

Minutes | 3rd Quarterly SCVR Meeting

July 21, 2025

Hybrid Meeting

Physical Location: Frankfort, KY – Kentucky Transportation Cabinet,
Room C117

Zoom Option Provided

Members Present:

Allison Johnson, Vice Chairperson; Terrie Terlau; Kellie Smith; Jade Finley; Kelly Bass; Jeff Edwards; Veronica Willis-Oldham; and Michael Fein.

Members Absent:

Danielle Burton, Chairperson; Cora McNabb, Executive Director; Briana Sweatt; and Johnny Collett.

Staff Present:

Susie Edwards; Holly Hendricks; Alan Gullett; Corey Marcum; Heidi Kesterson; Jonathan White; Kristen Beach; Tiffanie Caristo; Kathryn Spears; Anthony Sturgill; Nanci Howard; Jennifer Withrow; Chad Hunt; and Brooke McDaniel.

Guests Present:

Beth Metzger, CAP Coordinator.

Welcome & Introductions

SCVR Vice Chairperson, Allison Johnson, gave the welcome and called the meeting to order. A roll call was taken by Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Administrative Specialist Senior, Brooke McDaniel. A quorum was established.

Executive Directors Report

Susie Edwards, Deputy Executive Director of OVR, provided an extensive report. OVR continues to operate under Order of Selection (OOS) with all categories closed. At this time there is no current timeline when categories will reopen, and OOS will end. The focus of late has been priority category definitions and state regulations that are associated with the categories, as well as the requirement to promulgate administrative regulations in response to the recent passing of Senate Bill 103. The newly defined category recommendations will be presented later in the meeting. Susie announced Executive leadership is working closely with legal to make updates to state regulations regarding the priority category changes and an update of outdated language specifically in 781 KAR 1:030 Order of Selection and Economic Need Test for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Legal will potentially seek emergency regulation to expedite this process. This would allow an update within 24 hours of filing, however, would still go through the regular legislative review process to be fully approved. Additionally, Leadership is also working with Legal to incorporate language from Senate Bill 103 into 781 KAR 1:020 General Provisions for Operation of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Specific elements to be added include procedures and standards for service fee memos and assurance of revisions for procedure or standard prior to the new fiscal year, establishment of preference for in state services provided it does not interfere with informed choice or deny a service on the plan, and requires the Executive Director to submit an annual report of activities to the Governor and Legislative Research Commission for referral to the Interim Joint Committee on Families and Children and the Interim Joint Committee on Economic Development and Workforce Investment, to include operating and financial statement. Susie reported that OVR already submits an annual report to the Governor's Office every year so this would not be a new ask; this will only address the need to add additional referrals to the annual report and a potentially more robust financial section. An Annual Report from the Council based on Federal Fiscal Year is required and completed for submission to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) within ninety days after closeout which equates to the end of the calendar year. The report always includes financial and programmatic information for the agency and will now include, from our Education and Labor Cabinet Fiscal staff, an operating and financial statement.

Susie provided an update on the budget, provided by Jake Fouts, Assistant Director of the Division of Fiscal Management in the Education and Labor Cabinet. There are approximately \$9M in authorizations still obligated during Federal Fiscal Year 2025 and ending September 30, 2025. These authorizations will cause OVR to utilize the new Fiscal year 26 General Funds to cover any financial shortfall prior

to the new federal fiscal year beginning 10/1/2025. RSA has sent out notification that the reallocation process is open. Reallocation is the process used when states have funds that cannot be utilized by them and rather than returning to the federal treasury it is offered to other states that can match and expend the funds. OVR is asking for more money through this process. Fiscal has confirmed that we can match whatever we are approved to receive. OVR will be requesting reallocation funds from RSA for the Basic Support Grant, the Supported Employment Grant and the Blind Services Grant. OVR will request \$10M in Basic Support, \$1M-\$1.5M in Supported Employment, \$400K-\$500K in Blind Services funding to assist in covering any financial shortfall. There is no certainty in how much of what is requested will be approved by RSA as there are many other states in the same situation. Susie reported any amount approved would be beneficial to OVR's budget. Next year is the biennial budget and the process of determining requests begins months before that time. OVR has submitted its initial overview for fiscal review but receipt of reallocation funds does play a part in this request, and OVR cannot finalize the biennial request until confirmation of what, if any, reallocation funds we will receive. OVR continues to explore cost savings through office space reductions, requests for reduction of square footage costs and movement of offices to alternate spaces. Offices updates will be addressed more specifically in the Field Services report. Filling of positions continues to be highly scrutinized for necessity as staff continue to absorb other duties to provide coverage where vacancies exist.

