

**Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities**  
**Wednesday, May 20, 2015 from 8:30 am – 11:00 am**  
**Prairie Room – Prairie Hills Plaza**  
**1237 W. Divide Ave., Bismarck, ND**

**Members Present**

Tina Bay  
Barb Murry  
Ryan Volk

Vickay Gross  
Gerry Teevens  
Cheryl Wescott

Chad Kourajian  
Paul Vardanega

**Members Absent**

Eric Wittliff

**Roll Call**

Chairperson Barb Murry called the meeting to order.

**Approval of Agenda**

Request to add discussion of DD Waiver and Services to Youth Ages 18-21 to the agenda.

**Action: A motion was made by Gerry Teevens and seconded by Tina Bay to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.**

**Approval of February 2015 Minutes**

Request to amend minutes to include the year in the heading at top of the page.

Request to add the following language under the discussion of DD Waiver and Services to Youth Ages 18-21:

Concern was expressed that students age 18-21 with ID/DD are unable to access DD Waiver services if they choose to graduate. Youth in this age group with ID/DD are considered eligible for IDEA therefore services under IDEA need to be exhausted before DD Waiver can pay. Tina Bay agreed to check with other states to find out how they serve these youth who are no longer in school prior to age 21.

**Action: A motion was made by Chad Kourajian and seconded by Tina Bay to approve the February 2015 minutes as amended. Motion carried.**

**Budget Update – Lynn Derman**

Lynn indicated the budget for the 15-17 biennium is \$39,594, the same as the prior biennium. Of this amount, \$12,000 is from parking tags and the remaining is general funds.

Expenditures for the 13-15 biennium were minimal. The contract with Minot State University for the employment survey includes \$5,000 from the Committee. Barb will make the contact with NDCPD to begin work on development of the survey.

### **Plans for Strategic Work Plan**

The members reviewed the plans for an RFP and the group agreed to put the notion of an RFP aside and re-activate the members of other employment work groups. Other work groups will be asked to identify their key strategies related to employment. Representatives from these work groups can work together to prioritize the goals.

A future agenda item will include having members from the different employment work groups come to the Committee to assist in identifying and prioritizing these goals.

### **Employment First Training**

Debra Leucking is a consultant under a grant with the Employment Learning Community (ELC) and has led a strategic planning initiative for the ELC. The ELC is very interested in the Committee receiving training on employment first and has agreed to have Debra provide some training.

For the August agenda, Debra Leucking will be asked to discuss the key points of her employment first training the prior day and to give us a perspective on like committees in other states.

### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

Cheryl Wescott provided an overview of proposed regulations impacting subminimum wage. Subminimum wage changes go into effect July 1, 2016. Essentially, youth under age 24 must apply for VR service and be either found ineligible due to the severity of their disability or served by the VR agency under an Individual Plan for Employment and determined to be unsuccessful in gaining competitive and integrated employment before the youth accepts employment with an entity for subminimum wage. VR currently presumes everyone can benefit from VR unless they are determined too severe.

A few other highlights of WIOA include:

- Definition of competitive integrated employment is now a combined definition. The difference is the minimum wage has to be the higher minimum wage (local, state, or federal).
- Supported employment has been changed to allow up to 24 months.
- New requirement to spend 15% of VR grant (approximately \$1.5 million) on pre-employment transition services to students age 14-21.

Public comment closes on June 15. VR will share the comments submitted with the members of the Committee.

### **VR Updates**

VR will be issuing a request for proposal (RFP) to procure supported employment services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that lead to integrated and competitive employment opportunities for individuals currently receiving day support service or individuals employed in segregated employment settings, or both.

Vickay Gross indicated Harley Engelman, SRC Chair, brought forth the idea of developing a North Dakota hiring initiative to give priority to individuals with disabilities. A committee was formed and is currently doing research to determine what initiatives are out there in other states.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). The regional VR offices are encouraged to participate in related activities to celebrate.

A website has been developed for the Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and can be found at: <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr/councils-partners/ndemployment.html>

### **DD Waiver and Services to Youth Ages 18-21**

Tina Bay indicated the waiver is being looked at to determine what we can do in North Dakota. It is expected that more individuals will rush to graduate if the service is there for ages 18-21 and it will be important to plan for this financially in the budget. Tina further stated the residential needs to be looked at as well with the employment.

The volume of these individuals needing service is unknown. Gerry Teevens stated DPI can pull the number of students from age 18-21 by disability categories.

Kids that are a concern are those that have already graduated and are currently doing nothing. Vickay Gross stated it is important to look at entities such as the Dakota Boys Ranch where individuals graduate at age 18.

Individuals need to know their options and protocols need to be developed.

### **Employment Workgroup/Committee Activities**

- **Employment Learning Community**  
No report at this time.
- **ND Association of Community Providers**  
Meeting scheduled the end of June.
- **ND Association of People Supporting Employment First**  
No report at this time.
- **Olmstead Commission – Subcommittee on Employment**  
No report at this time.
- **State Community of Practice on Transition – Employment Subcommittee**  
Gerry Teevens provided an update on activities.
  - National Capacity Building Institute in Charlotte, NC - 12 states have been part of this COP and they have lost their funding. Discussing how they can work this out.

- Seven staff attended a conference with a focus on employment and changes with WIOA.
- Job coaching manual is still being worked on.
- Working with VR and looking at a pre-employment transition curriculum.
- Identifying best practices in keeping students engaged in school.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 19, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. – noon.

Additional future agenda items that have been identified include:

- Standing item for other new business
- Presentation on open records law and public meetings by Attorney General's Office
- Harley Engelman to provide an update and discuss ND hiring initiative.
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month
- How will we best utilize our budget over the next biennium.
- Barb Murry to review A Better Bottom Line

Meeting adjourned at 11:08 am.