

E-2 | Meeting Minutes – 1st Quarterly Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Kentucky Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation SCVR

October 24, 2022

Hybrid Meeting

Physical Location: Frankfort, KY – Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Conference Center
Zoom Platform

Members Present:

SCVR Chairperson Joe Cowan, Vice Chairperson David Allgood, Todd Stephens, Matthew Davis, Tyler Levy, Christopher White, Necholyia Wright, Kelly Knoop, Amy Luttrell, Danielle Burton, Briana Sweatt, Jeffrey Edwards (Beth Metzger), Cora McNabb, and Kelly Bass.

Members Absent:

Lynn Florence, Kellie Smith, Terrie Terlau, and Susan Farra.

Staff Present:

Holly Hendricks, Lametta Isaacs, Jennifer Withrow, Brooke McDaniel, Kellie Scott, Heidi Kesterson, Corey Marcum, Allan Gullett, Kristen Beach, Whitney Marcum, and Ron O'Hair.

Guests were present.

SCVR Chairperson Joe Cowan welcomed everyone to the meeting. The public did not offer questions or comments. A roll call was taken by Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Administrator, Lametta Isaacs. A quorum was established.

Executive Directors Report

The Executive Director's Report was given by Jennifer Withrow on behalf of Cora McNabb. Jennifer gave six topic updates. She reported that OVR will expend all its Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) money for 2021, and that we would not be returning any

money to the federal government. OVR has now moved into expending FFY 2022 money. Staff will be giving updates on the progress of the new case management system (CMS). It is currently taking up a lot of staff time. They are meeting daily, internally and having several meetings per week with the external vendor to ensure the rollout is smooth. The SSA Assessment Audit will occur in February of 2023. This is a routine audit/assessment that they conduct. They will be on site looking at our internal controls in keeping PPI safe. We have received our appointments for the new Employment First Council and Nanci Howard is the staff that will be dedicated 100% to the project. Our first meeting is this coming December. SCVR should consider having Nanci present at the SCVR meeting to learn about this council and its priorities. Beth Brinley has returned to the Education and Labor Cabinet as Deputy Secretary. Dr. Cumi Price has resigned as Commissioner of Workforce to take a position with the Louisville Urban League. Lastly, Cora will be attending the State VR Directors Conference in San Antonio from this Saturday through next Wednesday on behalf of the agency. She concluded the report.

Division Director's Reports

The Division of Blind Services

The Division of Blind Services Director Report was given by Heidi Kesterson on behalf of Helga Gilbert. She reported the Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) program is working with the Technical Assistance Center (TAC) and will have site visits on Nov 8th and 9th. There will be four (4) Independent Living Counselors joining. They have met with the TAC on several occasions to review federal reports, policies, and procedures and to begin clarifying goals and strategic plans for the next three (3) years. Heidi reported that Tonya Gattton is now the Deaf-Blind Services Coordinator. Recently, she has assisted with several cases, collaborated with Helen Keller on two cases currently and completed specialized training with them remotely. She is also doing adjustment counseling at the McDowell Center due to vacancies. In addition, Tonya attended a daylong meeting with regional Deaf-Blind Coordinators. In the last quarter, for July, August, and September, the McDowell Center averaged about sixteen (16) students—fifteen (15) were VR and one Independent Living, about twelve (12) were day, and about four (4) to five (5) attended virtually. As Helga reported previously, they continue to use a hotel due to the dormitory being under remediation and averaging about one (1) to two (2) individuals per week at the hotel. We are serving on average eight (8) of the different counties in the state. For October, we have sixteen (16) students—twelve (12) VR and four (4) Independent Living. We have twelve (12) day, four (4) virtual, one (1) in the hotel and serving seven (7) different counties. For November, we have three (3) scheduled evals, and two new referrals that came in last week, so they anticipate five (5) evals. Also, they have five (5) scheduled admissions in November. They have five (5) students that have

evals but are waiting to come in person for training. Heidi reported they have a current opening for Assisted Technology and are pleased with some of the applicants received. She is hoping to be able to have this vacancy filled within the next month. They also have openings for an Orientation Mobility Specialist, Personal Adjustment Counselor (temporarily filled by Tonya), Health Educator, and Dormitory Staff. She reported eleven (11) individuals have received their driving license YTD in the Bioptic Driving Program. Heidi informed the council that the remediation of the dorm will take longer than expected due to the extent of work uncovered during demo and are anticipating a mid-March reopening. She concluded the report.

