

Draft

# **Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**

## **Full Council Meeting Minutes**

May 7, 2026

### **Attendance**

#### **Members Present**

David Carey

Janette Lopez

Lisa Livesay

Adam Robson

Paula Seanez

Lenny Ovadia

Julie Oliver

Zane Cobb

George Garcia

Jaime Gonzalez

Melissa Wojtak

Kristen Mackey

#### **Members Absent**

Martin Appel

#### **Staff Present**

Lindsey Powers

#### **Guests Present**

Mathew Nevarez

Crystal Poetz

Stephanie Johnson

Lindsey Stevens

Bryan Gogg

Laura Fussell

Trinity Chin

## **Minutes**

### **Call to Order**

David Carey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

### **Roll Call**

Lindsey Powers conducted a roll call of members, and a quorum was established.

### **Public Comment**

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

### **Approval of Minutes**

Julie Oliver moved to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2026, SRC Full Council meeting. Lenny Ovadia seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

## **Member Reports**

### **SRC Chair Report**

David Carey stated that he would forego a report in the interest of time.

### **RSA Updates**

Kristen Mackey stated Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) presented during the Department of Economic Security's (DES) Lunch and Learn in March. She added that RSA also celebrated National Rehabilitation Counselor Day by giving away 100 swag bags to VRCs three times throughout the day. Kristen Mackey stated that all state agencies were part of an employee satisfaction survey. She noted the information would be

aggregated but unattributed and if she could share any information, it would likely be from DES and not RSA specifically. Kristen Mackey stated that she attended the CSAVR Conference and learned more about ABEL accounts and inclusive hiring. Ms. Mackey stated Federal partners also indicated the unlikelihood that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) would be reauthorized. She added that there was no discussion regarding RSA being moved to the Department of Labor or the Department of Human and Health Services.

Lindsey Powers provided a presentation regarding the Client Satisfaction Survey results for Quarter 3. Adam Robson inquired whether there was any concern regarding the small number of respondents to the survey. Kristen Mackey stated that it was a concern, although DES did not currently have alternate software for the survey. She noted RSA could consider increasing the sample size of clients. Janette Lopez inquired whether clients received reminders to complete the surveys. Lindsey Powers stated that clients did not receive reminders, although she could explore whether the survey platform would allow for reminders. Julie Oliver stated that some populations preferred information via text rather than emails. Adam Robson suggested the VRCs remind clients that they could receive a survey. Kristen Mackey stated that the surveys would need to remain anonymous, although she could inquire whether there was a mechanism to text and receive information via text. Kristen Mackey stated the council also had a previous question on whether the disability populations and/or regions could be randomly sampled in separate categories. She noted that if the information was parred down too much, it could affect the validity of the information. Adam Robson stated that if the information was still randomly sampled, there should not be a bias in the data. Kristen Mackey stated the random sample already pulled from each disability group, although some groups would be larger due to the number of clients in the groups. Janette Lopez inquired whether clients were only receiving the surveys through email and whether counselors could distribute surveys in the offices. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA had considered offering paper surveys but at that time, the number of clients without emails was so small. Kristen Mackey stated RSA had also considered using a QR code, although that would affect the random sample of clients. Janette Lopez stated that she was curious regarding the majority of clients responding from Maricopa County. Kristen Mackey stated that 60% of clients were from Maricopa, although RSA could investigate alternate ways to reach more clients in rural areas. Janette Lopez stated the

council had inquired how VRCs informed clients about the surveys or when in the VR process were clients informed. Kristen Mackey stated RSA could develop verbiage for how VRCs informed clients, although the surveys were sent out randomly. She noted that RSA used plain language when communicating with clients and that clients could be told "they may or may not" receive a survey.

Mathew Nevarez provided the Ombudsman 722 report for Federal 2026, which indicated 11 informal reviews, 10 mediations, and 6 fair hearings. Mr. Nevarez stated that for October 2024- September 2025, there were 18 informal reviews, 12 mediations, and 4 fair hearings. Adam Robson inquired whether the Program Review Committee could still review the fair hearing decisions. Mathew Nevarez stated that information could be shared with the committee. Lisa Livesay inquired whether there had been any further discussion regarding training for ALJ staff. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA had made that suggestion, although the ALJ was not under DES. Mathew Nevarez stated there was now a QR code option to request appeals, which was used regularly. He added that InFormed was also allowing data tracking and submitting tasks for supervisors within the system. Mathew Nevarez stated the Ombudsman Unit continued to offer workshops for staff and recently held training for new staff and some supervisors.

