



Commission on Rehabilitation Services Meeting

January 10, 2025

10 a.m. (Eastern)

Virtual via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order/Roll Call/Welcome

- a. The meeting was called to order by Marc Ruiz

V	Mandy Blaise	V	Kate Barrow	A	Ron Brown
V	Katie Connel	V	Jennifer Diaz	A	Mason Ellis
A	Abby Fleenor	V	Shawn Fulton	V	Kate Heger
V	Zaida Maldonado-Prather	V	Danie'l Mize	V	Ian Ragains
A	Cadence Riley	V	Marc Ruiz	V	Stacey Smith
A	Willaine St. Pierre-Sandy	A	Kindall Stewart	V	Mike Thibideau
V	Barbara Thompson	V	Theresa Koleszar	V	Kristina Blankenship
V	Courtney Scott	A	Whitney Ertel		

(A=Absent, P=Present, T=Teleconference, Virtual =V, I=Invited Guest)

II. Approval of the November 8, 2024, meeting minutes

- a) The Commission voted unanimously in favor

III. Public Comment

- a) There were no members of the public who made comment

IV. BRS Director's Update – Theresa Koleszar

a) Current Annual Expenditures

▪ 1. VR client services

- \$32-\$41M during SFY19-SFY23
- \$47M in SFY24 with 11.5% increase in participants from SFY23 and end to wait list

▪ Q1 SFY25 total participants 12.5% higher than Q1 SFY24

b) A look back – capacity building

- Hearing aid purchases through manufacturers
- Reduced office footprint
- Reduced staff turnover
- Modernized IT systems/reduced cost and contractor dependency
- Modernized vendor payment process to reimburse faster
- Improved consistency in postsecondary funding determinations
- Streamlined documentation/paperless
- Increased the number of VR vendors/providers

- Secured \$14M discretionary grant
- c) Looking ahead
 - Alignment with Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services Goals and Priorities – system capacity
 - Fiscal considerations regarding continued efforts to increase postsecondary enrollment and increase students entering VR
 - Continued efforts to streamline; continuous improvement in capacity/efficiencies
 - Close monitoring of participant trends and expenses
 - Continuous adjustments, e.g., prioritizing vacancies to fill, reducing staff travel, reduced administrative burden for staff and providers, etc.
 - Sharing successes, for instance [2024 Annual Report](#)
- d) VR Commission Goals for 2025
 - Discussion
 - Estimated timeline
 1. Hope to have new committee structure by the May meeting
 2. Have bylaws draft version by March meeting
 - Brainstorm discussion
 1. Need for focus around public education
 - a. Could be inclusive of informing policy makers
 2. More education on public policy tracking legislation, understanding how VR fits into the larger framework
 3. New member orientation (could be folded into recruitment)
 4. Membership and governance
 5. Moving recruitment into executive committee
 6. Potential business engagement - target focus of outreach could be business to business, tax credits, etc.
 7. Customer satisfaction – adding success stories
 8. Forming commissions based on big picture VR state plan goals
 9. Interagency collaboration
- e) Next steps
 - An email will be sent out to recap goals and draft new structure
 - Everyone to read and provide feedback
 -
- f) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment: Themes
 - Improve/expand services for participants with mental health conditions
 1. Strengthen partnerships with mental health providers and organizations
 2. Staff and provider training
 - Improve outcomes for targeted populations
 1. Evaluate closure reasons and practices

2. Focus on high-quality outcomes

- Reduce administrative burden/maximize efficiencies

1. Streamlining opportunities; improved consistencies; simplify service delivery

- Improved transition from education settings to VR
- Increased opportunities for postsecondary training and work-based learning

V. Committee Updates

- a) Addressed during goals discussion

VI. Other Business

VII. Meeting Adjourned

Future meeting dates:

Date	Time	Location
March 14, 2025	10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Virtual Click here to join the meeting
May 9, 2025	10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Bosma Enterprises 7225 Woodland Drive Indianapolis, IN 46278
September 12, 2025	10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Bosma Enterprises 7225 Woodland Drive Indianapolis, IN 46278
November 14, 2025	10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Bosma Enterprises 7225 Woodland Drive Indianapolis, IN 46278