Division of Field Services

Division of Field Services Director Holly Hendricks provided her report. Holly provided data from January 1st through September 30th of 2022. In total, 36,796 consumers have been served. The average cases served by caseload are 240. Holly clarified that this does not mean counselors have that many active cases but rather on average how many have been served from open to close. She reported 6,667 new applications have been received, with 6,018 determined eligible for services. 5,087 new IPE's have been written. 4,213 cases are in training status and 1,211 in job ready status. Holly reported over a 150 combined Associate, Bachelors, and Masters degrees have been obtained. Holly reported 2,433 cases were successfully closed and 2,109 cases were unsuccessfully closed. Of those cases that have been closed successfully, the average hourly wage is \$23.31 and the average hours worked per week is 34. Holly reported that on October 18, 19 and 20, OVR conducted an agency-wide leadership meeting in Frankfort. This was the first time that OVR Leadership had met in-person since March of 2020. All Division Directors and Administrative Branch Managers provided updates and training to Field Services Branch Managers. A diversity training was provided by a representative from the Personnel Cabinet. Staff at this meeting had a review of the OVR Strategic Plan and the Corrective Action Plan required of the agency by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Executive Director McNabb spoke regarding internal controls and engagement. The Field Services Division reviewed a potential approach for managing caseload sizes and staffing at the district level. Holly reported the purpose of this change will be to reduce caseload size and develop a comprehensive plan for ensuring service delivery, both of which should enable staff to better engage with consumers. This was an emphasis in the Corrective Action Plan from the RSA. Holly reported for FFY 2022, and Donna Osburn, our Social Security Administrator, reported that we have received \$3,349,608.50 in Social Security reimbursements. Field Services will be conducting a Skill Enhancement Training the first week of December to new staff. She concluded her report.

The Kentucky Blind Enterprises (KBE) Division

The Kentucky Blind Enterprises (KBE) Division Director Corey Marcum provided the report. He gave an update on bids that have taken place this quarter. Two bids were sent out, one being the Western Kentucky Correctional Route (consisting of Western Kentucky Correctional Institute and the Green River Correctional Institute) and the L&N Building. The Western Kentucky Route was awarded to Brad Holland and the L&N Building was awarded to Charles Dorsey. Corey reported two bids were currently open: the Kentucky Transportation Building and the Federal Medical Center. Currently, there are two emergency appointments: the Northern Kentucky Route and the new United States Penitentiary in McCreary County. The Northern Kentucky Route has an emergency appointment of Derrick Kromenacker and the McCreary County Prison emergency appointment has been awarded to Glenn Smallwood. Both gentlemen are blind but have not yet received complete training from KBE. Corey reported that KBE has spent the last quarter looking for new opportunities with the understanding that KBE will never operate on levels seen pre-Covid. Opportunities with school systems, Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Airport, State Parks, the possibility of expansions into janitorial contracts, and additional opportunities in private business have been reviewed. KBE has been working with blind vendors on 8-A status. 8-A is a federal program for disadvantaged population, giving that population priority to Federal contracts and provides incentives for private businesses to partner with 8-A corporations. KBE continues to look at technology to assist vendors in being more profitable, including expanding micro-market opportunities across the possibility of turning current operations into hybrid markets. Corey clarified that a micro-market is an unmanned market, whereas a hybrid market is a manned operation that has self-checkout technology present to reduce the need for an additional cashier thus reducing the overhead/payroll for the blind vendor. KBE has an upcoming quarterly meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 27th, at 4pm. Corey reported it is an election year for Chair and Vice Chairperson. KBE Vendor Larry Hall, with assistance from KBE staff, recently catered the Governors Fatherhood Summit. This statewide event had 200 people attending each day and was a great opportunity for the vendor. Corey then reported several different trainings he and his staff have attended over the last quarter. He concluded his report.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC) Division

Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC) Division Director Alan Gullett provided his report. There are currently 118 consumers enrolled, 100 residential and 18 day/outpatient. Alan reported ten (10) consumers are scheduled to arrive, putting CDPVTC at 128 consumers served. This number is similar to consumers served pre-Covid. There are currently about 72 consumers on the wait list. Alan reported CDPVTC has a goal to serve 140-150 consumers by the end of November/early December.

Currently, consumers are being housed in double occupancy in the dormitory because of the influx of consumers. For Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22), (October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022), the Assisted Living Branch had twelve (12) license completions, thirty-nine (39) permits, and 110 pre-driver's evaluations. Currently, there are nine (9) students in On-the-Road Training, eleven (11) enrolled in online permit classes and seven (7) in-person permit classes. The Physical Therapy and Outpatient Services has fifteen (15) to sixteen (16) consumers per month, on average. The Vocational Services Branch has provided over 37,000 hours of training. This number is nearly the course of FY22. Materials Management Program provided ten (10) credentials to consumers, and the Forklift Program has provided ten (10) credentials to consumers. Alan reported these two programs are in high demand. He also reported a potential name change in the future for this program to Logistics. In January 2023, Vocational Services plans to separate the Job Readiness Training Program from the Vocational Training Programs. CDPVTC has found their instructors are spending a lot of time with consumers on soft skills, and due to this information consumers will be given more instruction to focus on this area of need, separately. The Student Services Branch has tracked 46 successful closures over the FY22 timeline. The average hours worked were roughly 29 hours per week, with the average wage being \$11.49 per hour. During this time, 81 of the 120 counties in Kentucky have been served. This is an increase from 50 counties served during the pandemic. The top referring district was the Prestonsburg District, referring roughly 28% of consumers. The Elizabethtown District was second, referring 10.5%. The Ashland District was third, referring 8.68%. The Lexington District was fourth, referring 8.3%. The Paducah District was fifth, referring almost 7%. Alan reported the Perkins First Team continues to do great work reviewing efficiencies and successes at CDPVTC, reaching out to school systems across the state for tours, participating in statewide transition events, etc. Alan announced the planning of the 50th Anniversary celebration, scheduled for September 14, 2023. Alan concluded his report.

Program Reports

Community Rehabilitation Program:

The Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Satisfaction Survey Report was provided by Vocational Rehabilitation Manager Ron O'Hair. This report was sent out to providers with just under 50% of providers responding. These providers had the opportunity to respond to all Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) offices in terms of their interactions with the offices overall or counselors worked with. Many of the responses collected from the survey were from the Louisville, Western, and Northern Kentucky areas. Ron stated that for the areas that did not receive responses could be investigated further but suggested it could be a result of comfortability between the providers and the VR offices. In total,

forty-one (41) providers responded to the survey. [To view this report in its entirety, please refer to the accompanied PDF, [Exhibit A](#), provided by the CRP Branch.] Council Member Necholyia Wright posed the question “what are the comments regarding offices not having transportation or not setting up transportation?”. Ron answered that while the response did not provide a location, he did have a general idea of the area the comment was referring to. He explained that the provider is seeking approval to provide transportation and OVR is not agreeing to allow that service. There were no further questions or comments regarding the CRP Satisfaction Survey Report.

