

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Full Council Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2018

Members Present

Amy Porterfield*, Chair
Ted Chittenden
Bob Kresmer*
Sharonda White*
Dan Martinez
Janet Fisher
Donald Porterfield*
Nikki Jeffords
Mike Gordon*
Jim LaMay*
Annette Reichman

Members Absent

Ed Gervasoni
Bea Shapiro
Mike Kanitsch
Allan Curry
Nathan Pullen

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers, Admin. Assistant
Teleconferenced*

Guests Present

Kristen Mackey
Sue Kay Kneifel
Carlos Paraskevas
George Martinez
Milly Martinez
Jordan Moon*
Kristina Macholtz*
Lisa Yencarelli*

Call to Order and Introductions

Amy Porterfield, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. at the RSA Video Conference Rooms located in Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona. Introductions were made, a quorum was present, and the procedural meeting rules were explained.

Approval of December 1, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Bob Kresmer moved to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2017 GCBVI Full Council meeting as written. Ted Chittenden seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by majority voice vote.

GCBVI Chairperson's Report

Amy Porterfield stated the Executive Committee recently developed the form that would be used for committee members to track progress towards completing the outcomes included in the GCBVI Strategic Plan. Amy Porterfield noted that the form included a column for the committee to include notes regarding their progress. Ms. Porterfield stated that committee chairs would discuss the progress in the Executive Committee meetings and identify the next steps towards completing the tasks. Amy Porterfield stated that the lead committee would be required to provide an update twice a year to the Full Council.

RSA Administrator's Report

Kristen Mackey stated that Lindsey Powers had accepted the position of Council Staff Liaison, and her official duties would begin on January 29, 2018. Kristen Mackey stated that Rich Sorey, Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) Program Manager was currently out of the office and Sue Kay Kneifel, Assistant Program Manager, was covering any VR service related duties and Kristen Mackey was covering the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and OIB service duties.

Kristen Mackey stated the budget for 2018 was contingent on Congress passing bills to continue to fund government programs. Kristen Mackey stated that the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program would be funded for an additional 42 days, although Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) had not received funds for the Older Individuals Blind (OIB) program. Kristen Mackey stated RSA did have additional funds to cover the OIB program temporarily. Kristen Mackey stated if RSA received the full allotment of 3.6 million, the agency's programs would be covered, although the agency could face a shortfall in funds in 2019. Kristen Mackey stated the Sunset Audit indicated that RSA was using more funds than were received. She added that RSA was able to implement a 7% decrease in spending, which did not affect client services or client placements. Amy Porterfield inquired regarding whether RSA would request additional funds. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was able to request 20 million in funds, although due to the national disasters in Texas and Puerto Rico, RSA received 3.6 million in funds. Ms. Mackey stated the Sunset Audit indicated that RSA was spending more funds than were received and cautioned RSA from spending funds that were not guaranteed. Amy Porterfield inquired whether the reduced spending came from areas such as counselor training and in providing an accurate justification of VR services. Kristen Mackey confirmed and noted that RSA was interested in reducing waste in operating costs overall. Kristen Mackey noted that all staff salaries were included in the overhead costs. Jim LaMay inquired regarding the current potential shortfall

in VR funds. Kristen Mackey stated the projected shortfall in 2019 would be 7 million. Amy Porterfield stated if RSA reduced overall spending by approximately 10% and had already reduced spending by 7%, the agency should be in line with the projected budget amount. Kristen Mackey agreed and noted that RSA would continue to review the funds spent and to remain fiscally responsible. Amy Porterfield stated that RSA counselors were concerned with the budget and were discussing the issue with clients. Kristen Mackey stated that staff had not been informed regarding the budget although counselors were reminded to provide justification for client services.

Kristen Mackey stated the RSA would undergo Federal monitoring from February 26-March 3, 2018 and noted that the individuals might wish to meet with stakeholder groups. Kristen Mackey stated the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report indicated that RSA was not keeping accurate records of client costs, which prompted the Federal monitoring visit. Ms. Mackey stated the Federal monitoring would place an emphasis on monitoring performance and metrics, Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) services, Supported Employment, the joint implementation of the Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA), and the overall fiscal component. Kristen Mackey stated that the full report would be completed within approximately eight months, and she would provide the full report once finalized.

