

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council

Full Council Meeting Agenda

February 19, 2026
9:00 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.

Microsoft Teams Meeting

[Meeting Link](#)

Meeting ID: 217 284 445 244 15 **Passcode:** Hu9oh7VT

To join by phone only, call (608) 571-2209 **Phone Conference ID:** 203 110 007#

9:00 – 9:15

Roll Call and Introductions
Announcements
Quorum Check
Approval of Minutes – November 2025

9:15 – 9:45

Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals:

- Council Engagement Committee
- Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee
- Policy Review and Administration Committee
- Services to Business Committee
- Executive Committee

9:45 – 11:45

Strategic Planning

Heather Laakso, DWD Program & Policy Analyst

11:45 – 12:15

Lunch Break

12:15 – 12:30

Public Comment

12:30 – 1:30

DVR Administrative Update

Meredith Dressel, DVR Administrator

1:30 – 1:45

FFY2025 RSA722 Appeals Review

1:45 – 2:15

Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report

Lydia Hartlaub, Attorney for CAP/Disability Rights Wisconsin

2:15 – 2:30

Review Action Items and Identify Future Agenda Topics

2:30

Adjourn

*Public comment is limited to the time listed on the agenda. Comments can be sent at any time to: DVRWIRehabCouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

*Comments sent to that e-mail box will be read to the full council at the next meeting unless a specific subcommittee is listed. If a specific subcommittee is listed, comments will be sent directly to them and reviewed at their next committee meeting.

A Statement of Mission

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council, working on behalf of Wisconsin residents with disabilities, will review, analyze, and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities in providing quality services to persons with disabilities.

STATE OF WISCONSIN



Department of Workforce Development

Vocational Rehabilitation

DVR Quarterly Update

Meredith Dressel - DVR Administrator

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council – Feb. 19, 2026

Program Year (PY) 2025 Outcomes

For cases closed **7/1/2025 – 1/16/2026:**

PY 2025 Closures - YTD	All Cases	All SE Cases	All Non-SE Cases
Total Successful Closures	1944	348	1,477
Average Wages Earned Per Week	\$480	\$169	\$548
Average Wage Per Hour	\$17.19	\$12.79	\$18.15
Average Hours Worked Per Week	25	13	28
Private Insurance	591	76	515



Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) DVR Budget

- FFY 2024 and FFY 2025 budgets reflect final federal award and applicable state match.
- FFY 2026 budget reflects current federal award level and applicable state match. Final award level has not yet been determined.

FFY	Total Budget	Total Spending
2024	\$89,605,936	\$89,605,936
2025 to date	\$110,818,482	\$110,818,482
2026 to date	\$34,202,326	\$18,710,858

Data current as of 1/15/2026. Budget for 2026 includes all applicable state matches. State GPR match funding has not changed during the reporting period.



Order of Selection (Waitlist)

- Waitlist implemented December 2, 2025.
- Current waitlist:

Category	Count
1	1,764
2	1,490
3	46
Total	3,300

- Retention services.
- Working on projection tools with DWD budget.
- Pre-ETS training for staff held in January.

Data current as of 1/21/26



Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Total Purchased Expenses FFY25: **\$1,880,221**

WDA	Consumers	Expenses
1	83	\$80,127
2	95	\$130,869
3	222	\$380,209
4	149	\$227,126
5	97	\$134,863
6	181	\$230,069

WDA	Consumers	Expenses
7	30	\$34,612
8	111	\$197,140
9	72	\$101,770
10	182	\$358,634
11	59	\$113,289

Data current as of 1/21/2026



DVR Vacancies

WDA	VRC	Vac.	Support	Vac.	VRS	Vac.	FSS	Vac.	TOTAL
1	12	1	0	0	6	0	3	0	22
2	28	0	0	0	14	1	6	0	48
3	20	0	1	0	3	0	4	0	28
4	19	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	27
5	14	0	0	0	8	2	4	0	26
6	12	1	0	0	4	0	3	0	19
7	5	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	9
8	10	0	0	0	6	0	3	0	19
9	6	0	1	0	6	1	1	0	14
10	23	0	0	0	9	1	6	0	38
11	9	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	14

NOTE: Total column does not include WDA Directors, WDA VR Supervisors, or BSCs.