Client Assistance Program:

Beth Metzger, proxy for Council Member Jeff Edwards, provided an update for the Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP). During FY22 (October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022), CAP completed twenty-seven (27) information and referrals, focused mainly on information with vocational rehabilitation, CAP, and Title One. There were thirteen (13) cases during this time. Beth clarified that if more than basic information is being provided to consumers about VR or CAP it automatically must become a case. Three (3) of these cases did carry over to FY23 (October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023). Out of the ten (10) cases that were closed, six (6) were fully resolved in the consumers favor, one (1) case was withdrawn by the consumer, one (1) case issues were not resolved in the consumers favor, one (1) case was deemed a duplication, and one (1) case had issues that were resolved in the consumers favor. Beth reported that overall, these cases involved communication between the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and the consumer. There were no questions or comments. The report was concluded.

The Council broke for lunch and committee meetings.

Business Meeting

The Council reconvened, and SCVR Chairperson Joe Cowan called the meeting to order for business. Council members reviewed the minutes from the August quarterly meeting and a motion to approve was entertained. Necholyia Wright made the motion to approve the minutes. Christopher White, second. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee:

Chairperson Joe Cowan provided the report. There were two vacancies that were filled. Danielle Burton was appointed Chair of the Blind Services Committee, and Christopher

White was appointed Chair of the Nominating and Bylaws Committee. Both will join the Executive Committee. Todd Stephens requested to be moved from the Public Awareness and Legislative Committee to the Blind Services Committee. This request was approved and will be accommodated for meetings moving forward.

Public Awareness and Legislative (PAL) Committee:

Chair Tyler Levy provided the report. Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and a discussion on the notes were had among the members. SCVR Vice Chairperson David Allgood made a motion to accept the minutes. Christopher White, second. All were in favor, motion carried unanimously. SCVR Vice Chairperson David Allgood provided legislative updates. A Subminimum Wage bill will be introduced in the upcoming session. There has been discussion of wage trends in comparison to subminimum wage holders. A brief discussion was held on Salary Reimbursement/Payments from OVR. Current progress on the Annual Report was briefly discussed among the committee. A nomination for the Arthur Campbell Jr. Award was reviewed and the committee voted to observe this nomination as the award winner. Discussion on how the award would be presented was had. The committee adjourned.

Blind Services Committee:

Chair Danielle Burton provided the report. Heidi Kesterson gave an update to the committee regarding the McDowell Center, staffing, recent events, and upcoming events. The committee adjourned.

Policy and Planning Committee:

Chair Necholyia Wright provided the report. Previous meeting minutes from the August quarterly meeting were accepted. A motion was made by Kelly Knoop. Amy Luttrell, second. Open discussion regarding concerns with the OVR process was offered however there were no questions raised at this time. The committee discussed briefly with guest Sarah Thomas (OVR Intern) about her career in the Social Work field. The committee adjourned.

Nominating and Bylaws Committee:

Chair Christopher White provided the report. Discussion to fill the current Business, Industry, and Labor representative vacancy was held. Information was requested to the council if any contacts were made interest of this vacancy to please send this information to OVR Administrator Lametta Isaacs. There are five (5) terms expiring in June 2023. A combination of staff and council members will assist in gathering information to fill these terms with either reappointments or new appointments. Chris informed the council that any applications for these vacancies should be submitted by January 2023 to give ample

time for the appointments. Changes to the bylaws were discussed and will be presented during new business. Discussion was had around the language “designee” versus “proxy”. The committee will make a recommendation to strike the language “designee” from the bylaws and will also be presented during new business. The committee adjourned.

Consumer Services and Program Evaluation Committee:

Beth Metzger, proxy for Jeff Edwards, provided the report (Chair Matthew Davis was not currently present). A motion to accept Terrie Terlau as a member of the committee was made and carried. The 2021 Consumer Satisfaction Survey Report was set for approval at the August quarterly meeting but was not brought forth for a vote. The question list was reviewed, and changes were made to the first two questions. These changes are in regards to what accessible means, as well as clarifying virtual meetings being covered when asked about vocational rehabilitation offices. The Work Incentive Program update quality assurance was provided to the two vendors who have been using it for the last two years. The reports were reviewed and found to be good quality reports. Recommendations were provided and the vendors were receptive. An issue regarding a consumer being denied accommodations by an employer and a resolution for training was posed to CAP and a brief discussion was had. The committee adjourned.

