Meeting Minutes – 2nd Quarterly Meeting

Kentucky Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation
SCVR
April 21st, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Meeting

Physical Location: Transportation Cabinet, 200 Mero Street, Rm. C117, Frankfort, KY 40601
Zoom Platform

Members Present:

Nicky Wright, Chairperson; David Allgood, Vice-Chairperson; Cora McNabb, Executive Director; Todd Stephens, Member-At-Large; Danielle Burton; Christopher White; Allison Johnson; Michael Fein; and Jeffrey Edwards

Members Absent:

Brianna Sweatt; Terrie Terlau; Kelly Bass; Veronica Willis-Oldham; and Jade Finley

Staff Present:

Susie Edwards, Deputy Executive Director; Holly Hendricks; Alan Gullett; Jonathan White; Chad Hunt; Lametta Isaacs; Kathryn Spears; Jennifer Withrow; Anu Kumari; and Nanci Howard

Guests Present:

Beth Metzger, CAP Coordinator; Katie Wolf Whaley, UKHDI; and others.

Meeting Reports

Executive Directors Report

Cora McNabb, Executive Director of OVR, provided the report. She announced Lametta Isaacs, Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator for SCVR, would be leaving and this would be her final meeting. Cora as well as others expressed gratitude for Lametta's work with SCVR. Cora delivered an update on the agency's new case management system and announced the agency's plan for testing and training of the new system in the coming months. The agency wants to ensure the system is user-friendly for all staff. Additionally, there is still no disbursement of funds from the federal level at this point and informed council members of a resource guide for attendees regarding Order of Selection (OOS). This step-by-step, obtained by VRTAC-QM, guides agencies on how states should proceed when considering or implementing OOS. This guide will be sent to all councilmembers. She provided a brief overview of the current priority categories the agency must amend through the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Cora explained the reasoning behind the closure of all four categories was due to the lack of disbursement of funds and the duplicative language among Priority Category 1 and 2. The amendment to the OVR portion of the State Plan is almost complete and near ready for submission to RSA. There will be more upcoming public forums in the future regarding OOS and the State Plan amendment. Staff continue to receive extensive training on OOS and will be offered again next week as a refresher/update on OOS. OVR Director of Field Services, Holly Hendricks, would be providing the internal update to staff on a virtual platform. The agency continues to review contracts and has been fortunate for their collaborations. Cora concluded her report.

Deputy Executive Director's Report

Susie Edwards, Deputy Executive Director, provided a brief presentation regarding OOS and other states. She explained RSA requires the agency treat both Priority Category 1 and 2 the same. The current description of OVR Priority Category 1 and 2 are as follows:

<u>Priority Category 1</u>: Eligible individual with a *most significant disability* that limits three (3) or more functional capacities.

<u>Priority Category 2</u>: Eligible individual with a *most significant disability* that limits two (2) functional capacities.

Susie presented example definitions of categories from other states. *(See Exhibit A)*. The agency has been researching other states and their priority category statements and definitions. She highlighted the following nine approved state plans on the RSA website: Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Susie reiterated that some of the states have three, four or five categories. OVR Executive Director, Cora McNabb, said the agency has not yet researched other states who are not in OOS and their priority category definitions.

Councilmembers asked questions and had discussions about other states going into OOS, the approval process, functional limitation data, the process if consumers do not agree with categories and types of services offered in category one. Vice-Chair, David Allgood, mentioned the agency also participates in cost sharing, which was confirmed by

Holly Hendricks, Director of Field Services. Susie called for any further input on category definitions. Councilmember, Johnny Collette, recommended offering only three priority categories for a more defined and simpler process to determine eligibility. He also mentioned providing clear definitions and accessible language that provides flexibility. David Allgood, agreed. Susie thanked members for their input and concluded her report.