Kristen Mackey stated the Department of Economic Security (DES) and all programs were developing Strategic Plans, which aligned with the Governor's Strategic Plan. Kristen Mackey stated the DES and Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services (DERS) Strategic Plan included the agency's True North, which ensured that all individuals receive timely service. Kristen Mackey stated DERS annual improvement priority was to have 2200 individuals or less on the Order of Selection (OOS) Wait List by June 30, 2018. Kristen Mackey stated that the current number of individuals was 2197, although RSA would continue to take individuals off the OOS wait list. Kristen Mackey stated the second annual improvement priority was to increase job placements by 5% over the previous year. Kristen Mackey stated individuals were determined eligible for services within the 60 days timeframe 94.9%, and the IPE implementation compliance was at 85.4%. Kristen Mackey stated the average client hourly wage was \$11.86, 78.3% remained employed for over 90 days and there was a 33% increase in Transition students.

Kristen Mackey stated the Pre-ETS contract had been awarded to 22 individuals and would begin on February 1, 2018. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA would offer vendor trainings regarding the Pre-ETS contract, which

would provide the five required services to individuals 14-22 years old. She stated the services would introduce job placement services in a workshop setting rather than an ongoing service. Kristen Mackey stated if a client was found ineligible for VR services, that individual could not continue to receive Pre-ETS services. She added that if the client was found eligible and was placed on the wait list, that client could continue to receive Pre-ETS services. Ted Chittenden inquired whether the 2019 budget shortfall would affect the number of individuals taken off the wait list. Kristen Mackey stated RSA would continue to release individuals from the wait list. Ms. Mackey stated that RSA had not released enough individuals off the wait list to accurately project the client case costs. Dan Martinez inquired whether RSA identified any seasonal trends that would affect the 2019 VR budget. Kristen Mackey stated that month to month, the spending remained consistent, although RSA did anticipate some months of increased spending. Dan Martinez inquired how the GCBVI could assist RSA and the counselors to understand the budget and not necessarily discuss the issue with clients. Kristen Mackey stated she would appreciate any suggestions to convey the message to counselors in a way that they could understand and not feel overwhelmed. Amy Porterfield stated her understanding that counselors were focusing on inquiring how long clients would require services and noted that counselors would benefit from learning how to ask those questions. Nikki Jeffords inquired regarding the reason that one fourth of clients did not remain employed for 90 after days. Kristen Mackey stated RSA tracked client employment for 90 days and noted that some clients did not remain in contact with RSA after receiving employment. Ms. Mackey stated the new performance metrics would require that RSA track employment after the second and fourth quarter as well as the hours worked and the wage the client received. Kristen Mackey stated RSA currently tracked the information from vendor reports or reports from the client. Kristen Mackey stated if a client obtained employment but did not remain in contact with RSA, the agency could claim the closure, but not the retained employment statistic.

Nikki Jeffords inquired whether any of the vendors awarded the Pre-ETS contract were blindness organizations. Kristen Mackey stated that SAAVI Services for the Blind was awarded the Pre-ETS contract and Foundations for Handicapped, and Special Needs Services were awarded the contract and could provide Transition services for blind and visually impaired students. Amy Porterfield inquired how RSA was able to provide the required Pre-ETS services. Kristen Mackey stated there were 40,000 students in Arizona that met the age requirements for Pre-ETS services that were eligible for services. Kristen Mackey stated RSA staff provided workshops on the five required areas of service to schools or students. She added that the staff providing the training would time charge that time to the required 15% funds set aside for Pre-ETS services. Kristen Mackey stated that the

required 15% of funds needed to be spent on providing direct services to clients. Amy Porterfield inquired whether the Summer Transition programs could count towards the 15% required Pre-ETS services. Kristen Mackey stated she did not believe the Summer Transition programs could count towards the Pre-ETS services, although RSA would confirm that during the Federal monitoring visit. Ms. Porterfield stated her understanding that the regulations could be interpreted to include the Summer Transition program as offering broader training.

SBVID Program Manager Report

Kristen Mackey stated that SBVID reviewed the number of staff and added ILB teachers and would shift the operating budget to allow for more teachers. Dan Martinez inquired whether the teachers provided services statewide. Kristen Mackey stated there were 1-2 teachers in Tucson, teachers in Maricopa county and teachers that traveled statewide.

