

# Washington State Rehabilitation Council

## *Operating Principles*

March 17, 2006

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The manner in which Washington State Rehabilitation Members and Staff conduct business sets an example for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, its customers, business and industry, other community partners and stakeholders, and the general public.

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council recognizes the importance of demonstrating that our values influence how we approach our work.

Operating principles define our beliefs, values, and methods of working together.

The following pages outline council functions, and examine the impact of operating principles on the way we do our work.

### **COUNCIL FUNCTIONS & PRACTICES:**

The functions of the State Rehabilitation Council must include the following activities according to the Rehabilitation Act:

1 - Review, analyze, and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation regarding the performance of its responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act, particularly responsibilities related to: eligibility, including order of selection; the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and functions performed by State agencies that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under the Rehabilitation Act.

***In practice this means:** The Washington State Rehabilitation is a policy partner to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in such a manner that affords the Council opportunity to provide advice to the State unit on challenges and successes as they directly relate to the individuals served.*

2 - In partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities and evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program

***In practice this mean:** The Washington State Rehabilitation Council partners in the creation of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's goals and priorities as they relate to their service delivery system.*

3 - Advise the Department of Social and Health Services and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation regarding activities carried out under this part and assist in the preparation of the State plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by the Rehabilitation Act.

***In practice this means:*** *The Washington State Rehabilitation Council must be involved in the State plan as required by the State unit under the Rehabilitation Act. This includes authoring Section 4.2 of the State Plan and assuring that the Council has a mechanism to garner input from the public with regard to the needs of Washingtonians with disabilities.*

4 - To the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with, the functions performed by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the Rehabilitation Act; and the employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this part, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with those employment outcomes.

***In practice this means -*** *The Washington State Rehabilitation Council must conduct a review of consumer satisfaction with regard to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's service delivery system. An analysis should be made of the findings.*

5 - Prepare and submit to the Governor and to the Director of DVR no later than 90 days after the end of the Federal fiscal year an annual report on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State and make the report available to the public through appropriate modes of communication.

***In practice this means -*** *The WSRC must author an annual report which summarizes the past fiscal year activities of the State unit and the Council.*

6 - To avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, coordinate activities with the activities of other partners including the Washington State Independent Living Council, Department of Services for the Blind, the seven Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, the Workforce Board, the Governor's Committee on Disability and Employment Issues, and other stakeholders

***In practice this means -*** *The Washington State Rehabilitation Council must assure that they have established partnerships with the above named organizations.*

7 - Perform other comparable functions, consistent with the purpose of the Rehabilitation Act as the Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.

***In practice this means -*** *the Council has the opportunity to determine other areas of interest, within keeping of the Rehabilitation Act.*

B. The **RESOURCES** for the Council must be managed in the following manner:

1 - The Council, in conjunction with the designated State unit, must prepare a plan for the provision of resources, including staff and other personnel, which may be necessary and sufficient for the Council to carry out its functions under this part.

***In practice this means-*** *The Council must create an annual Budget in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation*

2 - The resource plan must, to the maximum extent possible, rely on the use of resources in existence during the period of implementation of the plan.

*In practice this means - The Council must expect the State unit to utilize funds it currently has access to in the support of the Budget.*

3 - Any disagreements between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Council regarding the amount of resources necessary to carry out the functions of the Council must be resolved by the Governor.

*In practice this means- If there is disagreement in the Budget negotiations, the Council can request that the Governor resolve the situation.*

4 - The Council must, consistent with State law, supervise and evaluate the staff and personnel who are necessary to carry out its functions.

*In practice this means - The Council is expected to supervise and evaluate their staff.*

## **ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES INFORMING PRACTICES:**

### **1. Trust & Credibility:**

We agree to be honest and forthright with one another. The WSRC is respectful in its dealings. The council is privy to sensitive information and handles it with care.

The WSRC understands that people with disabilities in every community in the state want to work. Experiences of disability affect those from every race, class, gender, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation. To succeed in building trust and credibility with the people of Washington the members and staff of the WSRC recognize our responsibility to pursue our mission in a manner that is both culturally competent and welcoming.

### **2. Informed Decision-Making:**

As the council pursues our mandates to provide analysis, evaluation, and advice, members and staff commit to continuous learning. The WSRC seeks input, and gathers the information (in accessible formats) to make informed decisions.

### **3. Collaboration:**

The WSRC is committed to a collaborative style that emphasizes sharing information, fostering accessible process and practice, maximizing resources, and advancing common interests. The council builds long term relationship with our partners named in the Rehabilitation Act. The WSRC engages former, current, and future customers of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and other stakeholders.

### **4. Public Integrity:**

WSRC members serve at the pleasure of the governor. The staff serves at the pleasure of the council. We use public funds to advance the interest of the public. Accordingly we recognize our responsibility to conduct ourselves with decorum,

act as mindful fiscal stewards, and to follow all laws, codes and guidelines with the highest degree of ethics and transparency.

**5. Understanding Employment as a Factor Contributing to Social & Economic Justice:**

The WSRC understands the role of employment in the lives of people with disabilities as more than a desirable program outcome for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Employment is a contributing factor to personal satisfaction, economic advancement, skill building, and transformation. Employment can be a catalyst for positive change and social justice for individuals and communities.

**MEETING EXPECTATIONS INFORMED BY ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES**

Timeliness: Provide timely responses to requests for information or scheduling inquiries from council members and staff.

No Surprises: Share ideas and proposals related to council work with colleagues and staff before presenting publicly.

Be Prepared: Work with staff and council members to identify and communicate strategies for supporting full participation including requesting reasonable accommodation. Review all council related materials in advance of meeting. Share your opinions and contribute to a group dynamic that invites other people to share their opinions as well.

Full Participation: Each council member's skills and abilities are critical to achieving the council mission. Members and staff are encouraged to participate fully in meetings and council business (with reasonable accommodation). This may include, but not be limited to, conference calls, quarterly meetings, and activities.

Constructive vs. Destructive Conflict:

The Rehabilitation Act establishes that SRC members represent various expertise and interests. Understandably there will be times when people disagree. The way we deal with that disagreement can support increased trust and growth, or it can undermine our ability to work together in service of our mission. We encourage council members and staff to express individual opinions and concerns in a manner that advances council objectives, the success of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and most importantly, its customers.

*Individual and council practices that demonstrate this value:*

- Resolve disagreements directly and without delay

- If a disagreement arises between individuals, the parties will discuss it with one another before bringing it to a larger group.
- Listen to and learn as much as possible about the concerns and motivations of stakeholders.
- Seek input from appropriate community partners, committee and/or the full council.
- Clearly communicate expectations and decisions.
- Design group processes promoting cooperation more than competition.
- Develop a clear understanding of our role and relationship with one another.
- Adherence to high standards of ethical behavior.