

Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Full Council Meeting Minutes
November 30, 2018

Members Present

Bob Kresmer
Dan Martinez
Ted Chittenden
Mike Gordon
Jim LaMay
Nathan Pullen
George Martinez
Rich Sorey
Sharonda Goode
Nikki Jeffords
Ed Gervasoni
Bea Shapiro
Annette Reichman
Janet Fisher

Members Absent

Amy Porterfield
Donald Porterfield
Allan Curry

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Milly Martinez
David Steinmetz
John McCann
Scott Weber
Terell Welch
Salisu Yunusa
Terri Hedgpeth

Call to Order and Introductions

Bob Kresmer, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. in 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 September 21, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Nikki Jeffords moved to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2018 GCBVI Full Council meeting as written. Ted Chittenden seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by majority voice vote.

GCBVI Chairperson's Report

This item was tabled.

RSA Administrator's Report

This item was tabled.

SBVID Program Manager Report

Nathan Pullen reviewed the Blind and Visually Impaired score card information (**Note: Attachment A**). Mr. Pullen stated the number of individuals in the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program was 1,130 and the number of veterans in the program were 47. Nathan Pullen stated the number of individuals in the Order of Selection (OOS) were 75 in which 47 were in Priority 2 and 28 were in Priority 3. The number of applications were 233; the average number of days from eligibility were 50 and the eligibility determination was 87.7%. Nathan Pullen noted the number of new plans written was 299; the average number of days from eligibility to Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) implementation was 78.6 and the IPE implementation compliance was 83.2%. He stated the highest hourly wage was \$88.45; the lowest hourly wage was \$10.00; 82 clients were placed in employment and 63 clients were closed with employment. Nathan Pullen stated the Deaf-Blind statistics were: there were 45 individuals in the VR program; the average number of days from application to eligibility was 40 and the eligibility compliance rating was 100%. Nathan Pullen stated the average number of days for eligibility to IPE implementation was 132.4 and the IPE compliance was 60%. He stated the highest hourly wage was \$26.44 and the lowest hourly wage was \$10.50. Nathan Pullen stated that 5 clients were placed in employment and 2 clients were closed with employment. Nikki Jeffords inquired regarding the disparity between the number of individuals that were employed and remained employed. Nathan Pullen stated that the numbers reported could be overlapping and noted that an individual closed with employment, indicated that individual had been employed for 90 days, and the individuals

reported as employed might not have been employed as long. Ted Chittenden inquired regarding the disparity in compliance with the deaf-blind population IPE compliance rate compared to the blind and visually impaired statistics. Nikki Jeffords stated in her experience, the deaf-blind clients required different services and communication to report all information accurately.

Bob Kresmer stated at the previous Full Council meeting, Rich Sorey had indicated the goal for 267 individuals to obtain employment and SBVID had placed 76 individuals in employment. Mr. Kremer inquired whether SBVID was on track to meet that goal. Rich Sorey stated SBVID had successfully closed approximately 50 cases and had made progress. Mr. Sorey noted the Department of Economic Security (DES) had noticed the progress and the program continued to move individuals forward. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding SBVID's efforts to place 267 individuals in employment for SFY 2019. Rich Sorey stated the counselors were receiving better training on how to prepare and close cases. Rich Sorey noted some clients owed RSA money or required a service need that extended the clients' cases. Rich Sorey stated that counselors needed to move services in a timely manner and to manage the cases from start to finish. Dan Martinez stated the OOS Priority Two had opened, which would allow individuals with less significant disabilities to receive services and would potentially increase timeliness of services. Rich Sorey agreed that individuals with less significant disabilities would not require as many services. Ted Chittenden inquired why the IPE compliance rate was higher for the blind and visually impaired population compared to the deaf-blind population. Rich Sorey stated that deaf-blind clients often required additional services to get the individuals into the system. He noted that SBVID unfortunately did not have a large deaf-blind population. Ed Gervasoni stated that there was a limited number of professionals able to work with the deaf-blind population as well. Rich Sorey stated there were a small number of counselors trained to work with deaf-blind clients, although SBVID was providing training to additional counselors to work with that population. Ted Chittenden inquired whether the blind and visually impaired and deaf-blind statistics were submitted together or separately on Federal reports. Rich Sorey stated the statistics would be reported separately. Bob Kresmer inquired whether RSA was able to recategorize counselors for staff to receive additional pay. Rich Sorey stated RSA had developed a report and a strategy, which would be submitted to DES for approval. Bob Kresmer stated at the previous Full Council meeting, the council had discussed a meeting with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to discuss the allocation of funds for Independent Living (IL) clients and inquired regarding that meeting. Rich Sorey stated that unfortunately, there had been significant DES activity such as Leadership Training and several Federal reports that had taken significant staff time.

