

Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Full Council Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2020

Members Present

Dan Martinez, Chair
Scott Lindbloom
Dave Cheesman
Jill Pleasant
John Gutierrez
Melissa Wojtak
Judith Castro
Carol Carr
Adam Robson
Twyla Bowman
Kristen Mackey

Members Absent

Kathy McDonald
Danita Applewhite
Ana Nunez
Paula Seanez

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Mathew Nevarez
Brandi Coffland

Call to Order and Introductions

Dan Martinez, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

Approval of August 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Carol Carr moved to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2020 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 he was involved in the planning for the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE) that would take place on November 13th. Mr. Martinez stated this would be the first year the event would be held virtually. Dan Martinez stated council members could go to the VRATE website for more information about the event and attendance.

SRC Officer Elections

Dan Martinez stated the Nominating Committee was presenting Scott Lindbloom as the nominee for the Chair position and Adam Robson as nominee for the Vice Chair position. Dan Martinez stated that SRC members were able to submit additional nominations for the Chair position. David Cheesman nominated Adam Robson for the Chair position. Judith Castro stated that she also nominated Adam Robson for Chair. Judith Castro motioned that nominations for Chair cease. David Cheesman seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote. Adam Robson stated that he would be unable to serve in the Chair position. Dan Martinez stated that Scott Lindbloom had been put forward as a nominee and the council would need to vote. Twyla Bowman, Adam Robson, Carol Carr, David Cheesman, Melissa Wojtak, and Jill Pleasant voted for Scott Lindbloom to be the SRC Chair. Dan Martinez and John Gutierrez voted no for Scott Lindbloom to be SRC Chair. Scott Lindbloom was voted as SRC Chair by majority vote.

Dan Martinez stated the Nominating Committee put forth Adam Robson as nominee for the Vice Chair position, and he would accept nominations from the floor. Melissa Wojtak motioned that nominations cease, and Adam Robson be elected as Vice Chair. Carol Carr seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. Dan Martinez stated the Sergeant-at-Arms position was now vacant and council members would need to elect a member to serve in that position. Carol Carr nominated John Gutierrez as the Sergeant-at-Arms. John Gutierrez stated that he would be unable to serve in the position. Scott Lindbloom nominated David Cheesman as the Sergeant-at-Arms. David Cheesman stated he appreciated the nomination, although he would be unable to serve in the position. Scott Lindbloom stated he nominated Jill Pleasant if she would be willing to serve in the position. Jill Pleasant stated she would serve in the position if no one else was willing to. Twyla Bowman inquired regarding the duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms. Dan Martinez stated the Sergeant-at-Arms was responsible for maintaining order of the meetings. Adam Robson suggested that an individual familiar with Rosenberg's Rules of Order fill that position. Carol Carr stated that Rosenberg's Rules of Order was rather simple to understand. Melissa Wojtak stated she would be willing to serve as the Sergeant-at-Arms position. Adam Robson motioned that Melissa Wojtak be elected as the Sergeant-at-Arms. John Gutierrez seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

SRC Annual Report

Dan Martinez stated the SRC Annual Report had been distributed to members to review and offer any suggestions or comments. David Cheesman stated that he did not have any suggested changes. Jill Pleasant stated that she currently resided in Phoenix. Lindsey Powers stated she would make that correction. Twyla Bowman stated she reviewed the Annual Report and that it looked great. Judith Castro motioned to approve the SRC Annual Report for submission. Carol Carr seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

RSA Administrator's Report

Kristen Mackey stated that Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff continued to work remotely and were not meeting clients face-to-face. Kristen Mackey stated the pandemic pushed Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to increase technology and had distributed approximately 250 computers and laptops and 300 cell phones to staff. Ms. Mackey stated there was no final congressional budget although RSA was beginning to receive notices for the Federal Fiscal Year. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was alerted that supported employment was not formally finalized in the congressional budget although RSA could use regular VR funds to provide supported employment services. Kristen Mackey stated RSA continued to support the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) administrative costs to reduce the burden on the BEP set aside funds.

