

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)

DeafBlind Committee Meeting Minutes

November 2, 2022

Attendance

Members Present

Andrew Cohen, Co-Chair
Jonathan Pringle, Co-Chair
Megan Mogan
Mary Hartle
Sue Kay Kneifel

Members Absent

Virginia Thompson
Larry Rhodes

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

PV Jantz
Carmen Green
Cindy Walsh
Carmilla Tisdale, ASL Interpreter
Lee Bradley, ASL Interpreter

Minutes

Call to Order and Introductions

Andrew Cohen, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm.
Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Approval of August 17, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Jonathan Pringle moved to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2022 DeafBlind Committee meeting. Mary Hartle seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Public Comment

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

Chair Report

Jonathan Pringle stated that he and Andrew Cohen reached out to some of their contacts in an attempt to recruit more individuals with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss (CVHL) to participate on the committee. Jonathan Pringle stated the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) was finalizing things as the year was ending, and the contract with the state was in the approval process.

Andrew Cohen stated there had been a greater awareness towards DB (deaf blind) individuals, which was great. He noted that many agencies and organizations were in the process of restructuring, which occurred annually, and they continued to support the DB community.

Committee Activities Discussion

Mary Hartle stated that she would like the committee to discuss what they would like to focus on, such as how to improve DB services. Mary Hartle stated that in previous years, the committee had discussed certification training for Support Service Providers (SSP)s, and how to increase pay for SSPs. Ms. Hartle noted there was a shortage of SSPs in Phoenix, and that SSPs were mostly available in Phoenix and Tucson. Jonathan Pringle stated that Julie Stylinski was no longer with the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDHH), and the agency did not currently have someone in that position, although there were representatives from the ACDHH at the meeting. Mary Hartle inquired whether SSP services were offered statewide to individuals. Cindy Walsh stated that services were primarily being offered in Phoenix and Tucson, although the program could be developed to offer services in other areas. Ms. Walsh noted the program had not received that request yet. Mary Hartle stated that outreach was important, because individuals were not aware that SSP services were

available. Andrew Cohen inquired whether an individual living in Flagstaff could request SSP services. Cindy Walsh stated the agency would work with the ACDHH to expand services to other areas if someone requested services. Cindy Walsh noted that if individuals in other areas requested services frequently, the agency would train a local SSP to provide those services. Cindy Walsh stated the agency had not reached the stage for outreach yet.

Carmen Green stated that when the need arose, the ACDHH would work together to provide outreach services and there was language in the contract to support services outside of the metropolitan areas. Ms. Green stated the committee had previous discussions surrounding SSP certifications and training, and that Julie Stylinski was contacted by Larry Rhodes about SSP training at the University of Arizona (UA). She noted that ACDHH staff were currently in discussions about that training, and who would teach that course. Carmen Green stated that ACDHH was not able to find anyone local to provide that training, but might potentially find an individual nationally. Jonathan Pringle stated the HKNC offered a SSP training class recently, which was sponsored by the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Colorado. He noted that the SSPs in Colorado were subcontractors, and the Commission could not provide the SSP training, but the agency could sponsor the training at minimal cost. Mr. Pringle stated he had been in conversations with Carmen Green about revitalizing the DeafBlind group that Julie Stylinski had worked with, although he would need to be familiar with all of the available services. Mary Hartle stated that Julie Stylinski had been performing intakes and meeting with prospective consumers and inquired whether anyone was providing those services now. Carmen Green stated that Kimberly Minard was providing those services currently and was working with the Valley Center for the Deaf (VCD) and the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD). Carmen Green noted that ACDHH had received feedback regarding the process for requesting services, and to potentially streamline services.

