

Washington State Rehabilitation Council Bylaws

Preamble

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council members and staff intend for these bylaws to be used in conjunction with the code of ethics established by the council and our agreed on operating principles.

Mission and Vision

Mission: To support all individuals with disabilities to receive culturally competent vocational rehabilitation services which support their realization of power and pride and exceed their expectations.

Vision: The Washington State Rehabilitation Council honors the unique, collective and diverse voices of individuals with disabilities to support the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and its customers to achieve employment outcomes by providing guidance, direction and recommendations to increase the quality and availability of vocational rehabilitation services.

Establishment

In accordance with Section 101(a)21 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Washington State Rehabilitation Council was established by Executive Order (EO) 93-04 (superseded by EO 94-04) of the Governor of Washington State for the purpose of moving toward a collaborative and comprehensive statewide system of rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities.

Role of the Council

- To review, analyze, and advise the general vocational rehabilitation program of its responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act.
- To advise and assist the general vocational rehabilitation program in the preparation of the state plan, the strategic plan, reports, needs assessments, and evaluation.
- To conduct a review and analysis of consumer satisfaction.
- To prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor, the public, and appropriate state and federal interested parties.
- To coordinate with other councils, as specified by the Rehabilitation Act
- To advise and provide coordination between the general vocational rehabilitation program and the State Independent Living Council and Independent Living Centers.
- To perform other functions, consistent with the Rehabilitation Act, as the council determines appropriate.

Membership

Members of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (hereafter referred to as “the Council”) are volunteers appointed by the Governor. The Council shall be comprised of at least 13, but not more than 19 members.

Membership of the Council shall be as follows:

(Pursuant to Section 361.17 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998)

1. At least one representative of the State Independent Living Council, which representative may be the chairperson or other designee of the State Independent Living Council.
2. At least one representative of a parent training and information center established pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
3. At least one representative of the Client Assistance Program.
4. At least one vocational rehabilitation counselor, with knowledge of experience with vocational rehabilitation programs, who shall serve as an ex officio, non-voting member if the counselor is an employee of the state.
5. At least one representative of community rehabilitation program service providers (currently referred to as Employment Service Providers – ESP.)
6. Four representative of business, labor, and industry.
7. Representatives of disability advocacy groups representing a cross section of:
 - Individuals with physical, developmental, learning or cognitive, sensory, and mental health disabilities;
 - Parents, family members, guardians, advocates
 - Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services.
8. At least one representative of directors of any vocational rehabilitation services projects operated by Indian tribes on reservations in Washington with Rehabilitation Act funding.
9. At least one representative from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction or other state educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities who are eligible to receive services under the Rehabilitation Act or under Part B of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
10. At least one representative of the state workforce investment board.
11. The Director of the designated state rehabilitation unit, the Department of Social and Health Services’ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, shall be an ex-officio member.

Membership Selection and Terms of Appointment

The Council Performance Committee will publish Council position openings, will receive applications for membership, will review applications and make recommendations regarding appointments at the next Council meeting. The committee will then forward the Council approved recommendations to the Governor. Members of the Council shall be appointed by the Governor and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor. To

achieve a balanced membership on the Council appointments shall be made with consideration given to geographic representation, gender, and ethnic and cultural diversity. Individuals with disabilities shall constitute a majority of the Council.

Terms of membership shall be three years, with the exception that initial appointments shall be staggered in order to assure continuity of the Council: one-third shall be appointed for one-year terms; one-third shall be appointed for two-year terms; and one-third shall be appointed for three-year terms. If a council member resigns before completing a term, a new member may be appointed to serve out the remainder of that term. Members may seek reappointment for a second term, but no member may serve more than two consecutive full terms.

A Council member may be removed from his/her position by the Governor for just cause. The Council may recommend the removal of a member to the Governor by a majority vote of the Council at any regular or special meeting of the Council. A notice of the proposed removal recommendation (including the cause for removal) must be sent to the member in writing at least one week prior to the date of the meeting at which such removal recommendation is to be voted upon.