Dan Martinez inquired whether RSA had received the report from the Federal RSA visit. Rich Sorey stated that Kristen Mackey would receive the report and he had not received an update regarding the visit. Bob Kresmer inquired whether there were any staff openings. Rich Sorey stated there was a Supervisor position open in Tucson and SBVID had identified some potential candidates. Rich Sorey stated SBVID had recently trained a counselor to work with the comprehensive blind contract. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the training efforts to rural clients. Rich Sorey stated SBVID continued to work with providers to provide training to rural clients in northern Arizona. Mike Gordon stated the blind comprehensive contract had been extended for six months and he inquired whether there was an update on that. Rich Sorey stated he met with the Office of Procurement regarding the blind comprehensive contracts and the agency was working towards getting the contract out for solicitation.

BEP Program Update

Nathan Pullen stated that several Business Enterprise Program (BEP) staff members attended the Blast Conference, which included a BEP trainee. Nathan Pullen stated he was able to speak to representatives of the Department of Education and other federal agencies. Mr. Pullen stated he received updates from the Department on Education regarding the required pre-approvals for the purchase of capital equipment, operator travel expenses, and the Federal arbitration related to the Luke Air Force Base. Nathan Pullen stated there were two BEP trainees that were taking Hadley online training modules and would begin classroom training in January. Nathan Pullen stated BEP opened the new coffee shop in the Scottsdale Civic Center Library and were in the process in opening a coffee shop in the Federal courthouse in Tucson. He noted that BEP had completed the RSA 15 report, which would be audited by DES Finance and then submitted to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). Bob Kresmer inquired whether there had been a change in the status of Luke Air Force Base. Nathan Pullen stated there was no change in status. He added that BEP had a position within the Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) regarding the priority of BEP services. Nathan Pullen stated the priority was not being pursued at the state level, although there was activity at the national level through the BEP.

Bob Kremer inquired whether there had been any changes in pursuing prison commissaries. Nathan Pullen stated he had reviewed the current contract with a potential prison commissary and would suggest that BEP prepare a case when the next Request for Proposal (RFP) was submitted. Bob Kresmer inquired whether BEP had made any progress towards perusing non-governmental contracts. Nathan Pullen stated BEP was pursuing non-

governmental contracts and to grow the BEP presence in micro-markets, corporate offices, hotels, and salons and spas. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the BEP maintenance position. Nathan Pullen stated he would likely have more information in January, although the maintenance and repair costs were down. He noted the savings translated to a greater carry forward to the operators. Nikki Jeffords inquired whether there were any BEP licensees that were waiting for vending locations. Nathan Pullen stated that currently, there were no licensees waiting for locations. Dan Martinez inquired whether the coffee shop in the Scottsdale Civic Center Library provided a sustainable income for an operator. Nathan Pullen stated the coffee shop Scottsdale was not meant to be the only income for that operator and was part of the current Scottsdale vending route. Nathan Pullen stated that BEP could potentially have several smaller coffee shops that could be added to existing vending routes.