Support includes CCCs, OPAs, and OOs.

Data current as of 01/12/2026 projected to 01/30/2026 with announced retirements, resignations, and accepted position offers.



DVR Staff Turnover

Year	Total Number of Staff Exits (Including Retirements and Terminations)	Number of Retirements	Staff Turnover Percentage
2021	26	7	7.8%
2022	31	9	9.8%
2023	32	7	9.8%
2024	43	12	12.9%
2025	28	3	6.98%
2026 (YTD)	2	2	0.29%

Data current as of 01/12/26 projected to 01/30/26 with announced retirements, resignations and accepted position offers.



DVR Counselor Numbers by Race

WDA	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	Two or More Races	White	Not Specified	Total
1	0	0	3	0	0	10	0	13
2	0	3	8	1	0	16	0	28
3	0	1	0	0	0	19	0	20
4	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	19
5	0	0	0	0	0	13	1	14
6	2	1	0	0	0	8	1	12
7	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	5
8	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	10
9	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
10	0	0	1	1	0	17	1	20
11	1	0	0	0	0	8	0	9

Data current as of 01/16/2026



DVR Caseload

WDA	Total Open Cases	Total Open Cases with IPE	VRCs/ VRSs	Total Average with IPE per Staff
01	1,633	1,183	19	62
02	3,857	2,880	41	70
03	1,934	1,551	23	67
04	2,045	1,538	23	67
05	1,779	1,358	21	65
06	1,339	972	15	65
07	866	515	7	74
08	1,400	992	17	58
09	1,090	828	11	75
10	2,869	2,213	30	74
11	940	722	12	60
Total	19,752	14,752	219	67

Data current as of 1/23/2026



RSA Negotiated Measures

Program Year 2025: **7/1/2025 – 6/30/2026**

Indicator	PY2026 Negotiated Level	PY2026 Actuals YTD
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	57.4%	37.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	55.1%	37.1%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,645	\$3673
Credential Attainment Rate	41.5%	37.9%
Measurable Skill Gains	62.0%	15.5%

Data current as of 1/21/2026



Existing Business Employment & Wage Assessments

10/1/25 – 12/31/25

	Referral for EWA	EWA Met Min. Wage	EWA Did Not Meet Min. Wage	EWA in Process	Debt/Asset Ratio Requested	Debt/Asset Ratio Passed	Debt/Asset Ratio in Process
Farm	10	4	5	1	5	6	1
Non-Farm	3	1	0	0	5	2	3
Total	13	5	5	1	7	8	4



Existing Business Case Closures

10/1/25 – 12/31/25

	26 Closed Rehabilitated	28 Closed Not Rehabilitated (After IPE Initiated)	Average Total Cost Per Case
Farm	3	0	\$36,940.92
Non-Farm	0	1	\$5,170.82
Total	3	1	\$26,055.87



Assistive Technology Fee Schedule Exception Requests

10/1/25 – 12/31/25

	Exceptions Requested	Total Amount Requested	Exceptions Approved	Total Amount Approved
Farm	4	\$20,255.22	4	\$20,255.22
Non-Farm	1	\$72,780.00	1	\$62,780.00
Total	5	\$93,035.22	5	\$83,035.22



Top Things Happening in DVR

- Technical Specifications
- State Plan
- Time study recommendations and workforce planning
- New Service Provider Portal
- Waitlist
- Outreach to schools to encourage student referrals



Business Services Update

Program Year 2024 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025)	Combined Result Across all WIOA Core Programs	Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV)
WIOA Effectiveness in Serving Employers Indicator - Percent of Participants Employed with the Same Employer in the 2nd and 4th Quarters After Exit	53.2%	76.4%

- For Program Year 2025 thus far, the DVR Businesses Services team has connected with 2,475 employers and provided 5,601 individual employer services.
- In October of 2025 and January of 2026 offered a statewide, virtual employer Lunch & Learn: Navigating Mental Health in the Workplace.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

Policy Academy

- Met 1/13/26.
- Welcomed new members.
- Reviewed waitlist including Pre-ETS and immediate job loss concerns.
- Reviewed updates to technical specifications that will go into effect July 1, 2026.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