Members may be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses of attending Council meetings and performing Council duties. The Council's expense policies must conform to guidelines published within the State Administrative and Accounting Manual.

Membership Requirements and Restrictions

- Council members should be familiar with and operate within the governing statutes, state and federal laws, and Council By-Laws at all times.
- Council members should not make unilateral decisions or take action without the consent of the Council as a whole.
- Council members must use discretion to avoid the appearance of speaking for the Council, unless specifically authorized to do so.
- Council members understand the mission of the Council is to serve the public and persons with disabilities within the State.
- Council members are restricted by RCW 42.52.140 from accepting or soliciting anything of economic value as a gift, gratuity or favor if it could be reasonable expected that the gift, gratuity, or favor would influence the vote, action, or judgment of the officer or employee, or be considered as part of a reward for action or inaction.
- Inquiries about Council issues should be directed to the Council Chairperson or the Executive Committee, who will see that all Council members receive full information by the next regular meeting.
- Detail of Council investigations, personnel files, or business discussed in closed Executive Committee meetings should not be disclosed unless they are a part of the public record.
- Use of telephone, state funds, or services such as photocopying, for non-state business is strictly prohibited.

Council Structure

The ***Executive Committee*** consists of:

- Chairperson which shall be elected annually by the full Council
- A Vice-Chairperson elected annually
- The Chairs of all Standing Committees

Standing Committees are:

Council Effectiveness Committee
Customer Satisfaction & Program Evaluation
Executive Committee
Interagency Liaison
Planning & Policy Committee

Additional standing or ad hoc (short term study) committees:

- May be established by the Executive Committee
- A recommendation for the establishment of such a committee should include:
 - The proposed role of the committee
 - The proposed membership of the committee
 - The proposed duration of the committee (standing or ad hoc)

Committee meetings should:

- If possible and appropriate, include interested non-Council members as participants, and should include, if possible, an opportunity to interact with persons with disabilities, providers and interested community members.
- If possible and appropriate, be held throughout Washington State to encourage interaction with persons in those communities.
- The council commits to operating in an accessible and culturally competent manner by taking action included but not limited to the following:
 1. Holding meetings in locations that adhere to accessibility standards outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 2. Welcoming requests for reasonable accommodation from staff, council members of the public.
 3. Working with staff or council members to identify and provide disability-related supports necessary to facilitate full participation.
 4. Making meeting materials available in large print as a standard practice.
 5. Scheduling ASL interpretation for all community forums. Scheduling ASL interpretation for any other council meeting or activity as requested
 6. Scheduling other language interpretation as requested.
 7. Including contact information for local transit authorities on all public notices.
 8. Budgeting for requests for reasonable accommodation whenever possible.

Committee members:

- May be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses of attending committee meetings according to all state laws and guidelines.

- Are expected to follow the Membership Requirements and Restrictions (as outlined above) in the committee settings in their relationships to the public.

Council Elections

Council Elections will be held each year at the January meeting. Elected terms last one calendar year.

A. Election Process

- Time will be allocated within the January quarterly meeting agenda to establish a slate of candidates
- Each candidate will make a short statement highlighting his or her motivation for seeking the position and their relevant experience
- The council will vote first for the position of Chair, followed by the Western and Eastern Vice-Chairs.
- Member will write the name of the candidate are voting for on a slip of paper (independently or with reasonable accommodation)
- A council staff person will tally the votes
- If a vote results in a tie the chair will break the tie

Duties of Elected Officers

Chairperson shall:

- Serve no more than two terms
- Preside at all quarterly meetings of the Council
- Preside at meetings of the Executive Committee assuring the duties and responsibilities of the Council are carried out
- Oversee the selection of members on all committees and assist committee chairs in understanding the role and responsibilities of that committee, and the relationship to the mission of the Council
- Appoint a Council member to be liaison to other related Councils (as needed)
- Be considered as an ex-officio member of all committees, attending committee meetings as is necessary

