



**Washington State Rehabilitation Council**  
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**Washington State Rehabilitation Council**  
**April 2008 Quarterly Meeting Minutes**  
**Full Council Meeting, Friday April 18th, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm**  
**Red Lion Inn**  
**1225 N. Wenatchee Avenue**  
**Wenatchee, WA 98801**

**Present:**

Jeffrey Abe-Gunter, of Spokane representing Labor; Sandra Carr, of Spokane representing the Washington State Independent Living Council; Mary Louise Colwell, of Seattle representing the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Kimmer Gordon, of Blaine, representing, DVR customers; Jerry Johnsen; of Seattle, Representing the Client Assistance Program; Carol Maher; of Olympia, representing DVR customers; Martin McCallum; of Olympia, representing the Workforce Board; Bill Murray; of Wenatchee, representing Community Rehabilitation Programs; Bob Roberts, of Spokane, representing Business and Industry; Lynnae Ruttledge of Olympia, DVR Director (ex officio member); Kris Tefft, of Olympia, representing Business and Industry; Amy Rossiter; of Olympia, Executive Assistant to the Council; Joelle Brouner, of Olympia, Executive Director of the Council; Gilbert Garza, Washington Migrant Council and WorkSource; Don Kay, Special Assistant to the Director of DVR; Kelly Franklin, DVR Field Services Administrator; Kelly Boston, Program Administrator for Planning and Evaluation Unit; Teresa Kutsch, Area 3 Manager; Duane Johnson, Supervisor, Wenatchee, Omak and Moses Lake; Val Smith, Rehabilitation Technician of Wenatchee Office; Steve Roldan, VRC for and Regional Coordinator for VR Services for the Deaf;

**Absent:** Joanne Butts, of Orting representing Parent Training and Education Centers; John Harrison, of Olympia, representing DVR Customers; Rudy Hernandez, of Burien, representing practicing DVR Counselors; Linda Pratt; of Toppenish, representing Tribal VR Programs.

Martin McCallum, WSRC Chair, welcomed the Council and its guests to the Wenatchee meeting of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council. Mr. McCallum highlighted his own local roots in the town of Cashmere. The meeting was called to order before a request for a motion to approve the minutes; the Chair commended Kathy Krulich for her extensive minutes.

A motion to approve the minutes was approved unanimously.

**Remarks of the Chair, Martin McCallum:**

Mr. McCallum congratulated DVR on the positive press that they received from the Governor in March, as well as from CSAVR and a variety of news outlets for the end of the waiting list. He noted their efforts to convene a diversity committee within the organization. He recognized and appreciated the DVR staffers who gave time to the forum and who are attending our meeting. Mr. McCallum also thanked Joelle Brouner for her work over the quarter.

Mr. McCallum recounted the work of the Executive Committee at a meeting held face to face in Olympia on February 29th which was graciously hosted by Jim Larson and the staff of Morningside. He discussed approval of guiding principles for the Council's work for a year and the work the Committee Chairs did to advance work plans. He planned to hold another face to face meeting with the Executive Committee before the next Council meeting.

Mr. McCallum went on to recognize some of the Council members who were not present at the meeting: John Harrison, who had a family emergency and who will be stepping back from his role as the Chair of the Interagency Liaison Committee until further notice; Joanne Butts for representing the Council at the CSAVR meeting in Bethesda, who had agreed to be the Acting Interim Chair of the Interagency Liaison Committee until Mr. Harrison returns; Rudy Hernandez who was ill; and Linda Pratt, who requested a leave of absence for one quarter. The Chair thanked Lynnae Ruttledge for nominating the Council Director for the "You Make a Difference" Award sponsored by Washington PAVE (The Statewide Parent Training Organization), which she did not win.

**Remarks of the WSRC Director, Joelle Brouner:**

Joelle Brouner's remarks highlighted three areas: a Council budget update, a projects and operations update, and appreciations.

Ms. Brouner confirmed that the Council's financial state was positive. After analyzing Council expenditures she concluded that at the halfway point of the fiscal year (which begins October 1) the Council had spent 37% of their total budget. Several things to keep in mind in considering that assessment: It did not reflect the costs associated with this meeting. This is the meeting which required the most Council members travel to attend. Based on our historic spending she anticipated that the total expense will be \$12,000.00.

