

**Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**  
**Full Council Meeting Minutes**  
February 7, 2019

**Members Present**

Dan Martinez, Chair  
Jill Pleasant  
Scott Lindbloom  
David Cheesman  
Danita Applewhite  
Kathy McDonald  
Paula Seanez  
Judith Castro  
John Gutierrez  
Melissa Wojtak  
Kristen Mackey  
Ana Nunez

**Members Absent**

Carol Carr  
Sheri Carparelli

**Staff Present**

Lindsey Powers

**Guests Present**

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**Call to Order and Introductions**

Dan Martinez, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm in the RSA Videoconference Room, 515 N. 51st Avenue, Phoenix, and in the RSA Video Conference Rooms located in Tucson, Flagstaff, and Yuma, AZ.

**Approval of December 13, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

Danita Applewhite moved to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2018 SRC Full Council meeting. Melissa Wojtak seconded the motion. The council approved the meeting minutes by unanimous voice vote.

**SRC Chairperson's Report**

Dan Martinez stated that he attended the E75 Diversity Builder Award breakfast organized by the Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI), which awarded employers that hired blind and visually impaired individuals and allowed for employer networking. Mr. Martinez stated it was a great event and was well attended. Dan Martinez stated he would be participating in the Vision Walk in February in Phoenix, which was organized by the Foundation Fighting Blindness.

## **RSA Administrator's Report**

Kristen Mackey stated she distributed a six-month update regarding Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)'s progress. She noted the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) shifted RSA's operating program year to the State Fiscal Year (SFY). Ms. Mackey stated that the end of December was that six-month period. Dan Martinez inquired whether the individuals placed in integrated competitive employment were case closures or job placements. Kristen Mackey stated the clients that were dual enrolled in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) were placed in employment. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA had a meeting with WINTAC and YTAC, whom would assist RSA in developing a customized integrated employment model for individuals with significant disabilities. She noted that RSA and DDD would also work with the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and the Department of Child Safety to identify two or three sites to roll out the customized employment model. Kristen Mackey stated RSA also partnered with Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC) to provide training also. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA was working with the Arizona Technology Access Program (AzTAP), on how to communicate the employment opportunities to the families of individuals with disabilities. Jill Pleasant stated AzTAP was planning a parent training session with Raising Special Kids. Dan Martinez inquired whether RSA or AzTAP had identified the concerns that parents of individuals with disabilities would have. Kristen Mackey stated many parents were reluctant to encourage their family members to obtain employment due to benefits, fiscal implications, and the fear of allowing their children to obtain employment. Dan Martinez agreed and noted that parents would need emotional support. Kristen Mackey stated RSA staff would receive hands on training on how to have those conversations with parents. Jill Pleasant stated that parents would need to have a shift in thinking and staff needed the appropriate training to have those discussions with colleagues and parents. Dan Martinez inquired whether there would be training for employers as well. Jill Pleasant stated that prior feedback indicated that staff had requested more information on how to reach the parents. Kristen Mackey clarified that AzTAP would provide training through the ADDCP, with staff and families. She added that VR and DDD would be spearheading the customized employment training and the agencies did discuss how to have those conversations with employers. She added that Kelly Hart, Employer Engagement Administration, would identify staff that could assist in engaging employers in the process.

Kristen Mackey stated that a press release had been distributed regarding Governor Ducey's initiative, the Phoenix Project, and noted that RSA was working with Precisionist Incorporated to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain employment. She noted the focus was on individuals with autism, although they would explore opportunities to individuals with all disabilities. Kristen Mackey stated that one client had completed the training and had obtained employment in IT. Danita Applewhite inquired whether SRC members or members from the Statewide Intendent Living Council (SILC) could participate in those meetings. Kristen Mackey stated she would review the road map and could share some of that information with the council.

Kristen Mackey stated that RSA would fill Rich Sorey's position as the Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) Program Manager as well as several