Kristen Mackey stated RSA was required to reach 90% compliance for Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) development implementation for two consecutive quarters, in which the agency was 85.2% for the previous quarter. Kristen Mackey stated that agency leadership was discussing countermeasure developments and how to assist staff performance. Kristen Mackey stated that Region 2, which included Judith Castro and David Cheesman, had above 90% compliance ratings, while Region 3 required the most significant improvement in IPE timeliness. Kristen Mackey stated the final finding was on prior approval and RSA was updating the internal documents per the Federal Fiscal team's recommendation. Ms. Mackey stated RSA continued to distribute the Client Satisfaction Surveys with the new questions to VR clients. Kristen Mackey stated that clients with open cases continued to have high ratings for being treated with courtesy and the lowest rating was 76% satisfied with the amount of contact with VR staff. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was developing standard work practices for when staff should contact clients and when staff should return calls and emails to clients. Kristen Mackey stated that clients with closed cases were generally satisfied with how they were treated at about 79% and the lowest rating was 57% satisfied with the counselor aiding their situation. Kristen Mackey stated some clients indicated that their education or employment goals were not supported. She noted that due to some clients' felony records or past legal records, VR was not able to support some employment outcomes. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was beginning to see an increase in referrals and applications for VR services, although RSA was still about 30-40% less than the same time last year. Kristen Mackey stated RSA staff now had Zoom for government accounts and were able to connect with others virtually. Dan Martinez inquired whether the Ticket to Work (TTW) was generating revenue for RSA. Kristen Mackey stated the TTW program did generate revenue and was currently generating approximately \$600,000 - \$800,000. Dan Martinez inquired whether VR clients were participating in more virtual job interviews. Kristen Mackey stated that clients were participating in virtual job interviews and job fairs. Dan Martinez inquired whether clients were also offered virtual positions. Kristen Mackey stated that clients were offered virtual employment.

Mathew Nevarez, Ombudsman, stated that overall, the number of appeals had been reduced by almost half compared to the previous year. He noted the reduction was largely due to RSA wanting to improve the process as well as an increase in training to staff. Mathew Nevarez stated there were 80 informal reviews in the previous year compared to 53 currently, 41 mediations previously and 28 currently, 74 Fair Hearings previously compared to 36 currently, 15 directed reviews previously compared to 3

currently and 3 civil suits previously compared to 0 currently. Mathew Nevarez stated that Mr. P was a client that brought many cases to RSA, in which the Ombudsman office had been able to reduce the number of his appeals. Mathew Nevarez stated that staff worked with clients to resolve issues prior to going to Fair Hearings, although some clients did prefer to go to Fair Hearings. Dan Martinez thanked Mathew Nevarez and his staff for continuing to communicate with clients about their options. Kristen Mackey stated that Ombudsman staff had been informing the leadership team about any trends in any effort to reduce issues.

Kristen Mackey stated Federal RSA contacted RSA inquiring whether Arizona would be interested in showcasing VR. Ms. Mackey stated RSA had 3 days to develop a 60-minute presentation of the great work being done in Arizona. Kristen Mackey stated RSA presented to Commissioner Schultz, representatives from McSally and Sinema's offices, representatives from the Governor's office, and the Department of Education. She noted RSA discussed the Arizona Management System (AMS) work and how RSA was managing and reviewing data to increase timeliness of services and reducing the wait list. Kristen Mackey stated RSA also discussed their partnerships with Sonoran UCEDD, specifically with Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) in building capacity around school districts and services. Kristen Mackey stated the presentation was well received and RSA was honored to be able to present to the Commissioner. Dan Martinez inquired regarding training to staff. Kristen Mackey stated RSA continued to work with the Office of Professional Development (OPD) on training such as the Core classes that all new staff would receive. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was also developing a Learning Management System tool that would provide additional courses to staff. Dan Martinez inquired how RSA was able to reduce complaints. Kristen Mackey stated Mathew Nevarez and his team were offering training on the appeals process and allowing staff to ask questions. Kristen Mackey stated that information was also passed down from leadership huddles to their direct reports, and then to field staff. She added that she also sent out weekly emails to staff, including any current activities and clarifying the status of current items. David Cheesman stated that Mathew Nevarez had also presented to the Region 2 supervisors, which had been helpful. John Gutierrez thanked Kristen Mackey and Mathew Nevarez for keeping the appeal numbers down and that the numbers were the lowest ever. Kristen Mackey thanked John Gutierrez for his work with helping clients to understand what VR could do.