The figures are not conclusive of the cost of utilities or communications in February or March. Again based on historic spending communications is approximately \$200.00 a month.

The costs associated with Joanne Butts' attendance to CSAVR on behalf of the Council (which are anticipated to cost \$2,500) are not reflected in this analysis. Finally, the figure of 37% was distorted by an outlying factor. Column "C" Row "12" would lead one to believe that the Council has spent 25 thousand dollars on purchased services. They have

not. That is the total allotment reserved for staff reasonable accommodation. Since DVR has a contract with a vendor to provide this accommodation it seems to make more sense for them to track the cost. If that factor did not skew the figures our true spending would be closer to 30% of the total budget.

Ms. Brouner mentioned that the Council had ample funding to consider the request for financial support from the Governor's Committee on Disability and Employment for the Youth Leadership Forum.

Ms. Brouner recognized that it had been a difficult quarter for many members. She commended the Planning and Policy Committee on their work developing the Council's contribution to the state plan. She highlighted the upcoming deadline to seek reappointments for Jim Larson and Sandra Carr. Ms. Brouner also alerted the Council to the passage of the Disability History Bill and shared a copy of the written testimony which was submitted on their behalf based on last quarter's vote. She thanked each DVR staffer who attended the forum and gave a particular thanks to local staff and to Phyllis Hansen and Jerry Johnsen for their facilitation of the Rehab Law Review for the Council the previous afternoon.

**Remarks of the DVR Director, Lynnae Rutledge (ex-officio member):**

Lynnae Rutledge began her remarks by acknowledging that March and April were exciting times for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and our staff. As we all know, the waiting list for services ended with the February 10th release. Ms. Rutledge traveled extensively through the state. She visited each office and wrote handwritten thank you cards to the staff. Each unit signed a "We Did It!" banner which was posted at the March 3rd Media Advisory with Governor Gregoire at the Thurston County WorkSource center. DVR invited five customers who represented customers who succeed. DVR was also featured for positive press by CSAVR and a reporter named Ryan Hess.

Ms. Rutledge went on to mention DVR's aggressive efforts to hire new staff and commended DVR's HR unit on the decreased time frame it is taking to complete the hiring process. She also mentioned a collaborative effort to train community, technical colleges and universities on the agreement with partners in higher education. From there Rutledge highlighted agency performance.

DVR is now half-way through the federal fiscal year. They are doing very well - many thanks to the on-going hard work of staff, customers and partners!

*Open Cases*

DVR has a total of 12,169 open cases and we are serving eligible individuals in all priority categories with no waiting. Caseloads are averaging 80-110 active individuals; in a limited number of offices, caseloads are a little smaller or a little larger as DVR moves

through the remainder of the individuals in assessment or in plan development from the waiting list. DVR anticipated the current 'bulge' of 5,600 individuals in plan development as a result of eliminating the waiting list and projects the pool of individuals in plan development to decline to the desired level in 2-3 months. Once DVR moves through the current workload peak, they will be well positioned to promptly initiate services to all eligible individuals.

#### *New Applications/Eligibilities*

DVR recognizes that an on-going smooth flow of new applications will be important as they build capacity to serve more individuals. The rate of new applications is right on target with 4,126 new applications so far this federal fiscal year. In comparison, they 3,370 new applications last federal fiscal year in the same time period of October - March. DVR is monitoring and tracking the proportion of new eligibilities in each of the Priority Categories. So far this year, they have experienced a slight increase in the proportion of new eligibilities in Priority Category 2. Currently, 51% of our eligibilities are in Priority Category 1; 47% are in Priority Category 2; and 2% are in Priority Category 3.

#### *Plan Activity*

DVR has increased the number of individuals in a plan of service by more than 1,000 compared to our performance last year at this time. They continue to build toward plan capacity. Lynnae applauded staff for stepping up their performance, particularly in plan development. Compared to the same period last year, field staff has more than doubled the number of new plans developed. At March 31, we had 2,409 new IPEs.

#### *Outcomes*

Successful rehabilitations are up 26% in 2008. The Rehabilitation rate exceeds both the federal standard and DVR's own target! March 31, they had 1,038 successful rehabilitations (compared to 822 at this time last year) and the rehabilitation rate has climbed to 60.3%.

