

Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Full Council Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2019

Members Present

Dan Martinez, Chair
Jill Pleasant
Scott Lindbloom
David Cheesman
Danita Applewhite
Kathy McDonald
Judith Castro
John Gutierrez
Kristen Mackey
Carol Carr

Members Absent

Ana Nunez
Melissa Wojtak
Sheri Carparelli
Paula Seanez

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

David Flores
Diedre Flores

Call to Order and Introductions

Dan Martinez, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 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 February 7, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Carol Carr moved to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2019 SRC Full Council meeting. John Gutierrez seconded the motion. The council approved the meeting minutes by unanimous voice vote.

SRC Chairperson's Report

Dan Martinez stated the date for the next SRC Full Council meeting would be rescheduled so most council members could attend. Mr. Martinez noted the council would also hold officer elections in October or November and he encouraged council members to continue recruitment efforts.

Dan Martinez stated that he was participating in the planning for the Vision

Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE), which was scheduled for November 15 and 16 at the Glendale Civic Center. Dan Martinez stated that VRATE was scheduled for Friday and Saturday with the hope that teachers and students would be able to attend one of the days.

RSA Administrator's Report

Kristen Mackey stated that Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) had requested input regarding the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) rules, which were still under review by the Attorney General Office. Ms. Mackey stated the proposed timeline for implementation of those rules would be May 2020. Kristen Mackey stated the proposed rules for the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) were submitted to Federal RSA and had been approved to move forward. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA had completed the focus groups and surveys regarding the Statewide Needs Assessment, and she would share that information once the information had been reviewed.

Kristen Mackey stated that RSA continued to release approximately 100-200 individuals off the Order of Selection (OOS) Wait List each month. She noted that currently, there were 438 clients on the wait list, which included 34 clients in Priority Two and 402 clients in Priority Three. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA intended to have approximately 30 individuals added to Priority Two each month, although about 40-50 individuals were applying for services each month, which was great that VR was receiving referrals, although services were somewhat delayed for releasing clients from Priority Three. Kristen Mackey stated that Priority Two clients could wait for up to four weeks to receive services, or until the next release of individuals. Kristen Mackey stated that she anticipated that all of clients in Priority Two and Three would be released by the end of August.

Kristen Mackey stated that RSA set large goals for the 2019 Strategic Plan, which included having 1,772 individuals exit the program with employment and year to date, 1,541 individuals had exited the program with employment. Kristen Mackey stated the goal for dual enrolled VR/ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) clients placed in competitive integrated employment was 70 and stated that 38 clients had been placed. She noted that the year prior, 7 dual enrolled clients had been placed in competitive integrated employment, which was an increase of 443% over the prior year. Dan Martinez inquired regarding the length of time that those clients would be tracked. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA would continue to track the clients the following year and into employment. Kristen Mackey stated there had been 288% reduction of individuals on the wait list.

Kristen Mackey stated that RSA was planning for the 2020 Strategic Plan, which would include increasing opportunities for youth to engage in Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). She stated that RSA was unsure how those metrics would be measured and what would constitute as an outcome. Kristen Mackey noted the Pre-ETS metrics would be the annual improvement priority for the Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services (DERS), and RSA's goal would be to increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities and increasing the dual enrolled VR/DDD clients. She added that RSA would also develop metrics to track progress in the BEP and the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) programs.