Scott Weber stated that Nathan Pullen met with several individuals at the Blast Conference and the consensus was that Luke Air Force Base was subject to the Randolph Sheppard Act. Mr. Weber stated that BEP had not been informed regarding who in DES was making decisions for the Governor. Scott Weber stated the Arizona Participating Operators Committee (APOC) was advised to contact consumer groups as well as the GCBVI for advocacy efforts. He added that BEP had scheduled a meeting in January with the Governor to discuss Luke Air Force Base. Scott Weber stated there had been several arbitrations across the county with Department of Defense (DOD) locations, which had been won. Scott Weber stated APOC was told to file an appeal on DES for not following the appeal process and for not filing arbitration. Scott Weber stated that APOC would have an all operator meeting on January 28, 2019 and anyone interested was invited to attend. Scott Weber stated that he would like the GCBVI to consider developing a letter to the Governor in support of the Randolph Sheppard Act. Bob Kresmer stated the GCBVI Executive Committee would meet and discuss APOC's request. Bob Kresmer stated his understanding that Scott Weber became a BEP operator after completing a university degree. Bob Kresmer inquired whether Scott Weber had any suggestions for reaching out to youth to encourage more individuals to enter the BEP program. Scott Weber stated he was a student at Arizona State University when a friend started the BEP program. Scott Weber stated that within five years of becoming a BEP operator, he was running one of the top facilities. Mr. Weber suggested that BEP reach out to the Disability Resources at universities as well as organizations such as Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) to let community members know about the great opportunities within BEP. Bob Kresmer inquired whether Nathan Pullen would be prepared to report out regarding the BEP recruitment efforts at the next GCBVI Full Council meeting. Nathan Pullen stated he would be pleased to do so. Dan Martinez stated the Public

Information Committee would be happy to assist with providing any materials for BEP.

ASDB Report

Annette Reichman, Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) Superintendent, stated the agency received an accreditation review by a non-profit educational agency. Annette Reichman stated the agency had prepared for the review for approximately two years. Ms. Reichman stated the review occurred October 21-23 and the reviewers met with Executive staff, teachers, staff, parents and stakeholders. Annette Reichman stated the agency had not received the final report but did indicate that the leadership team displayed collegiality. Annette Reichman stated the agency had recently implemented the English/Language Arts curriculum and would implement the Math, Science, and Social Studies curriculums in the subsequent years. Annette Reichman stated that she was pleased to have attended and presented at the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE), which was a great conference.

Ted Chittenden stated that Ms. Reichman had discussed that ASDB would potentially close the blind portion of the ASDB campus and inquired regarding an update. Annette Reichman stated ASDB did not plan to make any major changes without reviewing the resources and educational opportunities offered statewide. She noted that ASDB would gather data for a feasibility study and would give the report to the Board of Directors at the January meeting. Bob Kresmer inquired whether ASDB had hired any additional teachers as part of the additional funding to the Early Childhood program. Annette Reichman stated ASDB had hired 17 teachers out of the 21 that the agency intended to hire. Ms. Reichman noted that 5 of the 17 teachers chose to leave the agency, therefore the agency had to replace those positions as well. She added that the new teachers received training and had been matched to mentors that matched the new teachers' skills. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the new teachers were certified teachers. Annette Reichman stated that most of the new teachers were certified, and the teachers that were not certified would become certified within one year. She added that ASDB had hired teachers in rural areas such as Snowflake, Show Low, Yuma and Safford and were available to provide early intervention services. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the ASDB campuses continued to offer four days or regular subjects and one day as a plus day. Annette Reichman stated the ASDB co-operatives did not follow the same curriculums, which was the purview of the public or charter school. Bob Kresmer inquired whether ASDB students took the SAT or ACT tests. Annette Reichman stated the students could take the ACT, although the

primary tests were the AZ Merit tests and Galileo, which were administered three times a year as benchmark tests.

GCBVI Slate of Candidates Discussion

Bob Kresmer stated the Executive Committee had met and identified the slate of candidates for upcoming council elections. Mr. Kresmer stated the Executive Committee put Bob Kresmer forward as Chair, Nikki Jeffords forward as Vice Chair and Amy Porterfield forward as Secretary. Bob Kresmer stated that council members could nominate additional individuals at the next Full Council meeting on January 18, 2018, when the new officers would be elected.

GCBVI VRATE Town Hall Feedback Discussion

Nikki Jeffords stated that DES developed two videos from VRATE and noted the first video was for DES internal promotion and the second video would be more about VRATE. Ms. Jeffords stated that there were three keynote speakers with retinal diseases that shared their own experiences. Nikki Jeffords stated she did not have the final number of attendees, although she predicted that approximately 500 individuals attended the conference. Nikki Jeffords thanked the council members that were instrumental in the success of VRATE. Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the number of exhibitors at VRATE. Ms. Jeffords stated there were 35-40 exhibitors and she noted that members from the Lion's Club indicated they were amazed that so much technology existed.

Dan Martinez stated the GCBVI held a Town Hall meeting at VRATE, which was not well attended. Mr. Martinez noted the importance of obtaining feedback from the community and recommended the council hold a Town Hall meeting at a future Full Council meeting or at a VRATE conference and ensure that the community was aware of the meeting.