#### **Committee Reports:**

*The Interagency Liaison Committee and the Veteran's Ad-Hoc Committee did not convene at this meeting because of the absence of key council members.*

#### **Business Relations and Networking Committee, Kris Tefft, Committee Chair**

Kris Tefft offered the Committee report. During the Committee meeting Tefft supported members to review their work plan. Members confirmed their establishment at the January meeting and will formally request a budget from the Executive Committee in the coming quarter. Also, the committee affirmed its interest in a two prong approach to assisting DVR in building constructive relationships with the business community by

learning more about what the division is already doing and by supporting a surveying effort of employers through collaboration with the Association of Washington Business. Mr. Tefft requested that Joelle Brouner follow up after the quarterly council meeting to help him meet key stakeholders and support the project to advance.

### **Council Effectiveness Committee, Bill Murray, Chair**

Bill Murray reported that members of the Council Effectiveness committee discussed recruitment and retention of members, strategies for recognizing member contributions. The Committee then had a more detailed and lengthy discussion regarding the work plan objective to host a diversity summit. Members identified the need for particular policies and procedures. Although members of the committee appreciated the website, they thought it could be strengthened with regard to supporting new members to apply to the Council.

### **Customer Satisfaction and Program Evaluation, Jim Larson, Chair**

Jim Larson reported on the progress of the Customer Satisfaction Committee. Member of the committee met to discuss the large project of the needs assessment. Together, Joelle Brouner and Mr. Larson developed a Gantt chart and an amended timeline for initial discussions with DVR. Mr. Larson elaborated on historic surveying efforts with Jerry Johnsen. Both of the committees have knowledge of historic efforts of the Council preceding the current composition. Members spoke about how time might be saved if the Council could establish an inter-local agreement with a local community college or university. They also supported the idea of learning what other councils had done in terms of needs assessments. Sandra Carr brought up the importance of defining the target audience for the survey. Ms. Carr reiterated her interest in being an active member and requested that the committee schedule meetings after 2 pm and with enough notice so that she could use adaptive equipment to participate in conference calls. The committee agreed to meet by conference call after the meeting to adhere to the ambitious timeline for the project.

### **Executive Committee, Martin McCallum, Committee and Chair**

Martin McCallum reported on behalf of the Committee. Mr. McCallum supported the Committee members to look ahead at the meeting agenda for the Full Council meeting. Mr. McCallum communicated Linda Pratt's request for a leave of absence and the transition in leadership within the Interagency Liaison Committee between John Harrison and Joanne Butts. Committee members discussed the desire to continue meeting in person between quarterly council meetings. Mr. McCallum acknowledged the desire to maintain an accessible process and to continue the successful use of the FM system. Discussion turned to members around the table. Mr. McCallum acknowledged Kimmer Gordon. Mr. Gordon's participation and presentation at the PAVE conference in Lynnwood and his additional interest in transition and efforts to connect with local transition programs.

The committee discussed the possibility of identifying key meeting focuses for the remaining quarterly meetings. Members thought that the agenda for the July quarterly meeting in Spokane should include time for discussion about transition practices and DVR's relationship with Community Rehabilitation Programs.

Joelle asked for clarification from the committee about strategies for structuring meeting materials and agendas to allow the appropriate depth of discussion and review. Martin suggested restructuring the notebook by dividing background material from material that will be addressed during the meeting. The committee was supportive of developing briefs for members who prefer summary information. Martin then turned to a request from Jeffry Abe-Gunter to support his attendance at the Behavioral Health Care conference to be held in Yakima on June 11-13. The registration fee was \$225.00.

**Motion:**        *Move that the Executive Committee fund Jeffry Abe-Gunter with the cost of registration, lodging and per diem as well as travel costs within state travel guidelines to attend the Behavioral Health Care Conference in Yakima.*

**First:**            Bill Murray

**Second:**         Kimmer Gordon

Motion carried unanimously.

Martin specified that Jeff, along with Joanne and other members who had presented or attended conferences on behalf of the Councils should be allocated time on the July agenda to report back.

Joelle mentioned that she and Martin would work on developing the Council's 2009 budget proposal for presentation and negotiation with DVR during the 3rd week in June.

