

Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired
DRAFT Minutes
March 24, 2017
Ft. Pierre, SD

Members Present: Connie Sullivan, Catherine Greseth, Tana Buresch, Cole Uecker, Cheri Knispel, Alan Vandenburg, Koni Sims, Kay Miller, Patrick Czerny, Lynda O'Connor-Ohayon, Gaye Mattke

Members Absent: Julie Briggs, Roberta Ecoffey, Eric Rippentrop, Bruce Micheel, Marcia Hultman

Others Present: Nancy Hoyme, Sandy Neyhart, Ronda Williams, Becky Blume

Catherine Greseth made a motion to approve the agenda. Koni Sims seconded. Motion carried.

Koni Sims made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 9, 2016, meeting. Kay Miller seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Cheri Knispel is selling raffle tickets for National Federation for the Blind (NFB). The state NFB convention will be May 5 and 6 in Rapid City.

Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act Update

A Memorandum of Understanding between core partners for infrastructure costs needs to be in place by July 1, 2017. DRS/SBVI and Department of Labor & Regulation (DLR) are co-located in several areas so already have an

agreement in place. Changes are being made in the electronic case management system as a result of the new performance indicators, which will go into effect July 1, 2017, and staff training will be held on the changes. Now that the performance indicators have changed, RSA will track a baseline of performance for each state agency for two years, then there will be negotiation with RSA to discuss what the goals will be based on those baseline performance measures.

The Monitoring Guide is a resource and planning guide for VR agencies and state teams to assist in the preparation for and conduct of monitoring and technical assistance visits this fiscal year. The specific programs covered by the Guide are the VR program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act; and the Supported Employment (SE) program, authorized pursuant to Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.

The Guide includes five focus areas: competitive integrated employment outcomes; transition services and employment outcomes for youth with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities; supported employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; fiscal integrity of the VR and Supported Employment programs; and progress of VR agencies toward implementing certain requirements under Title I of WIOA governing unified and combined planning, performance accountability, and the one-stop service delivery system.

DLR has pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities available. These include electrical, electrical – lineman, mechanical, plumbing, sheet metal workers, and sprinkler fitter.

Board Activities

PR Committee:

A conference call was held on February 22 to discuss two main agenda items related to public relations by the committee members. Committee members discussed recommending to the Board a relaunch of SBVI media products. Of particular importance is using the radio ad completed in Lakota language to promote SBVI services in more remote areas of the state and offer to participate in radio talk shows in Kyle, Little Eagle/McLaughlin, and Rosebud communities. Catherine Greseth agreed to use her resources in marketing to assist with identifying radios that have talk shows on the Native American Reservations in South Dakota.

Committee members also discussed nominations for Governors Awards and identified a number of potential nominees to submit. The nominations are as follows:

Employee with a Disability – Tammy Francis. Tammy owns and operates Dakota Jackets out of her garage. She contracts with commercial businesses to provide uniforms, coats, etc. She was featured on Keloland Cares because of her generosity in making coats for people who did not obtain a coat during their fall/winter coat drive. Tammy has vision loss.

Transition Services – Eric Rippentrop. Eric has a strong passion for transition age students, which is shown by his volunteering hours at transition week, organizing tours at the college for students who attend SDRC transition week. — He was a 2016 recipient of the Spirit of Volunteerism for his work at Lutheran Social Services in teaching English to refugee students.

Citizen with a Disability – Koni Sims. She is a massage therapist with Sanford Health. She was recently recognized in a publication where she had the opportunity to write an article on the importance of massage in a medical environment. She and Chelle Hart presented on Blind and Visually Impaired Services to the employees of Sanford on two occasions. Koni is working with Sanford Human Resources to do another presentation for the doctors. Koni's passion for training and outreach on blind issues comes from her personal experiences.

Outstanding Employer – Wendy's in Rapid City. Wendy's has a reputation for providing an integrated work environment and was recognized in 2016 at the RehabAction Fall Conference in a panel presentation as an employer who diversifies their workforce. They currently employ a blind individual who has worked her way up to a management position. Catherine Greseth submitted this nomination.