Andrew Cohen stated the committee had identified two goals, which were to recommend that ACDHH provide outreach services, and to discuss SSP certifications so that SSPs could be recognized as professionals. Carmen Green stated she would recommend the committee develop a comprehensive list of the different agencies that provided services to DB individuals, so that all organizations would be aware. Jonathan Pringle agreed that would be helpful, although many agencies provided services to

DB individuals, such as food stamps services or child care. Mary Hartle suggested the committee recruit more DB individuals or individuals with CVHL to participate in meetings. Ms. Hartle also suggested the committee meet more frequently to try to address some of the topics discussed. Sue Kay Kneifel stated the new Director of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) was familiar with the DHOH community and she suggested the committee invite him to participate in meetings. Ms. Kneifel stated the Centers for Independent Living (CIL) received Federal funding that could be distributed to organizations serving DB individuals. She noted that SILC had Legislative powers and the committee could partner with that agency to request more services. Jonathan Pringle agreed and noted that the needs of individuals with CVHL were largely overlooked. Carmen Green stated that she served on SILC, although as a state agency representative, she did not have a vote. Ms. Green suggested that a DB or individual with CVHL participate on SILC to make a greater impact. Carmen Green suggested the committee develop a letter to SILC, outlining the things that impacted DB individuals and individuals with CVHL. Jonathan Pringle stated the committee had discussed several activity goals and that he and Andrew Cohen would prioritize the items. Mary Hartle suggested the committee identify specific goals so that members would know what to work on, and agreed to draft some goals for the committee. Ms. Hartle suggested that Jonathan Pringle or Andrew Cohen contact the Arizona DB group and inquire whether anyone would be interested in participating on the committee. Jonathan Pringle stated the group in Tucson was no longer active, although he could contact some individuals to see if they would like to participate in meetings.

Mary Hartle motioned that the committee meet every other month to address the committees' activities. Jonathan Pringle seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Meeting Logistics Discussion

This item was discussed under the next agenda item

Report/Statistics Format Discussion

Jonathan Pringle stated that Andrew Cohen had developed the potential reporting items that organizations could provide: how many individuals were served, where were those services provided, and what was the goal for the organization. Andrew Cohen stated that he wanted to create a template so

that organizations/agencies would know what information to present to the committee. Mr. Cohen noted the committee was interested in knowing what was working, and the services that were being provided. Sue Kay Kneifel suggested the committee have discussions with the different agencies to understand any gaps in services and to potentially cover some of those gaps. Ms. Kneifel stated the GCBVI would support the committee in any conversations with the Legislature if necessary. Andrew Cohen suggested the committee focus on the services offered, such as Orientation and Mobility (O&M) and invite the organizations that provided O&M services to discuss those services. Jonathan Pringle stated the committee could run into conflicts because different organizations would provide services to individuals, but would not necessarily be DB or individuals with CVHL. Andrew Cohen agreed, and noted the committee was in the process of identifying the services that were being offered. Megan Mogan stated the AZ DeafBlind Project was a different organization, although she agreed with the proposed reporting items.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the DeafBlind Committee was scheduled for January 11, 2023. Agenda items are as follows:

- Committee Activity Discussion

Announcements

Megan Mogan stated the AZ DeafBlind Project had recently sent out the Save the Dates for the next Usher Family Gathering on January 28th.

PV Jantz stated that several Supervisor positions were open within Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and the agency was in the process of filling those. Mr. Jantz noted that RSA continued to identify areas of need and he was excited to build a relationship with the new SILC Director.

Cindy Walsh stated the SSP program in Tucson was expanding, although the agency continued to struggle with recruiting, training, and retaining SSPs. Ms. Walsh stated that VCD's 45th Anniversary and COPD's 50th Anniversary events would be held next year, which would be possible events for outreach. Cindy Walsh noted that she was now a Program Administrator,

with COPD and Jose Vasquez would be overseeing the DHOH services within VCD and COPD.

Carmen Green stated that on December 3rd, there would be a Disability Pride Day in Tucson, in which the ACDHH would be providing SSPs. Ms. Green stated the commission would reach out to the DB, CVHL community to see if any individuals were interested in attending.

Adjournment of Meeting

Mary Hartle motioned to adjourn the meeting. Andrew Cohen seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:52 pm.