Vice-chairpersons shall:

- Preside at Council meetings in the absence of the Chairperson
- Assist the Chairperson to carry out the other duties of the Chairperson as needed or requested

Committee Chairpersons shall:

- Be selected by committee members
- Be responsible for the activities and responsibilities assigned to his/her committee
- Call and conduct committee meetings
- Provide written reports to the Executive Committee regarding all meetings, activities and recommendations of his/her committee

Standing Committee Responsibilities:

The Executive Committee shall:

- Oversee the use of Council funds and recommend any budget changes necessary to remain within available funding
- Review the expenditures of Council funds at each quarterly meeting
- Prepare a year-end financial status report to be presented to the Council
- Make recommendations to the Council regarding the employment of staff related to the Council
- Provide support and supervision for the Executive Director

The Council Effectiveness Committee shall:

- Publish approaching appointment dates
- Receive and review the applications for membership
- Make recommendations at each quarterly meeting regarding the membership recommendations to be made to the Governor, in accordance with the membership composition outlined above under Membership Selection and Terms of Appointment.
- Be responsible for maintaining a full Council membership at all times by filling open positions as outlined under Membership Selection and Terms of Appointment
- Receive records of membership attendance and report Council member absence of two consecutive Council meetings to the Executive Committee
- Report to the Executive Committee any needs for replacing members who have indicated that they can no longer fulfill their Council responsibilities
- Recruit and provide orientation to new and existing members

The Interagency Liaison Committee shall:

- Provide liaisons with other agencies and community organizations important to the activities of DVR
- Represent the Council in interagency program development focusing on developing business relations, opening employment opportunities and educating business regarding disability issues
- Provide reports to the Council at quarterly meetings on activities happening in other councils, committees, or boards

The Planning and Policy Committee shall:

- In order to support the review, analysis, and advisory responsibilities of the Council, request, gather and edit statistical data concerning the vocational rehabilitation needs of the population of the state, and the performance of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in meeting those needs

- Review and comment on public announcements of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation as to translation, format and content, and make recommendations regarding the information presented to the general public, served groups, and individuals
- Respond to the needs of individuals and/or groups who voice difficulties in attending and/or participating in Council meeting

The Customer Satisfaction and Program Evaluation Committee shall:

- Develop a process for analyzing and reporting information about the availability, appropriateness and effectiveness of services as delivered by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and about unmet service needs as identified by members of the community
- Identify possible interagency coordination opportunities, and local community programs, and business community resources which might augment and enhance the efforts of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in providing a comprehensive program for persons with disabilities
- Develop recommendations regarding the order of selection to be followed in the event that the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is unable to serve all those individuals who are eligible
- Review the strategic plan on an annual basis, and conduct fact-finding procedures as needed to address current conditions of services

Meetings, Quorum, and Minutes

- The Council shall convene at least four meetings a year
- A quorum for conducting Council meetings shall consist of a simple majority of current voting membership
- A staff person attached to the Council will record minutes of all Council meetings and the meetings of the Executive Committee. These minutes will be distributed to all Council members, and the Chairperson will request formal approval of the minutes at the next Council meetings
- Minutes of the Council, Executive Committee and all standing committees will be maintained in the official records of the Council. These records will be made available to the public

Protocol for Public Comment at Meetings

According to the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30.030), the meetings of the Washington State Rehabilitation council will be open to the public. The time and place of these meetings will be announced in advance in public newspapers (including those published in non-English languages), and in disability related newsletters or bulletins.

Amendments to the By-Laws

Amendments to the By-laws of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council may be recommended by any member or committee of the Council by presenting the changes to the Executive Committee for inclusion on the next general Council meeting agenda. Adoption of amendments to the By-Laws shall require approval by two-thirds the voting members present at the Council meeting.