GCBVI Committee Reports

Committee on Deaf-Blind Issues

Bob Kresmer inquired whether the Committee on Deaf-Blind Issues was able to recruit committee members. Ed Gervasoni stated that his membership term would end in one year, and he did not intend to renew his membership. Ed Gervasoni stated the committee had accomplished a lot, including the development of a statewide Support Service Provider (SSP) program and initiating the conversation with the Arizona Long Term Care Services (ALTCS) regarding intervener services. Ed Gervasoni stated his concern that

he was the only council member on the committee that could act as the Chair of the committee. Ed Gervasoni stated the committee would need to identify methods for recruiting council members to participate on the committee to keep the committee's activities moving forward. Nikki Jeffords stated that she knew of some potential committee members to participate on the committee.

Public Information

Ted Chittenden stated the GCBVI Annual Report had been completed and published. Mr. Chittenden stated the Public Information Committee was also low in membership and currently had four members. Ted Chittenden stated the committee would benefit from individuals with experience developing reports and experience with media releases.

Ted Chittenden stated the statistics for EyeKnow.AZ were:

September 1-30

Number of sessions (visits)
Number of individuals visiting website
Pages viewed per visit
Time spent visiting the database (minutes)
New visitors
Returning users

October 1 – 31

Number of sessions (visits) 208
Number of individuals visiting website 185
Pages viewed per visit 3.46
Time spent visiting the database (minutes) 3:23
New visitors 90.6%
Returning Users 9.4%

The GCBVI Facebook page statistics for November:

Number of page views: 5
Number of page likes: 3
People reached: 259
Page follows: 2
Post engagements: 137

Nikki Jeffords suggested the council Facebook page name to be changed to indicate the council is in Arizona to assist in searching for the council's page. Lindsey Powers stated she could change the council's page to include "Arizona" on the page. Sharonda Goode stated she was pleased that the EyeKnow.AZ allowed a user to download the database.

Assistive Technology (AT)

Sharonda Goode stated the AT Committee provided two one-hour presentations at VRATE and while the first presentation was better attended, the committee received great questions in both presentations. Ms. Goode thanked all committee members that participated in the presentations at VRATE.

Employment

Nathan Pullen stated the Employment Committee was planning for the upcoming E75 Event scheduled for February 1, 2019 at Ability 360. Nathan Pullen stated the committee was in the process of identifying keynote speakers at the event and the businesses that would be awarded. Mr. Pullen stated the Employment Committee would like Sean Callagy, who spoke at VRATE, to be a keynote speaker at the E75 event. Nathan Pullen stated he would speak at the event about BEP and the committee intended to recognize Peckham at the event. The committee had also discussed holding smaller quarterly events such as presentations, round table events, mock interview and job fairs.

Education

Bob Kresmer stated the Education Committee was attempting to gather data regarding the number of blind students in each grade level and their school districts. Mr. Kresmer stated the committee was concerned with the small number of blind students that applied for and took the SAT and ACT in preparation for scholarships. Bob Kresmer stated he received feedback from students indicating that VR would pay for community college, so students were not inclined to apply for scholarships.

Ex-Oficio Member and Blindness Community Organization Updates

Arizona Talking Book Library

Janet Fisher stated the library increased the number of patrons to 8,833 as of the end of the FFY. Ms. Fisher stated the library's book discussion groups began in November and would continue the second Thursday each month in

the mornings and evenings. Janet Fisher stated there was a budget proposal from the current Secretary of State office going to the Legislature for updates on the library building. Janet Fisher stated the building was currently referred to as the Library Services Center, formally the Records Management Center on 19th Avenue and Jefferson. She noted the plan was to bring all library parts together, including the State Research Library, the Library Development and eventually the Arizona Talking Book Library. Janet Fisher stated the library hosted the National Library Service expert on recording studios to make suggestions on if the library's recording booth could be moved or if there was a way to record near the railroad tracks. Janet Fisher stated the funds requested would be used for insulation and AC. Bob Kremer inquired whether the Arizona Talking Book Library required assistance from the council in advocating with the Legislature. Janet Fisher stated there would be a change in leadership in the Secretary of State, which would be responsible for monitoring the movement of that proposal. Bob Kresmer stated he spoke to a student, who mentioned that she used Newsline to complete a current event project and he wanted to commend the Outreach Librarian for her outreach efforts. Janet Fisher stated the library was able to visit teachers in rural schools to provide information regarding the library's services. George Martinez inquired regarding the success of the Whine and Cheese fundraiser event. Janet Fisher stated the Friends of the Library would meet in January, and she would receive a report, although the event was on par or better than the previous event.