Committee Reports

Program Review Committee

Melissa Wojtak stated the Program Review Committee had been assigned to review the Vehicle Modification Policy, although that policy had been reviewed through a Public Comment meeting. Kristen Mackey stated the RSA Policy Unit could inform the Program Review Committee of any new policies for review prior to public comment meetings. Ms. Mackey suggested a meeting to discuss potential areas for review, such as evaluating data from the previous year and to coordinate efforts.

Employment and Community Partnerships Committee

Scott Lindbloom stated he met with hotel staff who indicated an interest in working with

VR staff in employing individuals with disabilities.

Carol Carr stated that she was the outgoing Chair of the Employment and Community Partnerships Committee, which would meet to appoint a new Chair. Ms. Carr noted the committee had completed the Employer Toolkit with the assistance from RSA, which was presented during National Disability Awareness month. Carol Carr stated the Employer Toolkit could be used to perform outreach to employers.

Membership Committee

Dan Martinez stated the Vice Chair was typically the Chair of the Membership Committee and would discuss membership and recruitment efforts. Scott Lindbloom stated he would be willing to be the Chair of the committee. Carol Carr stated she had recruited an individual to fill her position on the council. Judith Castro inquired whether there were any restrictions for VR staff to participate on the council. Kristen Mackey stated that ideally, the SRC would be comprised of mostly stakeholders to review the VR processes and to help improve the program.

Membership Organization Updates

SILC

Scott Lindbloom stated that Shawnique Cotton was the new Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Chair. Scott Lindbloom stated SILC members would hold a meeting in December, while following social distancing practices. Scott Lindbloom stated he would speak to SILC members to discuss who would be willing to provide SILC updates.

Client Assistance Program

John Gutierrez stated the number of appeals had reduced during the summer but had started to increase.

AzTAP

Jill Pleasant stated the Arizona Technology Access Program (AzTAP) continued to provide equipment to individuals daily. Jill Pleasant stated the Institute for Human Development received two transitional grants, in which one was a planning grant to develop a plan to create smoother transition outcomes for students exiting school. Ms. Pleasant stated the IHD also received a five-year grant to assist students with intellectual and developmental disabilities attend post-secondary education. Jill Pleasant stated the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) was restructuring their augmented communication services program and were transitioning to the managed care organization and would hold several community Town Hall meetings to inform the community of those changes.

Committee Member Updates

David Cheesman stated that his office was beginning to see an increase in referrals.

David Cheesman noted there had been a reduction in referrals from schools, partly due to the challenges with virtual learning.

Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SRC Full Council will be on February 11, 2021 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.

Announcements

John Gutierrez thanked Dan Martinez and Carol Carr for all of their work and dedication to the SRC. Kristen Mackey thanked Dan Martinez and Carol Carr for their work on the SRC and for the community. David Cheesman stated that it had been a pleasure working with Dan Martinez on the SRC.

Public Comment

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

Adjournment of Meeting

Adam Robson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Carol Carr seconded the motion. The meeting stood adjourned at 2:45 pm.

Vocational Rehabilitation Scorecard – October 28, 2020 – November 3, 2020

The total number of individuals in VR program was 13,567

The average number of days from eligibility was 29 days

The eligibility determination compliance within 60 days was 96.7%

The average number of days from eligibility to IPE implementation was 71 days

The IPE implementation compliance within 90 days was 90.3%

The total number of individuals in OOS Priority 2 and 3 was 1267

The total number of individuals in Priority 2 was 846

The total number of individuals in Priority 3 was 421

The average hourly wage of successful employment outcomes was \$13.61

The number of job placements was 44

The number of clients closed with employment was 44

The retention rate was 79.6%

The average days to obtain employment was 591

The average days from referral to application was 34

The average days from job-ready to placement was 53

The average cost of closure with placement was \$15,205.78

The average cost of closure without placement was \$10,340.95