

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

August 11, 2022

**Attendance**

**Members Present**

Lisa Livesay, Chair  
Adam Robson  
Dave Cheesman  
Ceci Hartke  
Judith Castro  
Diana Meza  
David Carey  
Kristen Mackey

**Members Absent**

Melissa Wojtak  
Paula Seanez  
Twyla Bowman

**Staff Present**

Lindsey Powers

**Guests Present**

Mathew Nevarez  
Jami Parente  
Linda Fischer  
Karla Martin-CART

**Call to Order and Introductions**

Lisa Livesay, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

## **Approval of May 19, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Dave Cheesman moved to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2022 SRC Full Council meeting. Ceci Hartke seconded the motion. Lisa Livesay requested the minutes be amended to reflect the updating IDEA conference. The amended minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

## **SRC Chairperson's Report**

Lisa Livesay stated the Executive Committee met to discuss the resources available to help recruit new council members. Lisa Livesay stated the council had a recruitment flyer and she would welcome any feedback or suggestions from the council regarding that document.

## **RSA Administrator's Report**

Kristen Mackey stated that on July 5<sup>th</sup>, all field staff were required to be in the office or the community at least two days a week. Ms. Mackey stated that Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) started to see an increase in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients, although the increase in COVID cases had decreased that slightly. Kristen Mackey stated RSA did not have the same number of VR clients as pre-COVID, and RSA was starting to look at marketing/outreach efforts. Ms. Mackey stated that anyone interested in going to an RSA office, he/she could utilize the office locator and identify which days and hours the offices were open. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA would need to return any unused grant allotment funds, which was largely due to a lower number in VR clients. Kristen Mackey stated the state budget included a 10% pay increase for state employees, and the Governor's office provided a pay increase for certain high vacancy positions as well. Kristen Mackey stated the Rehabilitation Technician (RT) and Purchasing Technicians (PT) positions did offer low salaries, and RSA continued to work with HR to update the duties and salaries for those positions. She noted that VR had changed with the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and required more data collection, which could be performed by the RTs and PTs.

Kristen Mackey stated RSA would present the selected vendor for the new case management system to the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) for approval and would hopefully begin the work in October. Ms. Mackey stated that she would likely hire a consultant for change

management to assist staff, clients and vendors in utilizing the new system. Kristen Mackey stated that staff were able to attend the IHD Evidence Based Practice Conference virtually and in person. She noted the CRC credits requirements had changed, and staff were not able to obtain CRC credits for attending virtually. Kristen Mackey stated there were some critical staff vacancies, which RSA was working to fill. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA was still able to exceed the job placement goals despite a lower number of VR clients, which was great. Lisa Livesay inquired whether the change management position would be a contracted position or permanent. Kristen Mackey stated the position would be contracted, as it would be a temporary position. Linda Fischer inquired whether RSA would accept suggestions from the SRC or the Client Assistance Program (CAP) regarding utilizing unused funds. Ms. Fischer noted that CAP was aware of individuals seeking VR services but were considered ineligible. Kristen Mackey stated the biggest challenge was in utilizing the 15% of funds on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), and if RSA did not spend the 15%, the agency would have to return any unused funds. Ms. Mackey stated that RSA was able to purchase Assistive Technology (AT) devices for clients that had not received services yet, which was not allowed previously. Lisa Livesay stated the ADE was trying to boost the understanding of Pre-ETS at the educator level and would hold focus groups regarding the limitations. She noted that hopefully that education would increase Pre-ETS numbers and services. Kristen Mackey agreed and stated that RSA was also partnering with Sonoran University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education (UCEDD) and had seen an increase in referrals. Adam Robson inquired whether RSA would consider reaching out to community partners regarding feedback on the new case management system. Kristen Mackey stated RSA would accept feedback from community partners, although she was unsure when that would occur. David Carey inquired regarding the amount of unused funds that would be returned. Kristen Mackey stated she would have that number soon and would be able to present at the next Full Council meeting.

Jami Parente stated that all policy changes to the Policy Manual would be included on a public facing website, which would include minor grammatical changes. Jami Parente noted there was an increase in policy questions due to new staff and supervisors. Ms. Parente stated the Policy Unit distributed a survey to staff, with questions such as whether staff were able to locate information in the Policy Manual and how easy it was to navigate the

SharePoint page. Linda Fischer thanked the Policy Unit for posting the information online and making it easily accessible for the public. Ms. Fischer inquired whether the Policy Unit included staff in any discussions or questions from clients regarding any VR decisions. Jami Parente stated that staff could reach out to the Policy Unit regarding questions related to policies, or to suggest amendments to current policies. Kristen Mackey stated the counselor or supervisor should be making the decisions, and the Policy Unit could provide clarification to policies, but they should not be making the decisions. Ms. Mackey noted that Jami Parente and Mathew Nevarez met with the Leadership Team regularly and provided updates or any trends they were seeing.