The nominations should come from an individual with the Board's support. The Board was in consensus of the nominations presented.

If nominations from the SBVI Board are not selected this year, they can be updated and resubmitted next year.

Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol:

The Board paid registration for South Dakota Association of the Blind (SDAB) to have a table/booth at the Disability Awareness Day. The person who was going to be present at the booth was unable to attend due to a death in the family. It was suggested that the Board pay for a table to represent "blind and visually impaired" and NFB, SDAB, and/or Board members can be in attendance.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month:

Catherine Greseth is the Board representative on the committee. She informed the Board that budgets for the coming year are approved. Several locations have Chris Koch presenting. More information on dates and locations will be forthcoming.

Disability Summit:

Based on a recommendation made by Roberta Ecoffey, Tribal VR Director in Pine Ridge, the Board of SBVI reached out to South Dakota Advocacy Services and offered to co-host their annual event on June 2nd in Kyle. The event is a casual cook-out. Table space will be available and SBVI staff providing services in that area will be in attendance. SBVI has received referrals for services as a result of each event hosted on reservations.

Public Forum:

The Board of SBVI will have a public forum in conjunction with the NFB state convention on May 5th from 4-6 p.m. in Rapid City. Last year, the public forum focused on

technology. Catherine Greseth will inform the Mayor's Committee about the public forum.

NFB Consumer Stipends:

In the past, the Board has approved stipends of \$175 per convention with preference to first time attendees. The attendee or NFB representative has to report on the convention. Connie Sullivan made a motion to support \$175 stipend per convention. Catherine Greseth seconded. Motion carried.

Business Enterprise Program

BEP is a program within SBVI administered under the Randolph--Sheppard Act. In South Dakota, BEP has five food service businesses in Federal or State buildings.

There are currently two vacancies at BEP facilities. EROS Data Center (near Sioux Falls) has approximately 650 employees. The cafeteria in this location was abandoned in late May. The Aberdeen vendor is serving EROS as a satellite and has hired three individuals to manage the day-to-day operations and food service. The cafeteria reopened on March 7th. BEP assisted with initial inventory and some start-up costs.

The Pierre vendor resigned abruptly, however, he will continue with the vending portion for the next month or so. He has arrangements in place with Oahe Inc. to service the vending machines. The Kneip Coffee House is currently closed. BEP is looking for an individual who is legally blind to run the coffee shop and vending business.

The Huron site is vending only. The vendor currently has three vending locations, with the Huron Housing Authority, Federal Building, and Dakota Central Mail locations.

Aberdeen has a small cafeteria in the Aberdeen Federal Building. The Aberdeen vendor also has vending machines on all floors of the building, and one at the Courthouse, and has utilized the Project Skills program to hire a transition age student.

Yankton site has vending at the Federal Prison.

BEP relies on rest area vending income. Vendors also pay a set-aside assessment which assists in paying the management fee.

BEP is always looking for new vendors as the current vendors are aging and some have talked of retirement.

Independent Living Older Blind

Sandy Neyhart explained that this program has staff in Rapid City, Pierre, Sioux Falls, and Aberdeen. These staff members travel to individuals' homes to offer training on skills and devices so individuals can continue to live independently at home. The target population is age 55 and over, however, the majority of the people served are 80-100 years old. This program does not serve individuals in nursing care facilities. This program serves an average of 500 people each year. Rehab Teachers attend many outreach events, health fairs, etc.

The CCTV lease/loan program has 215 CCTV units in the lease/loan program with 86 leased and 116 loaned to individuals. The new units that were purchased during the month of February have been distributed to individuals who have recently been referred. There is no waiting list for CCTV units at this time, and only a few units are available for new referrals. DakotaLink does training on and delivery of the units, and also handles the administrative aspect.

The Assistive Technology Access Program (ATAP) will be available again. This program offers five hours of one-on-one training with their device or computer to anyone with a vision loss, no matter what age. Referrals can be made to the program. Announcements will go out in various newsletters.

The Telecommunication Adaptive Device (TAD) program is still available. TAD allows for eligible individuals to receive a device to assist with telecommunication needs. An assessment is completed to determine what device is appropriate. Training on the device is also provided.

