Both individuals responded to various questions. The ability to get in the door with some businesses is approaching them with the topic of "diversity" – which includes disability related topics. At this time, Grady re-introduced Ronda Williams to members. She has been with the Division, however, she recently received the additional title of 'Business Outreach Consultant'. She will coordinate and promote activities with an employer focus. She will be attending trainings in Utah and Florida along with Dan Rounds. The Division is looking at this from an employers' perspective of providing a quality product, the ability of providing qualified people with disabilities to better meet their needs. Comments and questions were raised regarding how involved is the Division working with employers or the Department of Labor in assisting consumers to become a marketable candidate. Other comments were raised about internships, mentoring opportunities, apprenticeship programs to be utilized to fill the labor pool

shortage. Questions were asked about fields that are being sought out by employers and are hard to fill (i.e., health care, retail, manufacturing, financial services, medical services) and how the 'Project Search' model could be utilized. Members were encouraged to think beyond the borders of Sioux Falls, and how to possibly promote similar activities in smaller rural communities.

DISCUSSION/DEBRIEFING OF PUBLIC MEETING WITH PLANS: The Board extended an invitation to the PLANS project members to join them for a luncheon to have conversation about vocational rehabilitation services and how they are best able to meet the needs of those they serve. Thirty individuals from PLANS and eleven Board members were present, in addition to Board and Division staff. The comments were as follows:

- The need for more flexibility within the vocational rehabilitation program – each individual is unique and their needs are different;
- Parent of adult child had very positive experience with VR, individual has two part-time positions;
- When individual first started working with providers, they were very discouraging – disability will limit you.
- There are differences between counselors or district offices of what services can be provided;
- Individual's son was working with the Project Skills program and the employer wanted to keep him on, however VR counselor didn't follow through; and then the individual's job ended;
- No vocational rehabilitation counselor present during transitional meeting (IEP meetings);
- Sometimes there is a need for an individual with a disability to take an entry level position and work up the career ladder;
- Blame of VR counselor for not being successful, also need to look at individual responsibility;
- Some individuals could benefit from having an advocate (or PLANS coordinator) with them to attend interviews, meetings, etc;
- Vocational counselor helped out a lot;
- Project Skills work experience should have an evaluation conducted within 60 days to see if anything is needed (more job coaching/on the job training, other services) meet with consumer and employer to determine any other needs.
- Explanation of vocational rehabilitation services was provided for an individual;
- There is a need for more public information about what vocational rehabilitation services are available;

- Employment skills training and Project Skills provides work experience for those with disabilities and it provides education and disability awareness training to employers;
- Individual preference of living in smaller homes vs. group homes;
- Need for education regarding role of PLANS coordinators, what they do, information they provide;
- Continued emphasis needed on transition
- Refocus on the four core services in the area of independent living (advocacy, training, independent living skills training, peer support).

Overall, the comments were positive and members felt this was a worthwhile effort in obtaining public comment. Comments also reflected that these types of activities would build upon relationships, allow members to meet new people, learn about programs and services, and learn what others are doing across the state.

DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORT: DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS - Grady handed out a copy of an email (see attached), which complimented the South Dakota Transition Services Liaison Project, and that the Minnesota vocational rehabilitation program will utilize some of South Dakota's transition materials to update their materials. DRS BUDGET UPDATE – The Division is in the third month of the state fiscal year and has a total budget of approximately \$21,200,000. Next year's budget request has been submitted to the Department and it reflects a modest increases in only a couple of programs. Grady reported that there are several programs, which have waiting lists which include the vocational rehabilitation services program and Activities of Daily Living Services (ADLS) Program. The Division anticipates a waiting list for the Neuromuscular Program and the Home Modifications and Assistive Devices Program. The Division has requested an expansion of \$1.5 million in the ADLS program. FOLLOW-UP ON RSA ON SITE VISIT – Grady reminded members that Rehabilitation Services Administration staff were in South Dakota in June to review both the Division of Rehabilitation Services and Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) vocational rehabilitation programs and the independent living program. Grady handed out copies of the "FY 2007 Monitoring Report on the Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Programs in the State of South Dakota" (see attached). He pointed out several items i.e., strengths and challenges on page 48 and the summary of results on page 49 and asked members to take the document and review it at their leisure before the next meeting. Grady asked that this be added as an agenda item for the next meeting to allow more discussion and address any questions that members might have. Grady ended this item thanking those involved with the stakeholders' meetings and referenced an email (see attached) which provides

