

Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Full Council Meeting Minutes

November 21, 2023

Attendance

Members Present

Lisa Livesay, Chair
Adam Robson
David Carey
Ceci Hartke
Kristen Mackey

Members Absent

Diana Meza
Paula Seanez
Melissa Wojtak

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Mathew Nevarez
Crystal Poetz
Stephanie Johnson
Jen Zepeda

Minutes

Call to Order and Introductions

Lisa Livesay, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

Approval of August 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Adam Robson moved to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2023 SRC Full Council meeting. David Carey seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

SRC Chairperson's Report

Lisa Livesay stated that she was contacted by Federal RSA staff to provide input regarding Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)s Federal monitoring and noted that any Executive Committee members could participate also. Kristen Mackey stated the Federal monitoring would focus on RSA's fiscal program, which was managed by the Department of Economic Security (DES). She noted that it would be about a 3 year process and if it resulted in any findings, RSA would then create a corrective action plan. Lisa Livesay stated that she could draft a letter from the SRC with any recommendations that could be shared with Federal RSA. Lisa Livesay stated that she would be taking time off in the Spring and if any council members were interested in temporarily Chairing the council, they could let her know. Adam Robson stated that his schedule would not allow him to permanently take over as the Chair, although he could assist temporarily. Lisa Livesay stated that she received notice that Linda Fischer had applied for council membership as the Client Assistance Program (CAP) representative. Ms. Livesay noted that CAP had been trying to identify the staff member that would apply to the council, and Ms. Fischer had officially applied for membership.

SRC Annual Report

Lisa Livesay stated that she had created a Chair Report for the Annual Report that highlighted the council's activities and need for membership. She noted that she also addressed the need for members in the SRC Committee Description portion, indicating that some committees had to pause activities due to low membership. Ms. Livesay inquired whether council members had any feedback or suggested changes to the Annual Report. The Annual Report was approved unanimously.

RSA Administrator's Report

Kristen Mackey stated that RSA would be Federally monitored in February, in which small groups or stakeholders could be contacted for input. She added the monitoring would focus on RSA's fiscal status. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was working with all of the fiscal programs to ensure that all programs had the same information for data reporting. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA's measurable skills gains had decreased, which prompted the agency to seek technical assistance on what was causing the

decrease. Ms. Mackey stated that on the previous 107 monitoring report, RSA did not capture all Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) accurately, and she was pleased to report that for FFY 2022, RSA successfully tracked the required 15% of Pre-ETS services. She noted that RSA would likely learn more about tracking and reporting Pre-ETS services during the monitoring visit. Kristen Mackey stated that she attended the CSAVR Conference and met with the states that would be Federally monitored to learn more about the visit. Kristen Mackey stated the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan was being formulated and she would share the current Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) portion with the SRC as well as the council's previous input. She added that the entire plan would go out for public comment in January and would be approved in March.

Kristen Mackey stated the Rehabilitation Technicians (RT)s and Purchasing Technicians (PT)s had recently received pay increases, which helped with recruiting and retaining those positions. Ms. Mackey stated that RSA would be working with a marketing firm to perform an environmental scan regarding outreach efforts. She noted the agency would also be working with Sonoran University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) on offering supported employment services to clients through a pilot program. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was on track for the implementation of the new case management system, Informed, and was working with IT staff to ensure the system was accessible for all staff. She added that the Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) program was reviewing their processes in an effort to mirror VRs processes.

Mathew Nevarez stated there were 30 informal reviews in which 11 were related to closures, 9 were related to eligibility and 10 were related to services. He noted there were 26 mediations in which 5 were related to closures, 1 was related to eligibility, and 20 were related to services. Mr. Nevarez stated there were 16 fair hearings, in which 4 were related to closures and 10 were related to services. Mathew Nevarez stated the Ombudsman Unit continued to facilitate informal mediations and offer tip sheets on processes to staff and clients. Mr. Nevarez stated that he continued to track the overall complaints related to delays in services and the appeals related to untimely services as well as holding bi-annual workshops for staff. Mathew Nevarez stated that he also continued to meet with RSA Leadership quarterly and provide report outs. Lisa Livesay inquired whether the council could obtain more detailed reports on the data in the Summer. Mathew Nevarez stated that he could potentially share information once all client names had been removed. Kristen Mackey noted that once Mathew Nevarez had created the tipsheets, there had been a significant decline in fair hearings and mediations. Lisa Livesay stated the Program Review Committee had reviewed previous Fair Hearing data and discussed potential recommendations for ALJ training. Mathew

Nevarez stated he had reached out to the Public Records office to identify the process for the council to request Fair Hearing data regularly.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee

David Carey stated the Executive Committee had previously discussed the VR policy that stated clients were only eligible for one home modification, which could be difficult if a client moved or needed additional assistance. Lisa Livesay stated the committee also discussed service thresholds, which could be interpreted as caps on services. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA had not been in favor of the term “threshold” and it could be time to revisit that. She noted that the threshold information was useful for new counselors, who did not have knowledge of average service costs. Lisa Livesay stated the committee could review the policy language and make any recommendations if necessary.

Adam Robson stated the committee had also compiled some documents and Power Points that could be shared with new SRC members. He stated that new council members could review the information and ask any questions via email, or through a quick meeting if needed.

Program Review Committee

Lisa Livesay stated the Program Review Committee had reviewed the fair hearing decisions and would follow up with Mathew Nevarez regarding any potential recommendations for ALJ training. Ms. Livesay stated the committee could also potentially review fair hearing data regularly. Adam Robson suggested the committee follow the same fiscal reporting period as the Ombudsman’s Office. Lisa Livesay stated the Program Review Committee had also discussed focusing on Pre-ETS and if the committee could make any recommendations regarding those services. Kristen Mackey stated that if the committee was interested in reviewing policies, to identify whether the policies were easily understandable and easy to follow. Lisa Livesay inquired whether RSA used a third party to review VR policies. Kristen Mackey stated RSA did have a company that reviewed the Client Handbook for plan language and whether it was accessible.

Membership Organization Updates

SILC

David Carey stated SILC continued to provide Emergency Preparedness training across the state and provided monthly webinars. Mr. Carey stated SILC was working to identify solutions for individuals experiencing health problems related to heat. He added that SILC members were also sharing information regarding safe traveling and offering advice to the community. Mr. Carey stated the organization was currently developing best practices for increasing the quality and diversity of the workforce.

Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SRC Full Council will be on February 8, 2024 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

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

Adjournment of Meeting

Lisa Livesay motioned to adjourn the meeting. David Carey seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:48 pm.