Sue Kay Kneifel stated SBVID continued to review the Comprehensive Services contract and noted that staff experienced challenges and were working through those challenges as they arose. Amy Porterfield stated one of the challenges was in changing the day rates to hourly rates, which slowed down the process. Sue Kay Kneifel stated the counselors had to become familiar authorizing services and all individuals receiving services had to have amended plans. Sue Kay Kneifel stated she was trying to approve amendments within 72 hours, which required communication between her and the supervisors. Kristen Mackey stated that services were split to better track the amount spent on each service. Sue Kay Kneifel stated that all the contracts had been amended and counselors would be required to have the invoices and supported documents to pay the invoices. Amy Porterfield recommended that RSA provide additional training regarding the new contract during the upcoming meeting with RSA and the providers. Sue Kay Kneifel stated her hope that Rich Sorey would be back in the office and would be able to participate in that meeting. Bob Kresmer inquired whether there were any Rehabilitation Counselors for the Blind (RCB) staff vacancies. Sue Kay Kneifel stated her understanding that there were two vacancies and noted that SBVID recently hired one RCBs in Phoenix and two in Tucson.

BEP Program Update

This agenda item was tabled.

ASDB Report

Annette Reichman, Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) Superintendent stated that Governor Ducey had approved the request for an additional 1.6 million for the early childhood intervention program. Ms. Reichman stated that ASDB would present to the House Education Committee on January 22, 2018. Annette Reichman stated ASDB received a commitment that the House Education Committee would vote in favor of the additional funds. She noted that ASDB would be required to address concerns regarding the agency's request for additional funds while the school was experiencing a decline in student enrollment. Annette Reichman stated that even with a declining student enrollment, the school had structural costs associated with the maintenance and upkeep of the building as well as staff salary costs. Amy Porterfield inquired how ASDB planned to recruit teachers to toddlers and infants when there was a current shortage in teachers. Annette Reichman stated that ASDB would hire 10-12 teachers in the summer and the rest of the teachers later. Amy Porterfield stated the teacher preparation program at the University of Arizona (UA) was facing challenges and inquired where ASDB would recruit students. Annette Reichman stated ASDB would recruit nationwide and within the agency. She added that the agency would develop training for teachers that would work with blind, visually impaired and deaf-blind children between the ages of one and three. Amy Porterfield inquired whether ASDB had identified a method for obtaining benchmark testing results for the upcoming AZ Merit test. Lisa Yencarelli stated the Tucson campus had started benchmark testing and she would follow up with the preliminary data.

GCBVI Member Discussion

Amy Porterfield stated the GCBVI had a current vacant position for an Arizona Council of the Blind (AzCB) member, and noted the council received an application from George Martinez for that position. George Martinez stated his background was in accounting and finance and he had been a CFO for approximately 15 years. Mr. Martinez stated he opened his own CPA practice, and had recently joined the AzCB Board. George Martinez stated he enjoyed participating with organizations, meeting individuals in the community and hearing about their needs and concerns. George Martinez stated he was involved with My Blind Spot and in testing Intuit and Quick Books for accessibility. Amy Porterfield stated she would contact the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions and recommend that George Martinez's application be moved forward for approval.

Ted Chittenden motioned that George Martinez's application be moved forward to fill the AzCB representation on the GCBVI. Nikki Jeffords seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

GCBVI Committee Reports

Amy Porterfield suggested the council members review the GCBVI Strategic Plan outcomes and the committees that were assigned and the lead and support committees for those outcomes.

Category I: Education

- Accessibilities standards are developed and implemented for instruction and testing for Infants and Toddlers through Post-Secondary Education
 - Lead Committee: Legislation and Public Policy. Support Committees: AT, Education
- Best practices are developed and implemented and available for all Arizona school districts to administer expanded core curriculum education
 - Lead Committee: Education. Support Committees: Legislation and Public Policy, AT
- Develop and implement collaborative data collection mechanism to track test scores K-12 for all school districts in Arizona
 - Lead Committee: Education. Support Committees: Legislation and Public Policy, AT

Category II: Employment

- VR services are funded by utilizing all methods available. All blind Arizonans are receiving services, and Comprehensive Programs are available to all blind consumers
 - Legislative and Public Policy
- BEP remains stable, protected by legislation, and continues to create opportunities for blind VR consumers
 - Lead Committee: Employment. Support Committee: Legislation and Public Policy
- Pre-ETS and Comprehensive Services preserve specialized quality training for blind VR consumers. Skill and employment growth outcomes are increased
 - Lead Committee: Employment. Support Committee: Legislative and Public Policy