Division Director’s Reports

The Division of Blind Services

Cora McNabb, Executive Director, provided the report. She announced that Division Director, Helga Gilbert, had retired and that position would not be filled. Cora stated that she and Deputy Director, Susie Edwards, will assume those additional duties. Statistics were provided from the McDowell Center. From January 2025 to March 2025, the McDowell Center served 43 consumers with the majority being OVR and Independent Living (IL) consumers. There were 26-day students and 17 on campus students, and 20 consumers have completed their training. There were 711 instruction hours provided. Furthermore, the McDowell Center has participated in several presentations and robotics demonstrations throughout the quarter. The Center staff have developed and continue to develop partnerships with Goodwill, Jefferson County Public Schools, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Baptist East and more entities. Also, Center staff participated in a tour of the Center for Accessible Living and presented to students and staff. The Center completed three evaluations for the Kentucky Business Enterprise (KBE) program. Cora provided statistics regarding the Bioptic Driving Program. There were 68 cases, and of those cases, 67 were OVR consumers and one was for IL. Cora said that 6 are under the age of 18 years. There has also been another bioptic driving instructor hired who remains in training. 14 individuals need evaluations and 13 need training in bioptic driving skills. Orientation and Mobility referrals are down as well so staff are doing preliminary bioptic driving assessments. The agency has been collaborating with the Helen Keller Foundation through the coordination of training for SSP and for Counselors who serve the Deaf/Blind population. Cora provided attendees with an overview of the IL program. She announced that Gay Pannell oversees eight counselors statewide. Since April 14th, there have been 505 IL cases in 90 counties. Somerset and Bowling Green have some of the largest caseloads with those regions covering 19 counties. IL staff are also involved in the testing of the new case management system as well as working on their procedures manual. Outreach videos available on the agency website are located on the IL Services page. Cora concluded her report.

Division of Field Services

Holly Hendricks, Director of Field Services, provided the report. She provided statistics from the period between January 1, 2025, to March 31, 2025. There are 309 positions with 24 vacancies. Of those positions, 144 are Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (3 vacant), 87 Administrative Specialists (18 vacant), 22 managers, and 12 Employer Services Job Placement Specialists. Holly concluded her report.

Councilmember, Chris White, inquired about the length of time between services and if the consumers are aware. Holly explained that OVR managers are provided lists to prompt engagement and follow up to see how the person is doing. Assistant Director of Field Services, Jonathan White, explained there are specific spots within the case that counselors should engage and make contact. This is a piece of data that could be pulled, he stated and assured attendees that staff receive extensive training on when to provide that engagement. Holly also mentioned the use of the SARA software to maintain calendar invitations, reminders of upcoming appointments, etc. through email and text.

The Kentucky Blind Enterprises (KBE) Division

Lametta Isaacs, Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator, provided the report for Corey Marcum, Division Director. Corey was currently attending a meeting with Kentucky State University (KSU) leadership regarding KBE's Request for Proposal (RFP) to oversee all the university's dining. KBE is in partnership with "Cup of the Commonwealth" in hopes of developing a program to boost food services for the blind and visually impaired. In addition to the program, KBE staff have also been involved with the "Spring Fling" held at the Kentucky School for the Blind. Programmatic data and statistics were also provided.

Council member, Todd Stephens, shared with the attendees that an announcement had been made that KBE has been selected to operate food services at KSU for staff, students and possibly concession services. Lametta thanked Todd for the real-time information and concluded the report.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC) Division

Alan Gullet, Division Director of CDPVTC, provided the report. Programmatic data and statistics from the Center were provided. In 2025, the Center had served individuals from 70 counties and currently there are 117 consumers enrolled at the Center. From a programmatic standpoint, the barista training program is an option for students offered at CDPVTC. This successful program celebrated its one year opening April 2025. The Assisted Living Unit (ALU) is awaiting completion of the updates and crews are in the "touch-up" phase of the project. He is hopeful consumers and staff will be able to move back into the ALU by April 30th. The Adult Education contract would not be renewed, and those services would now be provided by the local Johnson County Adult Education staff. The Center is currently working on securing a position for that instructor beginning in July 2025. Additionally, staff are working to place an “apply here" tab and a “request a tour” tab on the website in hopes of a more user-friendly way potential consumers could find out more information regarding the CDPVTC. Staff will host three school districts to participate in Pre-ETS activities—Logan, Boyd and Knott counties. The upcoming CDPVTC graduation will be held on Friday, June 13th, beginning at 11:00 a.m. He stated there will be 123+ graduates and their families in attendance. Alan concluded his report.