Mathew Nevarez stated the Ombudsman Unit continued to offer bi-annual training to staff on the appeals process and the VR decision making process to inform staff of their options regarding those processes. Mathew Nevarez stated he hoped the training would educate staff regarding the processes and to be able to communicate that to their clients. Mr. Nevarez stated the Ombudsman Unit was also including the Arizona Center for Disability Law and CAP into their conversations to improve the working relationships with those organizations. Kristen Mackey stated the training and workshops had helped staff to understand the decision-making process and how to walk clients through that process. Ms. Mackey noted that Mathew Nevarez and Jami Parente compared their data and identified any common questions to be addressed. Linda Fischer inquired whether Ms. Mackey was informed regarding all appeal cases. Kristen Mackey stated she was not informed about all cases, although she met with Mathew Nevarez regularly, and he would apprise her of any cases that required additional support. Linda Fischer inquired whether the SRC could receive reports regarding the appeal cases. Kristen Mackey stated Mathew Nevarez could include that information as part of his report, while redacting any client identification information.

## **Committee Updates**

Lisa Livesay stated that council members had indicated their preference for committees and inquired whether any members would be interested in Chairing a Committee or in serving in a Leadership role. Adam Robson stated that he was interested in moving to the Program Review Committee. Lisa Livesay inquired whether any of the Program Review Committee members were interested in Chairing that committee. Adam Robson stated

that he would be interested in Chairing that committee, although he was not able to yet. Lisa Livesay inquired whether any council members would be interested in Chairing the Employment and Community Partnerships Committee. Ceci Hartke stated that she would potentially be interested in Chairing the committee, although she would need assistance from other council members. Kristen Mackey stated the SRC could invite individuals to discuss Transition services, and collect that information to be shared with VR, provider agencies and advocacy groups. Ceci Hartke agreed and noted that information could be shared at Raising Special Kids as well. Lisa Livesay inquired whether any council members had contacts with business professionals. Adam Robson suggested the council share the recruitment document with Tim Stump, RSA Employment Coordinator. Kristen Mackey stated that she could share the information with Kelly Hart, the Employment Engagement Administrator, to share with her contacts. Lisa Livesay motioned the council to postpone council leadership nominations until the council had more members to assist with the work. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

### **Membership Recruitment**

Lisa Livesay stated the Executive Committee met recently to discuss the SRC Recruitment document, which had been submitted to the DES Graphics and Design Unit for an accessibility check. Ms. Livesay noted that some states had information regarding their SRCs on a website and/or offered a packet of information to individuals interested in joining the council. Lisa Livesay stated that council members could share the information at any events or with their networks as appropriate. Linda Fischer inquired whether the information could be shared on the DES website. Kristen Mackey stated the SRC could request the document be shared on the DES/RSA website. David Carey inquired whether the flyer could be shared on social media sites. Kristen Mackey stated RSA did not have a social media page, although the Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services (DERS) had a page through DES. Lisa Livesay stated that she could share the information on ADE social media pages. David Carey suggested the council create a banner with a link to the information that could be shared.

Lisa Livesay stated the Executive Committee also discussed the challenges with the appointment process and hoped to discuss that with the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions staff or communicate those challenges.

## **Member Feedback on Council Member Roles**

Lisa Livesay stated the council would continue that discussion once the SRC recruitment flyer had been finalized.

## **Membership Organization Updates**

### ***SILC***

David Carey stated that 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. Mr. Carey stated that SILC had committees that focused on topics such as transportation and vaccination equity access. He noted that when the COVID vaccines were first administered, the rural areas did not have equal access. David Carey stated that if any council members knew anyone in a rural community that wanted to provide feedback, they were welcome to contact him.

### **American Indian VR Program**

Kristen Mackey stated the VR agreement with Sonoran UCEDD had a close relationship with Tohono O'odham in supporting students through different funding capacities. Ms. Mackey stated UCEDD was working on providing Pre-ETS in the Navajo Nation, and how to better serve adults with disabilities.

### **Client Assistance Program**

Linda Fischer inquired whether VR provided training to the Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) regarding the VR process. Kristen Mackey stated RSA used to provide information to the ALJs as part of the onboarding process, although they were struggling to fill ALJ vacancies. Linda Fischer stated CAP noticed a high turnover rate within the Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID), in which some staff gave very short notice before leaving. Kristen Mackey stated the SBVID unit was small, and that any vacancies were difficult and created more work for other staff members. Kristen Mackey stated she could encourage supervisors to tell their staff to notify clients quickly regarding any changes to counselors or caseloads.

## **ADE Updates**

Lisa Livesay stated the ADE continued to work on capacity building with partners such as the RSA Transition Team, to enhance the use of Pre-ETS and to build commonality between what educators expected. Ms. Livesay stated the Transition Conference would be returning in person in September, which would include an array of topics. Lisa Livesay stated there would be opportunities to recognize those within the field and youth/young adults that have done wonderful things within Transition. Lisa Livesay stated that she hoped many individuals would be able to attend and to build relationships. She noted that ADE was also participating in a pilot project with

Diversibility Inc. to enhance student-centered planning with peer mentorship to work with students one-on-one and to build their advocacy skills.

## **Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the SRC Full Council will be on November 10, 2022 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Lisa Livesay stated the agenda could include updates from Raising Special Kids as well.

## **Announcements**

Ceci Hartke announced that Raising Special Kids would be working to provide information and services to Spanish speaking clients and hoped to offer an event for that population. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA had Spanish speaking staff members who could participate in those efforts.

## **Public Comment**

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

## **Adjournment of Meeting**

David Carey motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ceci Hartke seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 pm.