Kristen Mackey stated the Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) Program Manager position was still vacant, and she had recently escalated the issue higher to encourage that the position moves through HR. Kristen Mackey stated that Jami Lemmer had been hired as the new Policy Manager, who had been a counselor and a supervisor for the 7th Street Office. She noted that allowed Brandi Coffland to move into her new position that would manage projects, audit management and would manage all the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) portions. Kristen Mackey stated the VR State Plan for the WIOA would be due this year, and Ms. Coffland would assist with the VR portion. Ms. Mackey added that Brandi Coffland had assumed supervision over staff members that included Lindsey Powers, another Council Liaison and Sue LeHew, AT Coordinator. Kristen Mackey stated the Policy Unit would be hiring another Policy Specialist to replace Lisa Adamu's vacant position. She added that DERS had recently hired Jeramia Garcia Ramadan as the new Policy Administrator and oversees all the Policy Managers. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA had also hired a new Ombudsman or Client Appeals Liaison, Mathew Nevarez, as well as a support staff, Nicole Smith. John Gutierrez stated that Vanja Pasalic had been a great help and he inquired whether Ms. Pasalic would continue to work with RSA. Kristen Mackey stated that Vanja Pasalic was part of the Policy Unit and would continue to assist Mathew Nevarez and Nicole Smith in transitioning into their new roles. Carol Carr inquired whether the employment portion of DDD would eventually fall under VR. Kristen Mackey stated that support coordinators needed to be more comfortable in discussing employment and recognize that VR had the expertise in providing the employment services. She noted that RSA and DDD would work to identify the employment services that DDD provided and how RSA could increase the comfort level of VR counselors to accept individuals with significant disabilities. Kristen Mackey stated that agencies needed to identify how an individual could go from center-based employment to group supported to a work adjustment training in VR to job development.

Dan Martinez inquired regarding RSA's state budget. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA's state budget remained the same, and RSA continued to overspend the Federal allotment. She noted that RSA anticipated having enough funds for 2020, although the agency would rely on the ability to obtain re-allotment funds, which were becoming scarcer.

Kristen Mackey encouraged the SRC members to contact the Senators to appoint Mark Schultz as the RSA Commissioner, who was the previous General VR Agency Director in Nebraska. Ms. Mackey stated that Mark Schultz was nominated for Commissioner the previous year, although the position had not been filled, and he had been nominated again. Kristen Mackey stated that in the absence of a leader, processes were not moving forward. She noted that RSA was still waiting for the Federal Monitoring Report and noted there were other implications for not filling that position. Carol Carr inquired whether RSA's budget would go through the Commission for approval. Kristen Mackey stated the budget would go through the Commission for approval. Ms. Carr stated that RSA did not receive an increase in the budget but had more mandates to complete. Kristen Mackey stated there was a cost of living increase from Federal RSA, although there was no increase in the state budget. Kristen Mackey stated there were restrictions on what was considered Pre-ETS and RSA had not been able to meet those requirements. She added that more than half of the VR agencies were on an OOS,

which was an unintended consequence of not having a Commissioner. Carol Carr stated her concern that students with significant disabilities would require substantial support and accommodations. Kristen Mackey agreed and stated there needed to be a shift in how RSA evaluated performance. Kristen Mackey stated that she had been asked to participate in a group of VR Directors to go to Washington D.C. to attend a meeting, "Rethink Performance". Ms. Mackey stated that RSA had been challenged to identify the performance measures that adequately measured the impact and outcome of VR. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was able to give feedback regarding the measures that should be tracked. She noted that she expressed the ongoing concerns for approval before purchases over \$5000 and the ongoing requirement for data entry. Kristen Mackey stated that VR staff entered significant data, and RSA inquired whether that data was useful, as it took away from service delivery to clients. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA also expressed concern that a client needed to submit a pay stub to prove employment. She added that the proposed reorganization for community living was open for comment and the goal was to align and create efficiencies, although the reorganization would downgrade the leadership levels. Kristen Mackey added there was a dialogue regarding 14C waiver holders to gather information regarding the use of 14C and how to transition from the use of 14C. John Gutierrez inquired regarding the anticipated date that all clients would be removed from the wait list. Kristen Mackey stated that she anticipated that all clients would be removed from the wait list at the end of August. She noted that RSA would evaluate the costs for individuals in Priority Two and Three and would ensure that all clients could be served. Dan Martinez inquired whether RSA had a meeting with parents to encourage parents and students to consider Transition services. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA could schedule a meeting with parents. She noted that she would appreciate feedback regarding the discussion topics and the ideal venue and method for obtaining that information. Scott Lindbloom stated there would be a conference in September, which included education training with the Navajo Nation.