the links to RSA's website to find copies of the monitoring reports for all states reviewed and a link to fill out a survey to provide feedback regarding the review process. STATE PLAN SUBMISSION PROCESS – the Division received verbal approval last week from RSA and the signed approval letter from the RSA Commissioner is forthcoming. He stated the Statewide Needs Assessment was the biggest discussion item with RSA staff. Grady explained the Division and Board previously contracted with a university to conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment every three years. This medium was changed over the last couple of years, where the Consumer Services Committee along with Division staff look at a host of information to identify the goals, objectives and strategies for the agency. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES (MAWD) – Grady explained this project is an extension of the Freedom to Work Project and was implemented January 1st by the Department of Social Services (DSS) through an amendment to the Medicaid State Plan. It was reported that as of August 1st: 28 individuals have been approved for MAWD; 29 individual denied; and 23 applications were pending. The MAWD program allows individuals with significant disabilities to go to work and maintain their health care coverage through Medicaid. Hoby Abernathy and Bernie Grimme will provide training to the district offices and other interested parties regarding MAWD and the eligibility guidelines. The Division is reviewing the ADLS program and individuals being served by it. One of the eligibility requirements for the ADLS program stipulated that if the consumer earned over \$400 a month, these funds would be utilized to pay for PAS services. The Division will disseminate a survey to ADLS program recipients to see if they have an interest in working and if so, educate them about the MAWD program where the earned income restrictions are not as stringent. There could be a possibility that a number of the 114 individuals would exit off the ADLS program, obtain employment and get on the MAWD program. BOARD/COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS – Grady reported that Mary l'atala and Beth Haug were reappointed and Melissa Flor, Elaine Roberts and Lyle Cook were appointed to the Board recently. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) – NAVIGATOR POSITIONS: Grady reported that DOL received a grant from the United States Department of Labor to create 5 new positions (2/Sioux Falls, 1/Aberdeen, 1/Rapid City, and 1 position in Yankton). The staff will work with individuals with disabilities with obtaining needed services to become employed. The Division will assist in providing training for the new staff. Bernie passed out a fact sheet (see attached) which outlined information pertaining to the new positions. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the needs of employers and finding qualified employees (human resource meetings, employee shortages, meeting the need of employers, working with technical schools to fill the training gaps, transition programs, etc.). The Division will keep members apprised of this and perhaps have Mike Ryan attend a future meeting

and provide more details. FUTURE INITIATIVES: Bernie provided a handout “South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services Futures” (see attached). He described this as a new initiative of the Division which will challenge employees to further develop leadership skills which could lead into new, different or expanded roles within the agency. The Division will utilize this as a strategy for succession planning. Grady interjected at this point that a former Youth Leadership Forum attendee was recently hired as a vocational rehabilitation counselor.

(Elaine Roberts joined the meeting at this time.) Introductions were provided and members talked about their role on the Board and where they were from. The meeting was suspended at this point.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:30 AM on September 14th. The Chairperson welcomed everyone and asked for introductions. He also reminded everyone of the meeting protocol which was disseminated with the agenda.

FREEDOM TO WORK (FTW) UPDATE: Grady reminded members that MAWD is one accomplishment of the FTW project. He explained FTW is a federal grant in the amount of \$500,000.00 from the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services and is designed as a systems change grant to address barriers which people with disabilities face in attempts to go to work. The grant is in its’ sixth year and it has a steering committee now termed as the FTW Leadership Council. The Division has contracts in place for staff support of the project with Black Hills Special Services Cooperative and the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities to work on the projects’ initiatives. The Medicaid State Plan has been amended twice since the project was implemented. Activities of the project continue to address barriers which people with disabilities encounter in terms of employment. The project has brought Mike Walling in the last four years to provide training sessions on employment, benefits and available work incentives. Basic training sessions were offered first and now advanced and transition age sessions are being offered. A question was asked of what could be done to bring Mike Walling to one of the reservations. It was suggested that Lyle work with Shelly Pfaff and Dan Rounds to accomplish this. Elaine commented that South Dakota Parent Connection is receiving more inquiries from parents of youth/high school age and asked if they could partner with the project to better promote these types of activities. Grady added that the benefit specialists are also available across the state to work with individuals with disabilities to address questions and/or issues related to benefits, earnings and employment. Monte also added that individuals can access Social Security’s website (www.ssa.gov) for more information.

STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL: Larry Tolzin provided this update. He reported that South Dakota received federal disaster monies for the flooding that occurred this summer. Cornerstones in Huron received monies for training of migrant seasonal workers. He reported on the minimum wage increase and the pending increases for 2008 and 2009. Grady Kickul presented the State Plans for both Divisions for the Council's approval. The Department of Labor lost its contract for the Job Corp program located in Nemo. A company out of Texas (Neal Technologies) is looking at purchasing the Job Corp program with the intent of privatizing it. Larry reported that there are approximately 1,250 students in different programs across the state receiving alternative education. Questions were asked regarding alternative education and it was explained that these schools draw students who previously dropped out, teenagers who are/were pregnant, and sometimes those who don't fit into the regular education system. A comment was made about the upcoming change in statute of requiring students to stay in school until the age of 18 or until they graduate and the need to look at this issue and watch how schools address it. Not only does this impact the Department of Education it also impacts the Department of Labor, which provides a 50% funding match for alternative schools. A suggestion was made to have someone from the Department of Labor provide an overview of the alternative schools and technical schools at a future meeting (forward list of alternative schools to all members). The topic of 'employer needs' was talked about at length, and if some students are unable to get into technical schools or a four-year program (i.e., test scores, reading or writing skills, math skills) how does vocational rehabilitation fit into this picture (preparing people for needed areas)? This could equate to exploring with the Departments of Education, Labor and the technical schools to create something similar to a certificate program or a journeyman's program – something to match future employer needs as well as assisting people with disabilities seeking employment. Someone suggested that this concept should be a Workforce Development Council initiative. One member stated that what they were hearing being described was similar to a program offered in Minnesota – an occupational skills program offered in a college setting.

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC): Grady reported that the SILC meets next week in Pierre. He explained that both the Board and SILC are established under the Rehabilitation Act. The Independent Living component falls under Title VII and the vocational rehabilitation program falls under Title I. The independent living program was reviewed by RSA as he noted under his report yesterday. Preliminary approval has been given and the Division is waiting for the final approval letter from the RSA Commissioner. Grady explained that there are four centers for independent living in South Dakota and they provide information and referral, advocacy, independent living

skills training, and peer support. He referred to an earlier conversation regarding employees being prepared for the job market and he noted that the centers are one possible piece of a larger puzzle – in terms of providing job seeking skills training or other soft skills training.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was none at this time.

BVR COMMITTEE REPORTS: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Grady explained that the Division sets aside monies for the Board to use at their discretion to promote events or activities in the area of employment and people with disabilities. The Executive Committee asked Grady to bring forth the committee's recommendations for the FY 2008 resource plan. Grady provided the following: \$12,000 to support the 2007 NDEAM activities; \$1,500 to support the Governor's Awards Luncheon, \$1,500.00 to support public forum activities, and \$2,600 to support individual or organizational requests for training requests.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BOARD'S RESOURCE PLAN – MSC.

CONSUMER SERVICES COMMITTEE: Brady shared that the committee met briefly the evening before to talk about possible avenues of obtaining public comment. He offered the following for the Board's consideration: 1) Partners in Policymaking graduating session (April 12th) in Sioux Falls, which is a facilitated discussion on a variety of topics (VR, IL, transportation, education). Members could attend and listen to comments shared during this process. 2) South Dakota Association of Community Based Services (SDACBS), which are the directors of the adjustment training centers. A Board meeting might be arranged in conjunction with one of their meetings in Pierre and host something similar to the luncheon held with PLANS. 3) Work with the Native American 121 Program directors to convene a meeting and meet with Native American consumers. 4) Meet with the South Dakota Association of Mental Health Centers. Host a meeting with the directors similar to what was suggested with the SDACBS's directors. 5) Participate with the Youth Leadership Forum luncheon and legislative panel. 6) Piggyback with the Business Leadership Network with one of their round table discussions involving employers. Members were reminded that the need to obtain public input should be viewed as a continual feedback process and hosting these types of meetings could be scheduled over the course of a three-year period. Brady explained for the benefit of new members that the committee typically meets either face to face or via teleconference between meetings of the full Board. One major task for the committee is to review the State Plan attachments. Grady explained that the "Statewide Needs Assessment" had been removed as an agenda item since the majority of this work is being completed by the committee. Grady further explained that changes came from RSA in how states conduct their statewide

needs assessments. The committee's work has entailed looking over a vast amount of material, survey information, and public input, as they assisted Division staff with formulating the goals, objectives and strategies of the agency as outlined in the State Plan document. Grady thanked the committee members for their time and commitment to this process. PUBLIC AWARENESS COMMITTEE: Larry reported that October would be an exciting month with the district offices and other groups planning the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) events. A handout was provided which listed all the communities hosting events (see attached). Members were reminded that their attendance at these activities is a reimbursable activity. Members were asked to let staff know of their desire to attend a given event and the agency sponsoring the activity. More information was provided about the Fall Conference and members were encouraged to attend. Grady mentioned that there would be a press release and Governor's proclamation issued around October 1st for NDEAM. There was also mention of putting together another NDEAM booklet.