SAAVI Services for the Blind

Mike Gordon stated that SAAVI was a recipient of an award for a quarter of a million for technology. Mr. Gordon stated SAAVI intended to upgrade the infrastructure in the technology lab so that the equipment would support current software. Mike Gordon stated the Phoenix Children in Youth program was becoming more established, which included evening and weekend services. He stated that SAAVI hoped to perform Board development and began initial discussions with local businesses. Mike Gordon stated that SAAVI held an Open House in Phoenix, which was attended by 40 companies. Mike Gordon noted that VR counselors were better trained at understanding the nuances of how individuals achieved their employment goals as well as how they were able to retain employment. He added that SAAVI staff were better able to work with VR counselors and were pleased with the progress.

Arizona Industries for the Blind

Dan Martinez stated the new CEO of AIB, Chris Lafalette, would begin on December 3, 2018. Mr. Martinez stated that Mr. Lafalette had 20 years'

experience working with Ability One. He noted the new CEO was not visually impaired, although he did have significant experience in business development.

Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the GCBVI Full Council will be on January 18, 2019 from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. in the Video Conference Room, at 515 N. 51st Avenue, Phoenix, AZ.

Dan Martinez suggested the committees continue to provide progress reports regarding the implementation of the GCBVI Strategic Plan. Bob Kresmer thanked Dan Martinez for the reminder and stated that committees should structure their reports around their involvement with the Strategic Plan.

Announcements

Sharonda Goode announced that she would be moving out of state and would not remain on the council. Ms. Goode thanked the council members for everything for allowing her to participate on the council. She added that the AT Committee would meet to discuss the next Chair of the committee. Bob Kresmer thanked Sharonda Goode for all her contributions to the council, the AT Committee, and VRATE.

Dan Martinez stated that his term with the council had ended and he would not continue to serve on the council, although he would remain on the Public Information Committee. Mr. Martinez stated that it had been an honor to serve alongside everyone on the council who worked diligently to make a difference in the lives of blind and visually impaired individuals. Nikki Jeffords stated she had known Dan Martinez for twenty years and he had been a mentor, a friend, provided wisdom and guidance and she appreciated all that he had done for the council.

Ted Chittenden stated that Dan Martinez received the Walter Olson Lifetime Achievement Award from the Phoenix Mayor's Commission on Disability Issues.

Call to the Public

John McCann stated that he was the American Council of the Blind (ACB) President and he looked forward to participation on the council.

Nathan Pullen introduced Salisu Yunusa, who was a Fulbright scholar from Nigeria, who was visiting the state to learn about blindness resources that he could take home. Salisu Yunusa stated he had learned a lot from the meeting and it was a great opportunity to attend. Mr. Yunusa stated he would bring a lot of useful information home.

David Steinmetz stated he received a lot of information and he would continue outreach efforts for AIB and supporting advocacy efforts.

Terri Hedgpeth stated she would apply for council membership and thanked the council for allowing her to attend the meeting.

Adjournment of Meeting

Bea Shapiro moved to adjourn the meeting. Ted Chittenden seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm

As of September 30, 2018:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 1,130
The total number of Veterans in VR Program was 47
The total number of individuals in the OOS was 75
The total number of individuals in Priority Two was 47
The total number of individuals in Priority Three was 28
The number of VR applications was 233
The average number of days from application to eligibility was 50
The median number of days application to eligibility was 42
The eligibility determination compliance within 60 days was 87%
The number of new plans written was 299
The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 78.6
The median number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 66
The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days was 83.2%
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$88.45
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$10.00
The number of clients placed was 82
The number of clients closed successfully was 63

As of September 30, 2018, the Deaf Blind Population statistics:

The total number of individuals in the VR program was 45
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 8
The number of new plans written was 40
The IPE Implementation Compliance within 90 days was 60%
The highest hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$26.44
The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$18.47
The number of clients placed was 5
The number of clients closed successfully was 2