- DES revises procurement process to be commensurate with purchasing technology that is subscription and cloud base
 - Legislation and Public Policy
- Implementation of on-going Employer education campaign
 - Lead Committee: Employment. Support Committee: Public Information
- SBVID best practices are revised with collaboration with GCBVI and blindness stakeholders
 - Lead Committee: Legislation and Public Policy. Support Committee: Employment
- Implementation of mentoring program pairing successfully closed VR consumers with new VR consumers
 - Employment
- Implementation of best practices for AIB and Community partners using GCBVI and Blindness stakeholders
 - Employment Committee

Category III: Independent Living (Blind Services)

- ILB funding is increased and services to older blind consumers is stable and sustained
 - Lead Committee: Legislation and Public Policy. Support Committee: ILB Committee
- Under 55 ILB funding is established and sustained
 - Lead Committee: Legislation and Public Policy. Support Committees: Public Information, ILB Committee
- ILB services to all populations are universally available statewide
 - Lead Committee: ILB Committee. Support Committees: Deaf/Blind Committee, Legislation and Public Policy
- SSP services to deaf/blind Arizonans is sustained across the state
 - Lead Committee: Deaf/Blind Committee. Support Committee: Legislation and Public Policy
- ILB best Practices are established for SBVID ILB unit with GCBVI and blindness stakeholders
 - Lead Committee: ILB Committee. Support Committee: Legislation and Public Policy

- Public service agencies receive regular feedback regarding accessibility
- Lead Committee: Legislation and Public Policy. Support Committees: AT, Public Information
- Best Practices are established and implemented for ILB consumers who are deaf/blind
- Lead Committee: Deaf/Blind Committee. Support Committees: ILB Committee, Legislation and Public Policy

Category IV: Council Integrity and Function

- GCBVI is recognized as a critical council in Arizona that is equal to that of the State Rehabilitation Council for Blind Services
- Lead Committee: Executive. Support Committees: Legislation and Public Policy, Public Information
- All GCBVI members are engaged in committee work and produce work product
- Executive
- GCBVI is staffed with 1 full-time equivalent position
- Lead Committee: Executive. Support Committee: Legislation and Public Policy
- GCBVI is recognized as an information and referral resource for both consumers and agencies and businesses that serve blind consumers
- Lead Committee: Executive. Support Committees: Public Information, Legislation and Public Policy
- GCBVI has a budget line item to accomplish goals
- Lead Committee: Executive. Support Committee: Legislation and Public Policy
- Public awareness of the GCBVI is raised and positive outcomes are common knowledge
- Public Information
- EyeKnow.AZ includes an accessibility resource page
- Lead Committee: Public Information. Support Committee: AT

Public Information

Ted Chittenden inquired whether the GCBVI would prefer that the Public Information Committee develop a full Annual Report or a condensed version. Amy Porterfield suggested the Public Information Committee discuss the Annual Report and inform the Executive Committee.

Ted Chittenden reviewed the EyeKnow.AZ database statistics:

December 1-31, 2017

Number of sessions (visits) - 147

Number of individuals visiting website- 104

Pages viewed per visit- 2.48

Time spent visiting the database (minutes) – 1.25

New visitors- 64%

Returning Users- 36%

Employment Committee

Nikki Jeffords stated that several companies offered credit card donations towards upcoming E75 Diversity Builder events, although DES was unable to accept credit card donations. Mike Gordon stated he inquired whether SAAVI would be able to assist the Employment Committee, but he had not received a response yet. Nikki Jeffords stated the E75 event would be held on January 26, 2018 at Ability 360 and noted that approximately 20 employers would attend. Ms. Jeffords stated that the keynote speaker would be from Tucson Electric Power, which had hired several blind and visually impaired individuals. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee would still recognize employers with awards, although the event would be more concise. Nikki Jeffords stated that any council members interested in attending should RSVP to Lindsey Powers by January 22, 2018. Nikki Jeffords stated the committee decided to hold four smaller quarterly events in April, August, and November in the upcoming year.