South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind

The Rehab Center still hosts First Fridays training. Topics are set up by JoMarie Laughlin and promoted on the website. Walk-ins are available in the afternoon. JoMarie is available for any and all questions.

The Rehab Center recently purchased an OrCam for demonstration purposes. OrCam MyEye can be attached to a pair of glasses and is activated by a simple intuitive gesture. By pointing a finger or pressing a single button,

it will read text, recognize a familiar face or identify a product.

Community training during the month of March included a movie, court house museum tour, swimming at the Midco Aquatic Center, and dinner at HuHot. The students hosted a "Dining in the Dark." Students invited their families to experience wearing a blindfold to assimilate blindness and eating a meal without sight. Students planned the meal, did the grocery shopping, prepared the food, set the table, made centerpieces, and dined with their families who were wearing blindfolds. Students shared the experiences with their family and demonstrated how they cleaned up afterwards. The idea for the activity was developed to show families the depth of the skills the students are learning at the Center, as well as pulling together the skills they've learned using a different method. Home management instructor and musician, Mary Carrell, played the keyboard for entertainment. There were 22 people who attended.

There are currently 19 students in training.

Transition week is scheduled for June 11-15, 2017. Six to eight students have registered.

Dawn Backer and Bob Smith are available to present at Peer Support groups.

Koni Sims informed the Board that students are invited to SDAB activities and events.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Ronda Williams explained that the VR program assists people with visual disabilities in obtaining and retaining employment. There are seven VR counselors around the state that specialize in services for the blind and visually impaired. All offices are co-located with DRS. Newly hired staff obtain training in skills of blindness at the Rehab Center for the Blind.

Department of Labor will be hosting a training titled "Bring Your A-Game to Work." This is a soft skills training for VR clients or anyone who would benefit from the training. SBVI has scheduled training for all staff, which will be held in August in Sioux Falls. Fall Conference will be October 2-4 in Pierre. More information will be forwarded in the near future. Board member costs will be covered if they choose to attend. Counselors will be doing case file reviews in Sioux Falls April 25-27.

Rebecca Andrew was hired as a VR Counselor/Rehab Teacher in the Rapid City office. Her coverage area is the southwest corner of the state. She has been traveling with the DRS counselor to learn her territory.

Ronda Williams will be attending the National Convening in San Diego in May.

Board Vacancies

Julie Briggs and Bruce Micheel have served the maximum terms. Cole Uecker's term expires on June 30th, but he can be reappointed. The CAP and Native American representatives do not have term limits. In 2018, five

positions will expire but Eric Rippentrop will be the only one who can't be reappointed. Nominations are being accepted for the Board of SBVI.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

Sandy and Catherine attended the SILC meeting on March 21. The Council oversees the independent living centers in the state and the funding they receive. The Centers serve people with all disabilities so they can remain living independently in their home.

Adult Services and Aging (ASA) is currently under Department of Social Services, but will be moving to Department of Human Services and become the Division of Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS). ASA and DHS operate Medicaid waivers that are very similar, so having under the same department will be beneficial.

SILC is also looking for nominations to fill vacancies. SILC will meet again in June.

Director's Comments

The 2017 Legislature recently ended. House Bill 1149, an act to change the 15 cent phone surcharge (or tax) to 14 cents per phone line for the TED and TAD program was introduced. The account from this tax has a surplus and has been swept in the past. DHS opposed the change, stating that with increase in costs of devices (iPads, iPhones, etc.) the account may not have enough funds in the future. \$800,000 was swept from the fund again this year. The Governor vetoed the bill, but the legislators may override the veto.

There will be no cuts in the 2018 budget, but there will be no increases either. The raise that was set aside for state employees will be applied to health insurance costs.

Adult Services and Aging will become Long-Term Services and Supports and will move into the DHS building on April 12th.

The AT workgroup has had one conference call with the stakeholder group. Ken Rollman volunteered to be the representative for the Board since he uses AT. Another meeting is being planned in April.

The next Board meeting will be June 16 in Pierre. Patrick Czerny/DakotaLink will bring devices to show to Board members.

Patrick made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Catherine seconded. Meeting adjourned.