Program or Other Reports

Consumer Satisfaction Survey, Katie Whaley, UKHDI

Katie Wolf Whaley, UKHDI, gave a PP presentation of the new 2024 Consumer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) results. *(See Exhibit B).* After her presentation of the findings, councilmembers commented on several topics.

Councilmember, Chris White, inquired about comparisons to those receiving provider services and those only receiving VR services. Katie explained that although it would be ideal, there is no way to capture that information at this time. Allison Johnson, councilmember, inquired about comparing the demographics of who responded to the survey with the demographics of who were eligible to respond to the survey, to help determine if the results of the survey might be skewed based on who we got responses from. Allison felt this would help understand if there is any group which is over- or under-represented in the survey data. OVR Director of Field Services, Holly Hendricks, mentioned that the agency could capture data regarding any information through case closure where the individual received CRP services. Danielle Burton raised concern with the small sample size for individuals who are blind or have visual impairments. Discussion was held regarding the small sample size provided for the CSS. Council member, Todd Stephens, commented that the data, which was less than 10 individuals in each area, should be stricken from the report since the number of individuals was insufficient and not proportionate to the population receiving services. SCVR Chair, Nicky Wright, inquired about accessibility of language interpreting when obtaining the responses from participants of the survey. While she understands certain ethical considerations in research, she wondered if this could be an impediment to consumer participation. Susie Edwards, Deputy Executive Director, mentioned a language line is used as well as Spanish interpreters for OVR’s use. Katie was not sure if this type of service was available when reaching out to consumers for survey purposes. She will find out if this accessibility is offered. Councilmembers thanked Katie, and she concluded her report.

Client Assistance Program (CAP):

Beth Metzger, CAP Coordinator, provided the report. She provided attendees with programmatic and statistics of the CAP program. There are currently 15 cases open and mentioned that the primary client base for CAP recently has been 22 years of age or younger whereas in the past it has been about 30+ years old. Beth provided an update on the pilot program currently under development between Vocational Rehabilitation, Protection and Advocacy, and the Department of Juvenile Justice. This program would provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) services who are involved in a youth development center. Back-up centers have been chosen in case an agreement cannot be reach with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Lake Cumberland Youth Development Center is an option as well, she said. A curriculum is under development as well. OVR Assistant Director, Jonathan White, provided his input on the curriculum and stated it would have to strictly be designed for Pre-ETS activities. Beth then brought of the issue of allowing participants to leave the development centers for community work experience and having access to online course materials. Beth said she would be meeting with staff from the DJJ and will ask more questions during that time. Beth concluded her report.

Business Meeting

SCVR Chairperson, Nicky Wright, welcomed new members and called the meeting to order for business. Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator, Lametta Isaacs, provided the roll call, and a quorum was established. Councilmembers reviewed the minutes from the January 2025 quarterly meeting. Chris White made a motion to accept the minutes. Allison Johnson seconded. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee:

Nicky Wright, Chairperson, provided the report. She referenced the April 7th special meeting and noted that the corresponding materials were included in the meeting packet. The special meeting was held regarding the closure of all four service categories, to review the proposed amendment changes for the agency to implement an Order of Selection (OOS) and inform the committee of the plan to hold public forums. She welcomed the newly appointed member Michael Fein (SILC) and other reappointed members. Current committee membership needs were outlined, and participation was requested for those interested. Elections will be held during the business portion of the meeting. The Nominating and Bylaws Committee has made a recommendation for Danielle Burton for the position of Chairperson. A recommendation for Vice Chair will be made from the floor since there has not been any member that has shown interest as of yet. She announced that nominations from the floor will be accepted for both positions. Nicky concluded her report.