Committee Report

Employment and Community Partnerships Committee

Carol Carr stated the Employment and Community Partnerships Committee had submitted feedback regarding the RSA Self Employment Policy to the Policy Unit. Kristen Mackey stated the Policy Unit was able to offer a workshop regarding the new Self Employment Policy. Carol Carr stated committee had recently invited individuals from various entities such as Tim Stump, Employment Coordinator, Judith Castro, Jennifer Baier, the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE), and a representative from Linkages and Untapped Arizona to discuss employment efforts of individuals with disabilities. Carol Carr stated the committee would begin reviewing the Ohio Employer Toolkit and develop a similar toolkit for Arizona. Ms. Carr stated the toolkit would offer the links to locating information and resources for employers. Carol Carr stated the committee had not identified a due date for the project although she anticipated completing the toolkit by the end of the year. Carol Carr stated the committee was interested in inviting the individuals that worked with employers and to embrace the opportunity to work with individuals with disabilities. Dan Martinez inquired how ARIZONA@WORK fit into the committee's efforts. Carol Carr stated there were limited resources to agencies and VR and the expectation was that the community would

collaborate on providing the services to individuals. Carol Carr stated that companies such as Microsoft were invested in hiring individuals with disabilities as well as training individuals to advance within the company. She noted that many companies wanted to work with providers but were unsure how and the committee could act as a conduit for that process. Carol Carr stated that she met with the Department of Labor and ODEP and the conversation was to identify how to move forward. She noted that all providers, VR staff, and organizations needed to think creatively to serve individuals. Scott Lindbloom stated that most states had a committee that focused on employment and worked with small businesses. Carol Carr stated there was several entities working on employment and community partnership. Ms. Carr stated that Scott Lindbloom could forward any contacts to Lindsey Powers, and she would extend an invitation to the committee meetings.

Danita Applewhite stated that she would hold a Membership Committee meeting and she would provide a report at the next Full Council meeting.

Program Review Committee

Dave Cheesman stated the Program Review Committee reviewed the Pre-ETS and Section 511 Policies and compared the policy language to WIOA and found the policies to be in alignment with the WIOA language. Dave Cheesman stated the committee would begin reviewing the Post-Secondary Education/Training Policy and discuss the committee member's findings.

Membership Organization Updates

SILC

Danita Applewhite stated the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) programs would be expanded to the underserved populations especially youth. Dr. Applewhite stated the SPIL Evaluation Committee met and reviewed the goals and objectives of the SPIL, which would be extended for one year and there were 5 Centers for Independent Living (CIL)s. Danita Applewhite stated the funding would fluctuate, although the goals would remain the same. Danita Applewhite stated the Partners in Preparedness Summit was held in June, where participants discussed emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities, which could include grants distributed to CILs in the future. Scott Lindbloom stated that he and Sarah Kader were working on emergency preparedness for individuals in Show Low that had difficulty maneuvering through snow in wheelchairs. Dan Martinez inquired whether the state was sharing emergency preparedness Best Practices statewide. Danita Applewhite stated that each CIL would be involved with sharing the information statewide as well as nationally, although the focus was on statewide measures. Dr. Applewhite stated that Part B funds would be used for initiatives in Arizona such as the Youth Leadership Forum. Danita Applewhite stated that the final Youth Leadership Forum would be held in Phoenix and noted that several alumni of the program, were trained to serve on the Board. She stated the Arizona Disability Coalition held a Day at the Capitol in March and individuals had the opportunity to learn about advocacy and to meet with the Legislature. Scott Lindbloom stated that he taught self-advocacy skills to individuals in Show Low. Danita Applewhite stated that Scott Lindbloom was participating in many activities and efforts in Show Low

as well as on behalf of SILC and the SRC. Danita Applewhite stated the ADC would also be developing a newsletter of resources that would be distributed.