Susie reported OVR continues to work with Geographic Solutions on the Case Management System (CMS). Tentative plans for initial training phase are to begin in October, with the current go-live projection set for February 2026. Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are going well. OVR has participants in the Work-Based Learning Experience during the summer months with hopes that these opportunities for students will grow. Susie reported OVR had previously been placed on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) by RSA regarding the Pre-ETS program, but should now be in the final phase for closeout of the action plan. The final required documentation will be submitted by the end of July, planning for the CAP to be fully resolved by the end of September, if not sooner. Susie announced there are three Pre-ETS focused conferences taking place before the end of the year: The Pre-Employment Transition Summit, September 24th and 25th, the 2025 Assistive Technology in Pre-Employment Transition Services Workshop, and the General Assembly for Kentucky Business Enterprise (KBE), which will have an intensive focus on Pre-ETS to expose young entrepreneurs to the KBE program.

Susie reported vendor contracts are in the process of being updated and that OVR is in the final stages of the Rate Setting Study. Once completed a presentation will be given to the Council.

Susie addressed the Council vacancies. She stated emails have been sent out statewide to encourage council members and OVR staff to make recommendations of individuals to fill the vacancies. There are currently three vacancies for Business, Industry and Labor and one vacancy for Community Rehabilitation Program Services Provider (CRP) representative. If council members have recommendations, they can be sent to Cora or Susie. Lastly, Susie reported the responsibility of direct administrative support to the council is now being provided by both Cora McNabb and herself, with administrative assistant support provided by Brooke McDaniel from the Program Policy & Quality Assurance Branch. This concluded her report.

Division Director's Reports

The Division of Blind Services

Susie Edwards, Deputy Executive Director of OVR, provided the report. The Director of the Division of Blind Services position has not been filled at this time. Susie gave an update on the Bioptic Program with information provided by Chris Milburn, Program Administrator. There are currently 63 open cases in various stages. In the 2nd quarter of the calendar year, 4/1/25 through 6/30/25, there were 7 program referrals, 8 evaluations completed, 4 individuals earned their drivers license, 2 additional individuals had the night restriction removed from their license, and 5 have successfully completed the program. There are currently three bioptic instructors providing services across the state. Preliminary Bioptic Training is currently provided through an Orientation and Mobility Specialist (O&M), with one in active retirement implementation. The program is currently working to train other staff to assist with this assessment since an O&M is not required and the vacant positions will not be filled at this time. The Bioptic Program is actively working on outreach to recruit additional vendors for bioptic services. Dr. Musick is assisting the agency with a video that will provide specific instruction on what is required to provide this service. As he moves further into retirement, OVR have been assured his practice will continue to provide this service through their added optometric staff, but we would like to have availability of the services through the state and hope that with the recruitment videos being developed that will help achieve that.

Susie gave an update on the DeafBlind program with information provided by Faith Shelton, Administrator. There are a total of 19 consumers actively being served

(including those in Independent Living). OVR is working with Helen Keller National Center with training agency Rehabilitation Counselors for the Blind and Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf in a program specifically designed for serving DeafBlind individuals. This is an 11-month training using Moodle as the platform, beginning in June and will finish late April 2026. There are 13 modules that counselors will work through and participate in discussions and blogs the content presented. At the completion of the training, the counselors will attend a 3 day in-person training in April. DeafBlind will also be beginning a Service Support Provider training through the same training portal projected to begin this September. This will be a 3-week session with a 2 day in-person at the end. This training is supported by the agency after a significant need for the services in the Commonwealth was identified and is also being provided through the Helen Keller National Center.

An update on Orientation and Mobility was provided by Susie. There are currently 2 staff providing O&M services in Blind Services. From July 1st through July 30th, the O&M staff have provided services to 96 consumers. As previously mentioned, one employee is nearing retirement, and those Preliminary Bioptic Training services are being redistributed to ease the demand on the remaining employee. In addition to the internal staff the agency utilizes, approved vendors are set to provide the needed services to these consumers.

