SRC Annual State Report 2018

The State Rehabilitation Council was very busy in 2018. As a fairly new group with membership now up to 17 people, much of the work focused on orienting new members and establishing their roles and responsibilities on the Council.

As a part of this growth, the SRC developed an electronic membership application and a mentor process for orienting new members. The Council worked on the development of an updated Membership Manual available in electronic format. We also reviewed and revised the SRC’s Mission Statement and By-Laws to reflect the changes brought by WIOA and adjustments to meetings and responsibilities of the Council members. We also sent a representative to the NCSRC Conference to bring back information to our group about the work of other SRCs across the nation and made a financial commitment to continue to do so each year.

The Wyoming SRC meets four times annually in face-to-face meetings at various locations around the state. In addition, we also hold two videoconference meetings as a full council. Subcommittee work groups meet on alternating months to address assigned work and report back to the full Council in scheduled sessions.

A great deal of training was provided to Council members this year including:

- RSA mandatory reports from VR
- RSA fiscal processes for travel
- VR Futures Group and their role in the Policies and Procedures for VR counselors
- Next Gen Partnerships used with Workforce Services and other state partners to identify workforce needs and establish education and training opportunities statewide
- Process to establish affiliate groups with Disability:IN
- RFP process used by VR to allocate Pre-ETS monies statewide

The SRC reviewed the VR section of the Wyoming State Unified Plan and provided written feedback to VR regarding needed corrections and requests for clarification of information. We identified concerns in the accuracy of some of the information recorded and identified a lack of consistency in data reporting that made it difficult to track specific activities and their success or failure in meeting the targeted objectives. While VR administrative staff accepted our feedback, we saw little evidence of their consideration of our work. We hope to provide a stronger message
this year with more specific requests of the changes we feel are needed to strengthen the plan and provide a more detailed focus on the work to be done.

The SRC also met with Chaz Compton from SDSU (VR’s CSNA vendor) via videoconference to learn about the proposed survey process and questionnaires to be distributed. We provided feedback on the survey questions and received clarification that the survey would span a broader section of the state than has been the case in the past couple of survey cycles. We also obtained copies of the surveys to be handed out by SRC members as they participated in a variety of related activities throughout the state.

The SRC also worked to better establish itself as an advocacy and support group for VR clients. We identified the need to celebrate and publicize the good work being done to promote employment of individuals with disabilities in our state. In this effort, we established an annual award, titled the **RIPPLE Award**, to present to an outstanding VR employer in the state. Our first **RIPPLE** recipient, The Wind River Hotel and Casino, was presented this award at the annual Employment First Conference in November. In addition to the annual RIPPLE Award, monthly recognition awards are being made to other nominated employers across our state.

We are also in the process of developing a monthly recognition award to nominated VR counselors who are identifying innovative practices or working in new and creative ways to better support the clients they serve. The first **Heart and Soul Award** will be bestowed in January of 2019 to a deserving counselor. In addition to the award, the SRC is working with VR administrative staff to publicize this recognition in the VR counselor’s monthly newsletter to promote the celebration of these efforts within the agency.

The SRC also held their first public meeting in conjunction with our quarterly face-to-face meeting held in Cody in October. While we were not successful in generating participation of the public, we identified a number of ways we could better promote and advertise the opportunity to come and meet with SRC members to share client stories of success or barriers experienced when working with VR. We plan to continue the use of public meetings at each quarterly meeting event moving forward.

In a final effort to promote the sharing of information and access to the SRC, we established a SRC Facebook page and Twitter account. We are using these resources to publish information-based postings as well as educational opportunities for
training and development of VR staff and clients. We are working to promote these social media tools and increase our visibility in the state.

Finally, the SRC committee members have been engaging in cross-agency discussions about ways that we might enhance training and information sharing between state partners. Members from the Department of Education and the Behavioral Health Division of the Developmental Disabilities programs discussed barriers in their service provider’s knowledge of each other’s roles in working with VR to develop employment opportunities for individuals in our state. We are in the process of exploring options for cross agency training events and will be bringing forth a request/recommendation to VR in 2019 to address these concerns.

While we are still in our infancy stage as a developing council, we are finally engaging in the work that we are charged to do and feel we have established momentum to move forward. We look forward to 2019 with excitement and determination to provide benefit to the consumers of VR services as well as those making the commitment to serve with this group!

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Junge
Wyoming SRC Chair