Nominating and Bylaws:

Christopher White presented the Nominating and Bylaws Committee report. The committee met on March 27th, 2025. A proposal from the committee to transition to an ad hoc committee was tabled due to numerous council vacancies. The committee reviewed pending categories and discussed contacting Mr. Arthur Campbell, Jr. to replace Kelly Knoop whose term expired in June of 2024. Upcoming vacancies included three memberships expiring in August 2025 (Brianna Sweatt, Terrie Terlau, and Danielle Burton) and several more in June 2025 (Nicky Wright, David Allgood, Todd Stephens, and Christopher White). Two new member applications were received. A language correction was noted in the official appointment documentation, clarifying that the phrase "for the blind" should be updated to "of the blind." The committee also discussed strategies to engage interested citizens and recruit new council members, encouraging current members to connect with potential candidates. Members were advised to direct future inquiries to the appropriate contact person. Christopher also reported that several applications for council vacancies had been submitted the previous year that have not received appointment as of yet. He said letters were sent in December 2024 and February 2025 to individuals with terms expiring in June or August. Certificates will be presented during the meeting today to those whose terms would be expiring to thank them for their service on the council. The council nominated Danielle Burton for the chair position for the 2025–2026 term. Chris concluded his report.

Blind Services and Consumer Services and Program Evaluation:

Danielle Burton presented the Blind Services and Consumer Services and Program Evaluation Committee report. She stated that the two committees met jointly on March 27th, 2025. Danielle stated a presentation of the consumer satisfaction survey was provided. There was discussion primarily focused on concerns regarding the small sample size of respondents who are blind or visually impaired. Danielle concluded her report.

Policy and Planning:

Allison Johnson provided the Policy and Planning Committee report. Allison summarized the meeting held on March 27th, 2025. Old business items were discussed which included OVR collaborations with KDE and the inclusion of IEPs in OVR. Under new business, the committee *discussed the work that Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) is doing with Olmstead compliance. The committee made a recommendation to request a presentation from OVR on the intake process for VR services at the July 2025 SCVR meeting. Topics for the next meeting included more discussion on the impact of OOS on policies, the future of services and SCVR. Allison concluded her report.*

Public Awareness and Legislative Committee:

This committee did not meet due to not meeting a quorum.

Old Business

No old business was discussed.

New Business

Elections

Member-at-Large, Todd Stephens, presented Danielle Burton as the nomination for the position of SCVR Chair. Danielle accepted the nomination. Todd called for other nominations from the floor three times. No other nominations were heard. A motion was made by Chris White to cease all nominations for Chair. David Allgood, second. The motion carried unanimously. A motion was made by Michael Fein to accept Danielle Burton for the position of SCVR Chair. David Allgood, seconded. There were no oppositions or abstentions. The motion carried unanimously. Danielle Burton will assume position as SCVR Chairperson in June 2025.

Member-at-Large, Todd Stephens, opened the floor for nominations for SCVR Vice Chair. Allison Johnson nominated herself for the role of Vice Chair. Todd called for other nominations from the floor. No other nominations were heard. Chris White made a motion to close nominations and accept Allison Johnson as the Vice Chair. Michael Fein, seconded. There were no oppositions or abstentions. The motion carried unanimously. Allison Johnson will assume position as SCVR Vice-Chair in June 2025.

Certificates

Framed Certificates of appreciation were presented to David Allgood, Todd Stephens, Chris White, and Nicky Wright for their dedication and time served on the Council. Nicky and Chris were presented their certificates in person, and David and Todd’s certificates will be mailed.

Recommendations

SCVR Chair, Nicky Wright, made the motion to disqualify the results for the blind and visually impaired sample size of the CSS due to a low proportion as identified by Blind Services. Todd Stephens made the motion, and David Allgood seconded. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

Nicky Wright called for a motion to schedule a presentation from OVR on the intake process for VR services at the next (July) 2025 quarterly meeting. Allison made the motion, and Nicky Wright, seconded. No opposition or abstentions. Motion passed unanimously.

Nicky Wright, called for a motion to accept the CSS report with the recommendations as outlined by the Blind Services and Consumer Program and Evaluation Committee. Chris White made a motion, and Todd Stephens seconded. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

Member Michael Fein expressed interest in serving on the Policy and Planning Committee.

Motion to Adjourn:

Nicky Wright, Chairperson, entertained a motion to adjourn. David Allgood made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Todd seconded. There were no abstentions or opposition. The meeting was adjourned.

Attachments:

Exhibit A: Overview of State Priority Categories and Definitions

Exhibit B: Consumer Satisfaction Survey Summary of Results

Next Meeting Date: *July 21st, 2025*