### **Planning & Policy**

The Planning and Policy committee reviewed the policy summary provided by Michael Cunningham included under Tab 3 of the Quarterly Meeting Mailing and requested that Joelle resend the schedule of DVR's evaluation activities following the meeting.

### **Agency Reports:**

#### ***The Workforce Board Report, Martin McCallum***

Mr. McCallum reported on the recent activities of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board). The Workforce Board established four work groups to identify cross-program barriers keeping partner agencies from meeting employment needs of customers in the Workforce Development System. The work groups are examining barriers to program co-enrollments and barriers to co-locating

college and WorkSource Center staff. The work groups are also working to recommend staff cross-training opportunities and clarify performance measures.

Every two years the Workforce Board update “High Skills, High Wages: Washington’s Strategic Plan for Workforce Development.” Mr. McCallum reported that the Workforce Board convened work groups to identify industry initiatives as well as youth and adult strategies for the 2008 edition of the strategic plan. Lynnae Rutledge served as co-chair of the adult strategies work group.

### ***Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Lou Colwell***

Dr. Colwell reported that a new Individualized Education Program (IEP) training module that has been developed by the Special Education Section at OSPI. The interactive module is to provide training and technical assistance to district personnel in writing appropriate IEPs. Several of the evaluations and IEP examples included in the module are relevant to secondary transition. Council members were encouraged to review the module at <http://www.k12.wa.us/specialed/module.aspx>.

### **Motions for Council Consideration:**

#### **NCSRC Resolution:**

**Background:** The Council considered whether to approve a resolution establishing the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils. This was a formality because the Council had approved a more expansive resolution for the same purpose during the January meeting, but the national steering committee had amended the resolution to weaken the language a bit.

**Motion:** *To approve the amended resolution to establish the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils.*

The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Request from the Governor’s Committee on Disability and Employment Issues to fund the Youth Leadership Forum:**

**Background:** On Monday March 24th, Debbie Himes of the Governor’s Committee followed up on a discussion between Toby Olson and Joelle Brouner. Ms. Himes requested funding of the 9th annual Youth Leadership Forum which would be held in Olympia for young people across the state during the week of August 10th. The leadership forum which invited young people from across the state with disabilities to attend costs at least \$45,000.00. The Council had been asked to support the event with \$2000.00 funding. Following is how the motion appeared in the Quarterly Meeting Mailing materials.

**Motion:** Move that the Washington State Rehabilitation Council agrees to provide funding for the Youth Leadership Forum to be held in Olympia August

10-15, 2008 in an amount not to exceed \$2,000.00 and not to be used for food.

Rather than presenting the motion as it appeared in the meeting materials, the Chair suggested that we move to fund the event at a level of \$4500.00 or a total of 10% of the event cost.

Ms. Ruttledge expressed reservations about the motion. She explained that DVR was funding the event at a \$5000.00 level. She offered to attribute \$2000 of the existing \$5000 commitment to the Council. Ms. Ruttledge expressed opposition to the Council or DVR giving funding beyond that amount to support the event because of its limited vocational focus.

The motion was withdrawn. Members voted to accept and approve Ms. Ruttledge's offer. Carol Maher revisited the idea of the Council making an individual contribution, but no motion is put forth.

#### **Debriefing the Customer Forum:**

Despite sending out 167 notices in English/ Spanish there was almost no turn out. Ms. Ruttledge suggested that the Council co-host a forum with a community partner. The Council recognized the time, energy, and money DVR staff spent to attend and regretted that the community did not attend.

#### **Debriefing the Rehab Law Review:**

Members of the Council expressed broad appreciation to DVR for following up on the Council's 2006 recommendation to provide DVR staff with training about the Rehabilitation Act. The consensus was that the abbreviated version of the training which was provided by Phyllis Hansen and our own Jerry Johnsen was illuminating. Bob Roberts and Kimmer Gordon mentioned that they would like to participate in the fuller version of the training. Many people responded favorably to the film which was produced on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the publication of the regulations enacting the Rehab Act, which was produced by the Disability Rights in Education Defense Fund. The film was included in the training. Carol Maher mentioned feeling sad about how much has been lost and how challenging it still is to mobilize the disability community to fight for disability rights. It was a very positive response. Bill Murray inquired about whether the training participants would be eligible for continuing education credits.