American Indian VR Projects

This item was tabled.

Client Assistance Program

John Gutierrez stated that he continued to receive feedback from counselors, whom indicated that they were not receiving adequate training. Kristen Mackey stated that all new counselors attended the Core 1 and 2 training, which were 8 courses, as well as CBT courses. Ms. Mackey stated that all trainings were provided by the Office of Professional Development (OPD) staff and RSA had recommended that some of the trainings be updated to reflect updated information or policies. Kristen Mackey stated that OPD staff were unable to answer questions specific to VR processes, and she had recommended that RSA be able to bring in outside sources to offer supplemental training. John Gutierrez inquired whether the OPD staff were VR staff. Kristen Mackey stated that OPD staff were not VR staff and were certified trainers. Ms. Mackey stated that she had reviewed an online training program with 57 modules that included topics such as case management, managing case loads and how to work with individuals with combined vision and hearing loss (CVHL) or traumatic brain injury. Dan Martinez inquired whether the counselors had indicated the specific areas of the training that they needed. John Gutierrez stated that many counselors indicated challenges with working with Libera, the case management system, and the steps involved in the VR program. Kristen Mackey stated she had encouraged the Policy Unit to disseminate information to staff through workshops or small trainings.

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 had partnered with Gompers to provide accessible transportation to the event. Jill Pleasant stated the Community Exhibit Hall would be free to the community on Monday from 1:30-6:00. Jill Pleasant stated the conference would also offer Continuing Education Units (CEU) to individuals to renew their CRCs. Jill Pleasant stated the Lending Library would move from Flagstaff to AzTAP, which would require additional space. Dan Martinez inquired regarding AzTAP's budget. Jill Pleasant stated that AzTAP received an increase for the current year, which would likely remain the same for the following year. She noted the Assistive Technology (AT) Act would be reauthorized. Ms. Pleasant stated the AT programs were formula funded programs and often received increases due to population growth.

Jill Pleasant stated that AzTAP offered low interest loans to individuals that were interested in purchasing technology such as hearing aids, vehicle lifts, or co-pays on Medicare. Dan Martinez inquired regarding AzTAP's financial partner in offering the loans. Jill Pleasant stated that AzTAP partnered with Marisol Credit Union, which were in Phoenix, although individuals could apply for the loans statewide. Danita Applewhite

stated that AzTAP offered a seamless process for individuals applying for the loans.

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 would be determined for a date in August.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

David Flores stated that he had a stroke which left him partially blind. Mr. Flores stated that he applied for VR services with the assistance of his daughter. David Flores stated he was excited to learn about the resources that were available and to be able to help others. David Flores stated that he had to learn how to walk again and how to read, which was challenging, although he would be able to help others going through similar situations. David Flores stated that he was grateful that he met Dr. Applewhite and learned about the VR program and resources that were available. Dan Martinez stated that often individuals did not know where to look for resources and he was glad that David Flores was able to learn about the services and support that were available.

Adjournment of Meeting

Dan Martinez motioned to adjourn the meeting. Danita Applewhite seconded the motion. The meeting stood adjourned at 3:10 pm.

Vocational Rehabilitation Scorecard – June 2, 2019 – June 8, 2019

The total number of individuals in VR program was 12,980

The average number of days from eligibility was 33 days

The eligibility determination compliance within 60 days was 93.6%

The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 74 days

The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days was 88%

The total number of individuals in OOS Priority 2 and 3 was 201

The total number of individuals in Priority 2 was 1

The total number of individuals in Priority 3 was 200

The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$11.68

The number of job placements was 44

The number of clients closed with employment was 34

The retention rate was 83.3%

The average days to obtain employment was 663

The average days from referral to application was 51

The average days from job-ready to placement was 102