Ex-Oficio Member and Blindness Community Organization Updates

Arizona Braille and Talking Book Library

Janet Fisher stated the library was participating in a wireless delivery pilot program that the National Library Service (NLS) Library of Congress is currently running. Ms. Fisher stated the pilot test was MOCA (Mobile Cartridge device), in which individuals were provided with the device and tester cartridges in order to test downloading from BARD over cellular connections. Janet Fisher stated the machine was being tested by a few Talking Book Library users who do not have Wi-Fi access. Nikki Jeffords

inquired how many states were participating in the pilot program. Janet Fisher stated she was unsure how many states were participating. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the lending program for the refreshable Braille machines. Janet Fisher stated that the Perkins School for the Blind was currently offering that pilot program.

Arizona Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ACBVI)

Jim LaMay stated ACBVI received 50 computers to replace outdated computers for staff and clients, that would be operational by the end of January. Jim LaMay stated the agency received a donation which allowed ACBVI to purchase 38 computer work station chairs. Jim LaMay suggested that ACBVI staff be invited to present at an upcoming Full Council meeting regarding potential career paths. Amy Porterfield stated that several agencies could provide updates regarding their job training programs.

Foundation for Blind Children (FBC)

Nikki Jeffords stated that FBC would hold the Stride for Sight walking and running event in March.

SAAVI Services for the Blind

Mike Gordon stated SAAVI Services for the Blind was awarded the Pre-ETS contract and would develop workshops to educate staff on the requirements of the contract. SAAVI would begin implementation of the new Comprehensive Services contract, which was a large endeavor. SAAVI received the Community Development Block Grant to provide services for individuals with age related vision loss.

Arizona Council of the Blind (AzCB)

George Martinez stated the AzCB would advocate for the Legislature to encourage compliance with existing legislature. Mr. Martinez stated he would encourage AzCB to become more involved in reaching out to newly blind and visually impaired individuals and offer resources such as the EyeKnow.AZ website and AT conferences.

National Federation of the Blind (NFB)

Donald Porterfield stated the NFB of Arizona (NFBA) held the Phoenix seminar at the Arizona Capitol, in which the NFBA advocated for the rights of blind parents, to stop current guide dog legislation, and for changes to the DES Procurement process that excluded the purchase of subscription

software. Mr. Porterfield stated the NFBA received positive support from Nancy Bardo regarding the blind parent legislation. He added that the current legislation required the blind parent to provide proof that the individual was a competent parent. Donald Porterfield stated the modified bill would require that the person making the accusations prove that the blind individual was not a competent parent. Donald Porterfield stated the NFBA had to educate the Legislature regarding the problems to the guide dog bill. He noted that the current language would require the individual to demonstrate the tasks the guide dog performed, which was opposed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Donald Porterfield stated the NFBA continued to advocate for changes to the DES Procurement code, which would exempt RSA from the restrictions that opposed the purchase of software subscriptions for clients. Donald Porterfield stated NFB would begin the National Seminar in Washington D.C. on January 29, 2018.

Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the GCBVI Full Council will be on March 16, 2018 from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. in the Video Conference Room, at 515 N. 51st Avenue, Phoenix, AZ.

Announcements

Jim LaMay announced the Annual CSUN Convention would be in San Diego from March 20-23, 2018, which offered wonderful information regarding AT.

Call to the Public

George Martinez stated he was an independent CPA and worked with Quick Carlos Paraskevas announced the Foundation Fighting Blindness Arizona Vision Walk would be held on February 24, 2018 at Steele Indian School Park and individuals could join a team on the webpage.

Adjournment of Meeting

Bob Kresmer moved to adjourn the meeting. Sharonda White seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm

As of December 31, 2017:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 942
The total number of Veterans in VR Program was 33
The total number of individuals in the OOS was 101
The total number of individuals in Priority Two was 77
The total number of individuals in Priority Three was 24
The number of VR applications was 65
The average number of days from application to eligibility was 57.7
The median number of days application to eligibility was 49
The eligibility determination compliance within 60 days was 83.5%
The number of new plans written was 79
The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 75.6
The median number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 64.5
The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days was 82.1%
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$62.50
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$16.80
The number of clients placed was 10
The number of clients closed successfully was 13

As of December 31, 2017, the Deaf Blind Population statistics:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 40
The total number of Veterans in VR program was 1
The total number of individuals in the OOS was 0
The total number of individuals in Priority Two was 0
The total number of individuals in Priority Three was 0
The number of VR applications was 2
The number of new plans written was 1
The IPE Implementation Compliance within 90 days was 0%
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$26.44
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$26.44
The number of clients placed was 0
The number of clients closed successfully was 1