#### **Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the Hispanic/Latino Community:**

##### **Background:**

Because the Council met in Central Washington and because Central Washington has among the largest population of Latinos in the state, they wanted to learn more about service provision to this population. Although not expressly intended to compliment the Council's needs assessment process, this portion of the discussion is consistent with requirements by the Rehabilitation Services Administration that the Council learn more

in its needs assessment process about the needs of people with disabilities underrepresented in DVR's customer base.

Mr. McCallum drew the Council's attention to materials under Tab 7. Ms. Brouner enumerated the contents: a national report produced by the World Institute on Disability and funded by RSA entitled "Latinos with Disabilities in the United States Understanding and Addressing Barriers to Employment." Martin commented that members should note that the recommendations within the report were used to inform Council input on State Plan development. In addition to the report, the notebook included the Power Point from the Latino Taskforce convened by DVR in 2003 which included the 18 promises that were made to the Latino community and included in the 2004 state plan. The mailing also included two publications by the Workforce Board entitled Workforce Focus, one about people with disabilities, the other about Hispanics. The section also included a data request made by Ms. Brouner to DVR's IT unit about the number of cases statewide that identify Spanish as the primary language of the case in STARS.

The discussion was focused primarily on service provisions for Latinos residing in Area 3. Although there were comments by many, the featured speakers were Lynnae, Teresa Kutsch, Duane Johnson, and Val Smith.

- 19% of DVR's staff (including both Voc. Rehab. Counselors) are bilingual/bicultural [Spanish speaking and culturally fluent in Mexican and or Mexican American cultures].
- Within the Wenatchee DVR Office 13% of the total caseload is comprised of Hispanic/Latino customers.

The representatives of DVR acknowledged the challenge of recruiting and retaining bilingual/bicultural staff. There may be an opening for a VRC in Wenatchee in coming months and there was a hope that a bilingual/bicultural candidate would apply for the position.

DVR recently revised the qualifications required to become a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to welcome a broader range of graduate degrees. Further, by developing the "in training" career path DVR recognized that career path as a tool for welcoming grassroots community partners with desirable skills and community connections into the field.

In the meanwhile, Ms. Smith and Mr. Johnson discussed the creative approaches local staff has developed to provide outreach to the community for example: attending meetings of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and attending community fairs.

Staff with key skills working within Area three sometimes travel to other offices to serve customers with specific needs for a Spanish speaking Counselor. Sometimes Spanish speaking Rehab techs or translators have supported the customer in the VR process. Mr.

Johnson identified the corridor between Wenatchee and Omak as being in need of increased representation of bilingual/bicultural staff.

Ms Brouner inquired about service provision for Latinos in Area 1 and 2, and said she understood that there was one bilingual/bicultural VRC in Area 1. Ms. Ruttledge explained that DVR has a more than one bilingual/bicultural staff in Area 1.

Bill Murray inquired about the bilingual/bicultural capacity of Community Rehabilitation Programs in Area 3. Mr. Murray was told that there were no CRPs with the capacity.

He asked how people were being served under those circumstances.

Gilbert Garza, a guest at the meeting who works for the Washington Migrant Council asked two questions: one about mental health assessment of uninsured farm workers; the other was missed.

Ms Ruttledge assured Mr. Garza that DVR is committed to providing all eligible customers appropriate assessment.

Ms. Kutsch mentioned the Sunnyside office as an example of effective community partnerships that has supported success for Latino customers.

Someone asked DVR to provide data comparing the rate of plan success in the general customer population with the success rate of the Latino customer population.

### **Working with DVR “Beyond the Bulge”**

#### **Introduction**

**Lynnae Ruttledge, Director DVR, and Ex-Officio Council member**, was the first presenter. Ms. Ruttledge offered some baseline information about key indicators of the division’s performance and what one might anticipate for the mid term.

She said in part:

- DVR has approximately 12,000 open cases;
- The organization anticipated that after those who have recently moved from the waiting list, to plan development, and then transition into plan the organization expected caseload size to be between 80-100 per counselor;
- Although there was no longer a waiting list for services, DVR continued to distinguish which priority category a customer would be in, if there were a wait, in an effort to track caseload composition based on experiences of disability. At the time of the meeting, the caseload was comprised of 51% Most Significant Disability; 47% Significant Disability; 2% Disability.