Kristen Mackey stated RSA had hired a Region 3 Program Manager to support the Independent Living Blind (ILB) and the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) programs, although the Region 1 and 2 supervisors continued to support Region 3. Ms. Mackey noted the previous VRC on the council, Bibianna Ronquillo, had moved to a new position and RSA had recommended Susan Reeves, who had a General VR and TSW caseload, as a VRC representative. Kristen Mackey stated RSA received the first Federal fund allotment. She noted the proposed state budget would likely offer level funding, which could be a challenge for pulling down full Federal funding. Kristen Mackey stated there had been significant data errors from the migration to InFormed. She noted that the data would need to be cleaned up prior to pulling the Quarter 3 data and she would share that data with the council once it was available. Kristen Mackey stated the council had a previous question regarding a council budget and noted that council funds were paid through the General Vocational Rehabilitation funds. She added that if the council would like to develop a resource plan, members would need to develop a plan for what the funds would be used for. Kristen Mackey

stated that she followed up with the council's inquiry regarding council travel with the email confirmation that DES did not have a way to reimburse non-state travel. Kristen Mackey stated that DES was currently looking into Open Meeting Law training for councils, and that all councils would have to take an Open Meeting Law training likely at the beginning of the next state fiscal year. Janette Lopez inquired whether RSA could create an MOU with another organization to cover the travel cost. Kristen Mackey stated that MOUs did not typically have funds attached, although she could explore other options.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Program Review Committee**

Janette Lopez stated the committee had developed an action log to keep the committee focused and in alliance with WIOA and the Rehabilitation Act/Section 105. She noted the tracker would track any questions from council members or any public members during meetings. Janette Lopez stated that the questions would be categorized under WIOA or Section 105 as well as any response from the question. Kristen Mackey inquired regarding who would have access to the tracker sheet. Janette Lopez stated that it could be updated by the Council Liaison, although it would filter through the Executive Committee. Lenny Ovadia stated the committee was trying to be aligned with VR and to provide assistance or improve processes if possible. Janette Lopez provided an example of some of the open requests for information such as a question regarding employee satisfaction surveys. Kristen Mackey stated that she agreed with having a tracking mechanism, although she had previously addressed many of the council's questions. Ms. Mackey agreed with the value of tracking council activities/inquiries although her concern was that the tracker sheet was not a collaborative effort. Janette Lopez agreed that all inquiries needed to be under the purview of the council.

Janette Lopez stated the committee also developed an Ad Hoc committee to review the current council bylaws and made recommendations for adding verbiage and clarity. Ms. Lopez noted the section on the required positions could be expanded to include verbiage regarding the "mandated positions". Adam Robson stated the added verbiage could help a new member who was not familiar with the positions. Janette Lopez stated some of the information was shifted to other areas as needed. Adam Robson noted the committee did not develop the added verbiage but had borrowed it from other sources.

Janette Lopez stated that the committee would send the bylaws out for council members to review. Adam Robson stated the committee could review any feedback from council members, update as needed, and share with the council. Lisa Livesay stated the intent was not to change the purpose of the SRC, but to clarify the information. Kristen Mackey agreed that the bylaws needed to be reviewed. Stephanie Johnson inquired whether new members would also receive the new member manual. Janette Lopez stated the committee had discussed reviewing the new member manual also. Lenny Ovdia stated the committee hoped the information could help new members to feel more knowledgeable about the council and in their role on the council.

### **Nominating Committee**

Janette Lopez stated the committee had updated the new member orientation Power Point to be shared with new council members. She noted the committee had also included a checklist for new members, which included the PDF instructions for accessing council training within the training platforms. Adam Robson stated that he liked the updated training Power Point and inquired regarding the next steps. Kristen Mackey noted that RSA was tracking council member training internally although an orientation for new members was a good idea. Stephanie Johnson noted that any documents embedded within the checklist would need to be updated if any of those documents were updated through DES. Janette Lopez stated the Nominating Committee would be responsible for updating any information. Kristen Mackey stated the Nominating Committee would also have the opportunity to look at any gaps in the council and focus recruitment efforts in those areas. Lenny Ovdia agreed that the committee could look into the current vacancies on the council. Kristen Mackey stated that she was part of the Workforce Investment Board and would engage with the board regarding the open position on the SRC. David Carey noted that if any council member was interested in participating on a committee, they were welcome to join a committee.

### **SILC Report**

David Carey stated SILC had developed the 2025 SPIL and continued efforts to educate the community and encourage individuals to register to vote. Mr. Carey stated SILC also collaborated with other non-profits and to provide emergency preparedness planning for successful outcomes in an emergency.

## **American Indian VR Project Report**

Paula Seanez stated the Navajo Nation was in its 5th year of funding and continued to work to review grant outcomes and budgets to meet its goals and objectives. She noted the RSA Request for Proposals (RFP) had not been released and that they had received an extension for a 6<sup>th</sup> year. Ms. Seanez stated there were vacancies in Arizona that were in the process of filing. Paula Seanez stated the Navajo Nation had hosted a Rehabilitation Academy, which focused on an indigenous approach to rehabilitation services. Paula Seanez stated that she would be presenting at the upcoming IHD Conference on 2 Systems, 1 Goal. Ms. Seanez stated that the Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR) conference would be held in June. Paula Seanez stated that she attended the CSAVR conference, which offered great leadership and sessions, such as a drop-in session from VRTAC.

## **CAP Report**

Lindsey Stevens stated that CAP continued to offer advocacy to individuals. Ms. Stevens stated CAP had participated in successful agreements with clients, who continued to receive services and employment goals. She noted that CAP participated in outreach efforts and to provide education on VR and to explain the role of CAP. She noted that CAP had received some complaints regarding some vendors not providing accommodations for individuals with additional disabilities and that CAP continued to advocate for services for clients.

## **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

## **Council Meeting Dates and Adjournment**

The next meeting of the SRC Full Council will be on August 6th, 2026 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.

## **Adjournment of Meeting**

Lisa Livesay motioned to adjourn the meeting. Adam Robson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 pm.