Old Business

SCVR Chairperson Joe Cowan entertained a motion to accept the 2021 Consumer Satisfaction Survey Report as provided at the last meeting. Council Member Necholyia Wright provided the motion. Todd Stephens, second. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously. The nomination for the Arthur Campbell Jr. Award was discussed. Council Member Christopher White announced that Rhonda Logsdon with the Center for Accessible Living had been nominated by Amber Hamm with KYSPIN. SCVR Chairperson Joe Cowan entertained a motion to accept the nomination. Todd Stephens provided the motion. Christopher White, second. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously. Recognition of exiting members was discussed at the previous August quarterly meeting. SCVR Chairperson Joe Cowan recommended a certificate of appreciation be awarded to exiting members. Christopher White was in agreement and posed the question to OVR Executive Director Cora McNabb on how this has been handled in the past. Cora answered that previously there have been certificates and plaques presented to exiting members. Todd Stephens was also in agreement that a certificate would be a nice gesture and made a motion to present past members with a certificate of appreciation. Tyler Levy, second. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) was discussed briefly to the council by Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator Kellie Scott. This assessment is required every three (3) years. A bid process has been initiated and will be next calendar year January 1st through December 31st, 2023. Kellie informed the council that they need to be made aware of the CSNA and that any pertinent information will be passed along to the council. Kellie also encouraged the council's involvement in the CSNA. The request for proposal (RFP) has been approved by Fiscal, is currently moving through Legal, and will be posted within the next week. Kellie concluded this update. SCVR Chairperson Joe Cowan discussed the importance of being active and present during each council meeting. Members must have cameras on during the meeting (if attending via video teleconference) to be considered present during the meeting, as stated in the Kentucky Open Meetings Act (members must be seen and heard). SCVR Chairperson Joe Cowan informed the council that a refresher training to cover the purpose of the council will be offered at a later date. This will be facilitated by Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator Lametta Isaacs and Administrative Specialist Brooke McDaniel. Council Member Christopher White posed the question on when this refresher will take place – would this occur early 2023 before the new members are appointed or will it take place after the new members have been appointed? Council Member Todd Stephens suggested the refresher course take place as soon as possible. Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator Lametta Isaacs clarified with the council that the current new members have received training, and this additional training would be for any members of the council wanting to be reacquainted with the role of SCVR.

Council Member Christopher White presented the proposed changes to Article VII in the council bylaws. See [Exhibit B](#) for this proposal in further detail. The Nominating and Bylaws committee has made the recommendation to the council to accept these changes. Christopher White made the motion to accept. Todd Stephens, second. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously. Christopher White presented another change to the language in the bylaws regarding “designee” versus “proxy”. It was discussed during the Nominating and Bylaws Committee meeting that these words are essentially the same, and to remove any confusion within the bylaws it is suggested to strike the word “designee” from the bylaws and replace with the word “proxy”. Currently in the bylaws, designee is not defined as a voting or nonvoting member. Replacing the word “designee” with “proxy” would be clarified as a nonvoting member. SCVR Chairperson Joe Cowan entertained a motion to strike the word “designee” from the bylaws and replace with the word “proxy”. Todd Stephens made a motion. The motion was seconded. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

SCVR Chairperson Joe Cowan opened the floor for public questions and comments on any items discussed. The public did not offer questions or comments.

Council members Todd Stephens, Danielle Burton, and Terrie Terlau offered information and open invitations to the council regarding upcoming events for the National Federation of the Blind and the Kentucky Council of the Blind.

Motion to Adjourn:

SCVR Chairperson Joe Cowan entertained a motion to adjourn. Council Member Todd Stephens made the motion. Kelly Knoop, second. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

Next Meeting Date: January 23, 2023.