- DVR had 4,126 applications during this fiscal year compared to 3,370 at this point last year;
- During this fiscal year DVR has developed 2,409 new Individual Plans for Employment.
- The Rehabilitation Rate was up significantly. A total of 26% from one year ago at this time.

The analysis did not touch on cost per plan or spending trends.

In addressing additional organizational efforts, DVR was not only asking each office supervisor to review two case files per counselor each month, but was also undertaking a statewide caseload review. They were looking into the role of customer surveying efforts at the local office level because of feedback on the employee survey about having integrated customer feedback into work processes.

The organization historically had a diversity taskforce. As one part of a larger strategy to recruit representative staff, DVR formed a diversity committee.

Following Ms. Ruttledge, Jerry Johnsen was the next in a series of presenters, which included Teresa Kutsch, Area 3 Manager; Kelly Boston, Administrator Planning and Program Evaluation; and Kelly Franklin, DVR's Field Services Administrator. The purpose of the panel was to address the topic of the practical landscape of DVR in a post waiting list environment from their particular perspectives. The Council's goal was to identify ways they might work with DVR effectively at this time. Due to inclement weather, the discussion had to be purposeful and abbreviated.

## **CAP**

**Jerry Johnsen, CAP Director and WSRC member** was the second of a series of presenters. Mr. Johnsen's thoughts were centered on CAP observations about the political climate in the field and key issues impacting service provision. Specifically Mr. Johnson addressed:

- ***Staff Adjustment to Increasing Caseload Sizes***—Mr. Johnsen explained that the VR process has, and always will have, an inherent tension between production and quality. He noted that, that tension has been heightened as Counselors learn to pace and balance the demands of growing caseloads.
- ***Communication between Counselors and Customers***—The tensions between quality and productivity illuminated previously contributed to CAP having noted increased instances of customers not having heard from counselors, customers not having received complete information about options, and to some Counselors not having found adequate time to provide quality service.

- *Trial work*— CAP is concerned that some Counselors were using “Trial Work” inappropriately to determine eligibility for VR services as opposed to having used it to identify the customer’s barriers to employment, his or her strengths, abilities, and capabilities. He mentioned that according to the Rehabilitation Act, Counselors can determine an applicant ineligible for VR services only when they have “clear and convincing” evidence that the applicant will not benefit from services. Jerry went on to attribute the confusion about the role of “Trial Work” in the field to the synonymous use of the term in the current version of DVR’s contract with CRP partners for services that are defined differently than “trial work” by the Rehabilitation Act. Although DVR planned to change the language issue in the future versions of the contract it remains confusing.
- *Direct Pay Auditing Has Unintended Consequences on Customers*— (underlined content was added by the Council Director to provide context for the issue mentioned by CAP on this point) During Mike O’Brien’s tenure as the DVR Director, the organization’s relationship with partners in higher education was less constructive than it was at the time of this meeting. In the context of that political environment DVR adopted what was known as the “Direct Pay.” Direct pay was a practice that made it possible for Counselors to allocate funds directly to the customer to pay for a specific service identified within their Individual Plan for Employment. The customer then paid vendors, (for example the colleges) directly. Proponents of the practice saw it as a way to support customers in understanding the costs associated with their services and to create opportunities for customers to select the vendors they would buy services from. People with more skepticism towards the practice did not agree that it resulted in giving customers more choice. Some skeptics understood the practice to be motivated by conflict with partners in higher education, because, at the time DVR did not have a memorandum of understanding with the colleges. It was in the interest of higher ed. partners to identify students who received services from DVR because if those students requested reasonable accommodation, the college could approach DVR to share the cost of the accommodations or pay for them outright. Direct pay gave DVR customers anonymity and made it difficult for college to distinguish students who received services from VR from the rest of the student body. At the time of the meeting, DVR no longer used direct pay as a practice. When direct pay was being implemented customers were required to provide documentation of their purchases. CAP noted that some customers, who chose direct pay, were being directly contacted by the Office of Financial Recovery and asked to provide receipts (which they may have already provided in some cases) which may have caused unintended difficulties.