supervisor positions and the Client Appeals Liaison position. She noted that she was also able to hire an Operational Strategic Planning position, which Brandi Coffland had accepted. Kristen Mackey stated that Brandi Coffland's current position as Policy Manager would be posted soon as well. Dan Martinez inquired regarding who was handling Rich Sorey's duties. Kristen Mackey stated that Sue Kay Kneifel, Assistant Program Manager for Region 3, continued to cover the VR aspect and Kristen Mackey was covering the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB). Kristen Mackey added that the tiered counselor positions and salaries had reduced the staff turnover rate. Dan Martinez noted that new staff would require training. Kristen Mackey stated there were training opportunities within DES, although she was exploring external training opportunities as well as to provide workshop opportunities such as an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) workshop and a Client Appeals workshop. John Gutierrez requested clarification regarding the Client Appeals Liaison position. Kristen Mackey stated the Client Appeals Liaison position was the Ombudsman position, although the position classification had been elevated to align with the importance of the position. John Gutierrez inquired whether the position would be referred to as the Ombudsman position. Kristen Mackey stated the technical title would be the Client Appeals Liaison, although she appreciated feedback regarding the title. John Gutierrez stated there could be some confusion among clients, although RSA could determine the appropriate title. Kristen Mackey stated the duties of the position would not change, although the classification would be updated to reflect the position accurately. Dan Martinez inquired regarding who was handling the Policy Manager position. Kristen Mackey stated that Brandi Coffland was still handling most of the work and she would help to train the individual that obtained that position. Judith Castro stated that RSA would have a difficult time replacing Brandi Coffland, whom had been an integral part of the Policy Unit. Kristen Mackey agreed and noted that Brandi Coffland would help ensure that staff continued to reach out to the Policy Unit with questions. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA held public forums regarding the Self Employment policy and would compile the feedback and post the updated policy within 30 days. She noted that RSA would also hold workshops to train staff and to increase the availability and opportunities to offer self-employment plans to clients. Judith Castro stated her appreciation to the Policy Unit for updating the policy, which was easier to understand. Kristen Mackey stated she had not received an update regarding the Federal visit report, and she had not received an estimated time to receive that report. She noted there had been a shift in the Federal RSA teams and individuals.

## **Committee Reports**

### ***Employment and Community Partnerships Committee***

This item was tabled.

### ***Program Review Committee***

Ana Nunez stated the Program Review Committee had started review of RSA's Section 511 Policy and would compare the language to the WIOA regulations. She noted that the committee had divided the work similarly to the review of the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) policy. Ana Nunez stated that Brandi Coffland took the recommendations from the committee regarding the Pre-ETS policy. Ms. Nunez inquired

regarding how the committee should share their recommendations with the SRC. Dan Martinez stated that any committee recommendations should be submitted to the SRC members for council approval. Dan Martinez inquired whether Ana Nunez required additional assistance to accomplish the committee's goals. Ana Nunez stated the committee would appreciate subject matter experts familiar with the policies under review.

Ana Nunez stated that Kathy Hoffman was the new ADE Superintendent, and had been traveling to meet the ADE staff. Ms. Nunez stated ADE was in the process of hiring three additional Transition Specialists. She added that ADE was accepting papers and award nominations for the upcoming Transition Conference as well as artwork from students. Ana Nunez stated the National Technical Center on Transition had identified several goals in which one is to invite families to have a conversation with the schools, VR and DDD. She stated the goal was to align the goals of all the stakeholders and to expand the conversation to the agencies participating.

Melissa Wojtak stated that Peoria Unified School District was holding a Pre-ETS Parents' Orientation on March 13, 2019, with some of the Pre-ETS vendors. Ms. Wojtak stated the Transition program aimed to provide a smooth transition for students.

## **Membership Organization Updates**

### ***SILC***

Scott Lindbloom stated that Sarah Kader had been elected the Director of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), and SILC would develop a Strategic Plan. Danita Applewhite stated she would continue efforts to develop a Membership Committee. Dan Martinez inquired whether any council members would be interested in participating on a Membership Committee. Scott Lindbloom stated he would participate on that committee. Danita Applewhite stated that she hoped that customized employment could assist veterans in obtaining employment. Dan Martinez stated his understanding that customized employment could be used across all populations. He suggested that council members review the Walgreens warehouse in South Carolina, which had a great employment model. Paula Seanez stated the Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) had aided in the development of the Strategic Plan. Ms. Seanez added that Sarah Kader was the SILC Director of Operations, Melissa Santora was the SILC Director of Innovations, and Tanisha Smith had been hired as the Administrative Support Specialist.

Scott Lindbloom stated that he was working with the Show Low Chamber of Commerce in a partnership with businesses and high schools to offer training to individuals with disabilities. Danita Applewhite stated her understanding that Scott Lindbloom was working with a Disability Chamber of Commerce to work with individuals with disabilities. Scott Lindbloom agreed and noted the Show Low was working with job coaches to aid individuals with disabilities.

