

Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)
Full Council Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2023

Attendance

Members Present

Lisa Livesay, Chair
Adam Robson
Dave Cheesman
Ceci Hartke
Judith Castro
David Carey
Paula Seanez

Members Absent

Melissa Wojtak
Diana Meza

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Mathew Nevarez
Crystal Poetz
Zane Lambros
Julie Oliver
Nancy Stanford
Shawn Hyde
Wendell Richardson
Janette Lopez
Jennifer Zepeda

Minutes

Call to Order and Introductions

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

Approval of November 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Adam Robson moved to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2022 SRC Full Council meeting. Dave Cheesman seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

SRC Chairperson's Report

Lisa Livesay stated the council had performed some recruitment efforts and several members from the community were interested in joining the council. Ms. Livesay stated the council would continue to work with the Office of Boards and Commissions to move the applications through quickly and would update individuals regarding their application statuses. Lisa Livesay stated that she found several good resources on the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC), which included some training materials that could be useful for new members or anyone interested in learning more about the council. Ceci Hartke agreed that those resources would be beneficial for new members.

Lisa Livesay stated the Executive Committee met to discuss recent recruitment efforts and that several individuals had applied for council membership. Ms. Livesay stated that a new Director of Boards and Commissions had recently been appointed, and the council hoped to receive updates regarding the recent applications. Lisa Livesay stated the committees would benefit from having additional committee members to assist with committee activities.

SRC Membership Discussion

Lisa Livesay reiterated that the council would continue to work with the Office of Boards and Commissions to assist in the application process of new members. She noted that she received some questions regarding the letters of recommendation that would be submitted to Boards and Commissions as part of the council application. Lisa Livesay stated the letters of

recommendation could briefly list an individual's skills and expertise and why they were being recommended as a council member.

Lisa Livesay stated the council had previously nominated Linda Fischer as the Sergeant-at-Arms, although Ms. Fisher's application had not been completed yet. Ms. Livesay stated the council had then nominated Adam Robson to fill the Officer position if he was willing. Adam Robson stated that he would accept the nomination for the Sergeant-at-Arms position. Lisa Livesay called for the vote for Adam Robson to be nominated as the Sergeant-at-Arms. The council voted unanimously.

RSA Administrator's Report

Kristen Mackey stated that Angie Rodgers had been appointed as the new Department of Economic Security (DES) Director and RSA would continue to educate her on the program's activities. Kristen Mackey stated RSA had a new case management system, Informed, and staff had been busy reviewing the system requirements and checking to ensure they had been included in the system. Ms. Mackey noted that RSA had a 20% vacancy rate for staff, and RSA continued to work with HR to increase pay to recruit and retain staff. Kristen Mackey stated recently completed workshops to assist staff with the Federal 911 report to document the common performance measures so that everything was documented. Kristen Mackey stated there was a new Federal monitoring guide, which focused on fiscal responsibilities. She noted that 336 million had been returned back to the Federal Treasury, which was largely due to the 15% set aside for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Ms. Mackey stated that pre-COVID, there were approximately 14,000 individuals receiving VR services, and there were about 8,000-10,000 currently. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was interested in performing some marketing to increase awareness of VR, while still being cognizant of the staff vacancies. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA did not currently have a wait list for individuals seeking VR services, although the agency could potentially have to reinstate that if there was a large influx of VR clients.

Kristen Mackey stated RSA was in the process of developing a new vision and staff had been invited to choose 5 core values that would be included in the vision statement. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was working with Northern University of Arizona on an Assistive Technology Employment and

Independence program with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHOH) population. She noted that NAU would provide assessments and recommendations regarding the AT and AT vendors could provide services as subcontractors of NAU. Kristen Mackey stated RSA was working with Sonoran UCEDD to pilot a customized employment program, which would go through the Managed Service Provider (MSP) for interested vendors. Kristen Mackey stated that the State budget would be the same and the Federal funding would include a cost-of-living increase, which offered some challenges to pull down full match. Ceci Hartke inquired whether RSA would benefit from the council developing a letter in support of salary increases for Rehabilitation Technicians and Purchasing Technicians. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA would welcome any support from the council. Paula Seanez inquired regarding the funds that were sent back, and whether the funds were from Pre-ETS services. Kristen Mackey stated that about 12.3 million had been returned Federally, which was a combination of Pre-ETS and lower spending overall. Ceci Hartke inquired whether the Pre-ETS services were being provided in the schools. Kristen Mackey stated that vendors experienced challenges getting onto campuses to provide services, although some VR counselors were able to provide some Pre-ETS services. Ceci Hartke inquired whether students would be able to receive Pre-ETS services more than once if they needed. Lisa Livesay stated that students would be eligible to receive Pre-ETS services multiple times from different vendors if they needed additional support. Lisa Livesay stated the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) learned a lot of information from focus groups regarding what educators and parents experienced when navigating the Pre-ETS program, which had been shared with TSW staff.