**Teresa Kutsch, Area 3 Manager** was the third speaker. Ms. Kutsch presented her observations about how the end of the waiting list, increased caseload sizes, and other key factors related to the agency’s performance, manifested in the local offices within Area 3 and what the impact on staff were. She said in part:

- Staff morale was bolstered by the end of the waiting list. Many were inspired by the possibilities;

- Within Area 3 (and throughout the state) “the bulge” was apparent in the number of customers who were developing plans for employment.
- DVR established 120 days as a guideline for how long it should take for a counselor and a customer to develop an Individual Plan for Employment. At the time of the meeting, there were a number of plans in development status beyond that timeframe.
- As a broad generalization, although timely service and progression through the VR process is important, those factors are less important than having developed quality individual plans for employment which fully addressed customers’ barriers to employment. From a supervisory perspective clear documentation of the case is considered valuable. Ms. Kutsch emphasized the role of file review in supporting and sustaining quality.
- Area 3 staff was quite busy at the time of the meeting. They were embracing creative approaches to serving customers in plan development status by hiring non permanent staff to assist. She also highlighted the “engagement project.”

**Kelly Boston, DVR’s Administrator Planning and Program Evaluation;** shared the analysis of how “the bulge” would likely play out in terms of caseloads and need for increased applications across the division organization wide based on projections.

Handouts (1 of 4)

*The handout entitled “Caseloads After OOS” included data from April 15, 2008. It contrasted a snapshot of where cases are in the VR process as of the day that the data was pulled with DVR’s desired targets*

Content:

Current (4/15/08)			
Application	Plan Development	Plan	Total
1,400	4,900	5,800	12,200
Desired			
1,700	3,500	7,000	12,200

Handouts (2 of 4)

*The second handout entitled “The math of the bulge” quantified how many eligible customers needed to apply across the organization as a whole for DVR to achieve its targets.*

Content:



			(127 VRCs)	
Open cases	18,529	12,168	96	12,000-13,000
In plan development	3,883	5,024	40	3,300-3,700
In plan	4,710	5,772	45	7,000-8,000
New applications	3,370	4,126	32	4,000-4,500
New IPEs	1,123	2,409	19	2,795

### Significance of disability of new eligibilities

	March 2007	Percent	March 2008	Percent
New eligibilities	2,972		3,225	
MSD	1,753	59%	1,655	51%
SD	1,173	39%	1,528	47%
D	46	2%	42	2%

### Timeliness

	2007	2008 ytd	Standard
Average days to eligibility	39	40	60
% of eligibilities over 60 days	6.5%	8.3%	Under 10%
Average days to IPE	114	115	120
% of plans over 120 days	33%	38.5%	Under 10%

### Outcomes

	March 2007	March 2008	2008 March Target
Rehabs	822	1,038	1,500
Rehabs w/CRP Placement*	28%	44%	n/a
Rehab Rate	51.4%	60.3%	60%
Average wages*	\$11.55	\$11.03	n/a
Average hours per week*	27.5	27.3	

\*Results reflect full year FFY 2007

**Kelly Franklin, the Field Services Administrator** for DVR presented the final perspective from the panel. She highlighted the performance of VRC's in the field by using DVR performance "Dashboards" and GMAP material. Ms. Franklin outlined the multipronged approach that DVR's Human Resources Unit had taken to recruit and hire staff for key positions. She was candid about the challenges the organization had faced in attracting a bilingual and bicultural base of candidates. Ms. Franklin introduced a new "Diversity Taskforce."

Ms Franklin went on to discuss the positive organizational impact of the Field Services Unit in the field. She discussed specific efforts to build partnerships, roll out germane training initiatives such as motivational interviewing, Rehab Law Review, etc.

*April 2008 Quarterly Meeting, Wenatchee; Full Council Meeting Minutes Draft 2*

## **The Council's Response to the presentations**

Because of worsening weather conditions, the Council opted to condense this portion of the discussion. This section may not summarize the full conversation, but documents the Council's request for answers to the following questions from DVR:

1. Mr. Murray asked: What is the Individual Plan for Employment success rate by order of selection category?
2. Mr. Gordon asked: How many current DVR customers have had an open case with DVR before?
3. How many DVR customers who achieve a successful rehab receive SSI or SSDI at closure?
4. Regarding trial work, how many cases were closed at eligibility based on trial work and how many were closed after eligibility based on factors determined during the trial work experience?

Kelly Boston agreed to follow up on the requests for information.

The meeting was adjourned more than an hour ahead of schedule.