EMPLOYER RESOURCE NETWORK (ERN) UPDATE: Kathy Hassebrook updated members on the ERN project, which is a committee of the Society for Human Resource Managers (SHRM) association in the Aberdeen area. She indicated her role has been one of a liaison, a relationship builder between members of SHRM and of other providers, and she has been the diversity chairperson. She talked about the importance of members knowing who the providers are and what services they are able to offer. Providers are brought in on a rotation basis to speak to the group. She talked about a survey being conducted with employers about job shadowing and creating a pamphlet. She has met with other chapters of SHRM across the state about duplicating these types of efforts. She is facing the challenge of how to duplicate these types of efforts and she shared the story of trying to "share a recipe" with other communities, and they would take it, add to it, and mold it to fit their needs, so the initiative will take on a life of its own. Grady offered that if there is a need for resources for printing or copies of the brochures, the Division could assist with this or provide a letter of support.

ORDER OF SELECTION: Bernie provided this update and he informed new members of the Order of Selection and the need for a waiting list. He explained that at the end of August, 1,400 eligibility decisions were made and of these 80% were individuals with the most significant disabilities. Individuals in Categories 2 and 3 are those who are put on the waiting list and about 17% of these individuals have been moved off the list and now receive services. Individuals remaining on the waiting list include: seven individuals in Category 2 and thirty-two individuals in Category 3 (there are seven cases still pending

until the category can be determined). The Division is reviewing the waiting list and as of October 1st only individuals in Category 3 will be put on the waiting list, because the number of people coming into the system is starting to lessen. A question was asked regarding RSA and not having specific guidelines for each state to use to implement the Order of Selection; whereas the Council of State Administrators in Vocational Rehabilitation is looking at this, and why would there be a push for a national criterion? A comment was made that what South Dakota is doing, seems to be working so why change it. Grady responded that an Order of Selection is the last thing any state wants to implement, however the funding level has not kept up with the demand for services, and then states become forced to address the issue. Grady indicated that the easy solution would be more funding, however it does require more work for the vocational rehabilitation counselor in general. A lot of work has been done to implement the Order of Selection in South Dakota in regard to public education and training for staff. The Division is pleased that it is able to serve 97% of the individuals applying and determined eligible for services. The next handout was explained in more detail (see attached "Order of Selection Survey Form Returning Off Waiting List Summary of Results September 14, 2007). This survey resulted from questions asked at a previous Board meeting. The feedback was positive and members indicated that the information collected was very interesting. Vocational rehabilitation services were discussed (what it can and cannot do) vs. the provision of social services.

OTHER BUSINESS: Bernie asked if he could re-visit the topic of the Statewide Needs Assessment and permission was granted. He shared that the Consumer Services Committee identified 5 goals and thirty-eight strategies. He has since shared this information with the field offices' staff and asked for their input regarding action steps. These action steps will be brought back to the committee for further review and discussion. Once again this topic will be addressed under the Consumer Services Committee at future meetings.

CLOSING ACTIONS: FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: Upcoming agenda items will include: Final report from RSA, Dr. Cooch present on the post-high school survey (include before the RSA Final Report discussion item), Dan and Ronda will address the topic of Business Consultant Outreach, revisit the State Plan approval. Other future items noted during discussion which could be addressed at future meetings: DOL representative provide an overview of the alternative schools and navigator positions, DOE present an overview of the technical schools, four-year programs and eligibility requirements. Brady asked for clarification regarding the public meetings when he talked about the possible avenues of obtaining input. He asked if the Board was interested in sending members and/or staff to the Partners in Policymaking graduation session to

listen to comments. If the Board selected this, he would need to pass information onto staff at South Dakota Advocacy Services for planning purposes. It was agreed that there could be members of the Board or committee that would attend to hear the comments. SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING: The Board agreed to meet on November 26 and 27th in Rapid City and convene the new member orientation in conjunction with it. **ADJOURNMENT: MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 12:00 (NOON) – MSC.**