### ***American Indian VR Projects***

Paula Seanez stated the Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation

(CANAR) Conference was held December 10-13, 2018, which included presentations on Pre-ETS collaboration between tribal and state VR programs. Paula Seanez stated that 2 Project Officers attended the conference and one Officer would retire. Ms. Seanez stated that some tribes could begin applications for grant funds and asking for support letters. She noted there would be a competition for tribal VR funds and not enough funds for all tribes. Paula Seanez stated CANAR hired staff from Northern University of Arizona (NAU), who would provide a grant writing workshop to review and develop their Request for Proposals (RFP). Dan Martinez inquired whether the tribal VR programs were affected by the government shutdown. Paula Seanez stated the tribal VR programs were not affected, although Indian Health Services were struggling to pay staff. Dan Martinez inquired whether the tribal VR programs had made efforts to obtain data regarding the number of American Indians that were disabled. Paula Seanez stated that NAU had potentially conducted research through their programs and grants, although she was unaware of any efforts statewide. Dan Martinez stated he would be interested to know whether the number of disabled individuals in the American Indian population were comparable or more than the general population. Paula Seanez stated that older statistics reported the number of disabled individuals in the American Indian population as higher than the general public.

### ***Client Assistance Program***

John Gutierrez summarized that CAP was mandated under the Rehabilitation Act as the advocacy component for clients statewide. Mr. Gutierrez stated that CAP continued to hear that counselors would only pay for bachelor's degrees for clients, although WIOA indicated that VR would pay for higher education for individuals seeking medical or law degrees. John Gutierrez stated that many clients were also placed in customer service positions, which were entry level positions. Dan Martinez inquired whether counselors knew that clients could obtain higher education. John Gutierrez stated that counselors and supervisors could be unaware that clients were eligible for higher education. Danita Applewhite inquired whether there was a qualifier that qualified clients for higher education. John Gutierrez stated that VR would evaluate the clients' strengths and identify whether higher education would be appropriate. Kristen Mackey stated that individuals would need to have the aptitude to complete the schooling and counselors and clients would review the educational requirements to obtain those goals. Ms. Mackey noted that customer service was a broad term and RSA would provide training to staff to better identify those employment outcomes. Danita Applewhite inquired whether clients could appeal their IPEs. Kristen Mackey stated that IPEs could be amended at any time. Scott Lindbloom stated he knew an individual with a bachelor's degree although a master's degree would be beneficial for counselors in VR. John Gutierrez stated that a master's degree in Social Work, for example, would offer more opportunities and pay for the client.

### ***AzTAP***

Jill Pleasant stated the upcoming AzTAP Conference would be combined with Northern Arizona University's Institute for Human Development (IHD) and the Evidence Based Practices Disability and Disciplines and would be held July 14-16, 2019 at the We-Ko-Pa Resort and Conference Center. She added that AzTAP was working with Gompers to provide accessible transportation to the event. Jill Pleasant stated that AzTAP was

accepting the call for papers and vendor registrations for the conference. Jill Pleasant stated that AzTAP was offering a module of three online trainings on hearing loss. She noted the modules were designed for caregivers or family members working with older adults with hearing loss. Ms. Pleasant stated the first module was Hearing Loss 101, the second was about Assistive Technology and the third was Communication Strategies. Jill Pleasant stated the trainings were available on the AzTAP website under the Education Training tab.

### ***Developmental Disabilities***

This item was tabled.

### ***Community Rehabilitation Providers***

This item was tabled.

### **Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the SRC Full Council will be on May 9, 2019 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. in the Video Conference Room, at 515 N. 51st Avenue, Phoenix, AZ. The meeting agenda items are:

- Disability Chamber of Commerce Update

### **Announcements**

Paula Seanez stated the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual American Indian Summit would be held on March 29, 2019 at the Desert Willow Conference Center. Dr. Applewhite announced that the African American Symposium was scheduled on February 15, 2019 at Desert Willow Conference.

### **Public Comment**

A call to the public was made with no responses forthcoming.

### **Adjournment of Meeting**

Paula Seanez motioned to adjourn the meeting. Jill Pleasant seconded the motion. The meeting stood adjourned at 3:00 pm.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Scorecard – January 20, 2019 – January 26, 2019**

The total number of individuals in VR program was 12,944

The average number of days from eligibility was 37 days

The eligibility determination compliance within 60 days was 93.8%

The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 78 days

The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days was 87%

The total number of individuals in OOS Priority 2 and 3 was 1011

The total number of individuals in Priority 2 was 596

The total number of individuals in Priority 3 was 415

The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$12.86

The number of job placements was 34

The number of clients closed with employment was 32

The retention rate was 87.1%

The average days to obtain employment was 596

The average days from referral to application was 27

The average days from job-ready to placement was 50