Quality Assurance

- Last meeting: December 2025.
- Currently working on review of Supported Employment cases.
- Biennial comprehensive peer review being conducted the last week of February.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

START

- Last meeting February 3, 2026.
- Pre-ETS spending review.
- Pre-ETS during an OOS training for staff.
- Student graduation/withdrawal and education and training module.
- Transition Conference – waitlist response.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

AsTec

- Last meeting Dec. 11, 2025.
- Reviewed QA SenseAbility and completed. Discussed creating a QA review for Assistive Technology Cases.
- Discussed recommended updates to the Assistive Technology Assessment Technical Specification, provided feedback.
- Reviewed team charter, goals and next steps.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

SenseAbility

- Last met Dec. 9, 2025.
- Discussed cost of interpreters (ASL & Foreign language) and fiscal process.
- BEP presentation by TJ Jerke.
- Discussed recommended updates to the Assistive Technology Assessment Technical Specification and provided feedback.



DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

Workplace Wellness

- Met remotely with team in October, no December meeting.
- Shared resources for financial wellness.
 - Employee Assistance Program, Employee Trust Funds, coaching and other resources.
- Discussed community engagement opportunities.
 - Partners in Giving, food drives, charity walks, etc.
- Coordinated coverage of wellness activities for “You, Me, and SLT.”



DVR Staff Trainings Update

November 2025: MUDA (state employment advancement education); CAP training; AgrAbility/UW-Extension Trainings; Fiscal Training.

December 2025: Waitlist training.

January 2026: 'Working with Students During a Waitlist' and 'Employment Retention Policy Training,' comprehensive new staff training.

February 2026: Assistive Technology, Office of Economic Advisors Training.

March 2026: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy with Dr. Jacob.



New Mediation Requests 10/01/25 – 12/31/25

DVR received **three** mediation requests:

- One was resolved.
- One was denied by DVR.
- One is pending.



New Appeals Requests 10/01/25 – 12/31/25

DVR received **five** appeals requests:

- One consumer withdrawn.
- Four are pending.



Appeal Hearing Outcomes FFY 2025

Fifteen Total Appeals:

- **Four** – Consumer withdrew
- **Four** – Dismissed per DVRs request
- **One** – Resolved
- **One** – Pending
- **Four** – Decisions rendered
- **One** – Denied by DHA



Questions?





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Defending Dignity.
Advancing Justice.

Client Assistance Program (CAP) Activity

Lydia Hartlaub, Staff Attorney
Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council meeting
February 19, 2026

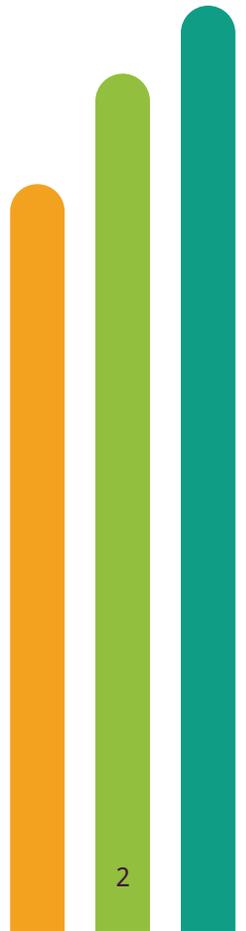
This presentation is funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Rehabilitation Services Administration). It does not necessarily represent the official views of the funding authority.



Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Formerly done by WI DATCP

Consumer advocacy for DVR services. Gives advice and information to consumers and applicants for services. Investigates and tries to help resolve complaints about VR and Independent Living Center services.





Requests for help related to VR services

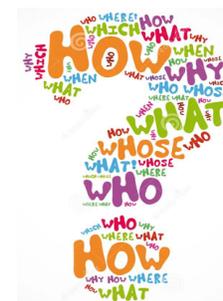
**10/1/25 – 12/31/25
(1st Quarter FY 26)**

⊕ Total: 43 (up 65% from this time last year)

- Information and referrals: 29
 - PABSS (for social security beneficiaries): 6
 - CAP: 23
- Opened cases: 14
 - PABSS: 2
 - CAP: 12



Questions?



Defending Dignity.
Advancing Justice.

THANK YOU!