Mathew Nevarez stated the Ombudsman's Office had produced more client resources regarding the fair hearing and mediation processes to be distributed. Mr. Nevarez stated Ombudsman staff had been visiting offices to provide learning sessions for staff to learn more about the processes. He noted that he would develop the appeals report that would be shared at the next council meeting. Mathew Nevarez stated that informal reviews were the most often used, which was the lowest level. He stated the Ombudsman's Office would hold their bi-annual training on April 5th and 6th, which would include representation from the Client Assistance Program (CAP), VR, and a panel of attorneys. Paula Seanez inquired regarding the number of fair hearings. Crystal Poetz stated there were no current fair hearings and the last 4 had been resolved from last year. Paula Seanez inquired whether

there were any trends in appeals. Mathew Nevarez stated there weren't any identifiable trends, although there were some conversations regarding self-employment or non-participation. Judith Castro inquired regarding the Policy Manager position and when it would be filled. Shawn Hyde stated the position had been reviewed and would be posted soon.

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 received the Health Equity Grant and was working with the rural communities to bring in partners and individuals with disabilities to discuss different topics such as transportation and access to services. David Carey stated SILC held a listening session for individuals to discuss their caregiving experiences to improve the quality of the workforce. Lisa Livesay inquired whether SILC intended to publish the information learned. David Carey stated the project should be completed in May and he could inquire whether the information could be shared.

American Indian VR Program

Paula Seanez stated the Navajo Nation had a new President and Vice President and that mandates had been removed, allowing staff to return to their offices. Paula Seanez stated the Navajo Nation continued to work with Sonoran UCEDD on work-based learning initiatives for Transition youth with 3 schools. Ms. Seanez stated there were several vacancies for counselors and Rehabilitation Technicians at several offices and they were hiring job developers to assist with job placement. Paula Seanez stated the Navajo Nation was in the 2nd year of the 5 year grant, and they were trying to increase their numbers and utilize leftover funds. Paula Seanez stated that she could share the recent Tribal VR toolkit, which included information regarding self-employment. Paula Seanez stated the CANAR conference was held in December and the next conference would be held in June.

CAP

Lisa Livesay stated that Linda Fischer had shared the upcoming Arizona Center on Disability Law (ACDL) African American conference, in which VR, the ADE and CAP would be providing a joint presentation on Pre-ETS.

ADE Updates

Lisa Livesay stated the ADE was working with several agency and community partners on supporting Transition age youth to get them ready for employment after school. Lisa Livesay stated ADE was also working on capacity building to enhance opportunities for youth in technology and education. She noted the ADE was working with VR on data analysis to streamline processes and meet the needs of educators and staff. Lisa Livesay stated the IDEA Conference was scheduled for August 21-23 in Phoenix and would focus on connections and systems. Ms. Livesay stated there would be about 80 sessions for individuals attending, and more information was on the ADE website, or individuals could sign up for the email updates. She added that ADE was involved in regional training to provide support for student Transition planning.

Raising Special Kids

Ceci Hartke stated Raising Special Kids continued to train families and to assist in navigating programs. Ms. Hartke stated the organization had a new training, *Imagining a Great Life*, which was less technical training for parents. Ceci Hartke stated Raising Special Kids would be offering another Spanish speaking event in Tucson, where different organizations would be invited to attend and provide information to the community. Ms. Hartke noted the organization was also offering more training for youth for individuals to learn about items such as finances and how to self-advocate.

Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SRC Full Council will be on May 18, 2023 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, and the agenda items are:

- Marketing Updates

Announcements

Adam Robson stated the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) also had a new Director, and they were excited to have her. Mr. Robson stated that referrals were also down within AHCCCS, and he would be interested to learn more about RSA's marketing strategies to increase numbers.

Public Comment

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

Adjournment of Meeting

Ceci Hartke motioned to adjourn the meeting. Dave Cheesman seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 pm.