Susie provided an update on Independent Living/Older Individuals who are Blind (IL/OIB), with information given by Gay Pannell, Branch Manager. The following data is a summary between 10/1/2024 through 9/30/2025. 657 total cases combined between OIB and IL. 545 are OIB (people 55 years and over). 112 are IL (people less than 55 years old). 68% of these individuals are female. Of the OIB group, 71% are female, 53% have a severe vision impairment, 87% are living in private residences, and 50% were referred by family/friends or self-referred. The most requested service for both groups is instruction in Daily Living Skills. People served this fiscal year lived across 113 Kentucky Counties. Outreach is an ongoing activity with staff contacting established referral sources and potential new referral sources including eye doctors, health departments, senior centers, public libraries, etc. Staff also participate in Intragency Groups and Coalitions such as Mental Health and Aging Coalitions increasing opportunities to network with professionals from other agencies. Four staff have been working on an update and revision of the IL/OIB counselor procedure manual. The draft is under review by the Executive Director. Staff are working with the McDowell Center to host an OIB senior training workshop in October. The event will be titled KSTAR (Kentucky Seniors Taking Active Roles). Four staff (a manager, two counselors, and an administrative specialist) are involved with the new CMS development team. Monthly satisfaction

surveys are completed with randomly selected consumers with closed cases. As of 6/30/2025, 128 people had responded. The caseload in the middle of the state consisting of 19 counties is vacant due to counselor retirement (Counselor location was Elizabethtown). These counties are now being covered by counselors in Bowling Green, Somerset, and Louisville placing extra work on them. Even under this hardship, 18 of the 19 counties have been served this year.

Heidi Kesterson, Facility Administrator, began her report on the McDowell Center. April 1st through June 30th 34 consumers had been served. 6 were Independent Living, and 28 were Voc Rehab. 18 consumers were male, 16 were female. They had 15 day students and 19 dorm, from 14 different counties across the state. Two Kentucky Blind Enterprises (KBE) Evaluations have been completed. 11 students have completed training and graduated. The McDowell Center is averaging about 678 instructional hours per month. Heidi provided information about staff engagement and outreach efforts. Staff attended the Kentucky Ophthalmologist Conference in April and the Bluegrass Council of the Blind 'Dining in the Dark' event. Staff presented at Sky Rehab in Bowling Green and the Kentucky School for the Blind Foundation meeting. Staff participated in the Lions Law Foundation meeting in April, and the Pre-ETS Life Skills Symposium in May. In May, staff attended and shared information at the Louisville Metro Disability Coalition. Internal trainings and presentations were also held this quarter. Heidi reported the installation of new sliding doors and how this has improved accessibility and ease when entering the building. Heidi reported the Judge Family Foundation and Kentucky Lions Eye provided funding for three raised garden beds to be installed at the Center. She shares that students have thoroughly enjoyed participating in the gardening process. Lastly, Heidi announced this years White Cane Day event will be held on October 15th at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Frankfort Avenue and will allow for indoor and outdoor activities. This concluded the report.

Division of Field Services

Holly Hendricks, Division Director of Field Services, provided the report. From January 1st to June 30th, the division served 38,139 total cases. This is an increase from total cases in 2024 at 37,887 served. 14,934 potentially eligible cases have been served during this time, a slight decrease in numbers from 2024 at 15,644 served. Active cases have also decreased with 28,302 served so far in 2025, with 28,445 active cases at this time in 2024. The average cases served by caseload currently sits at 246, with 248 reported in 2024. Holly reported Field Services have received 7,843 new referrals, compared to 8,964 referrals in 2024. They have taken in 5,375 new applications, a decrease in number from the 6,376 new applications received in 2024. Average days from application to eligible has

increased to 36 days compared to the 29 days reported in 2024. The average days from eligible to IPE sits at 31 days, a decrease from 2024 at 33 days reported. 681 credentials have been earned so far in 2025 by consumers, a decrease from 804 in 2024. Measurable Skills Gains have increased to 1,868 as opposed to 1,693 earned in 2024. There have been 1,651 unsuccessful closures, a decrease from 1,855 reported in 2024. Successful closures have increased to 2,935 from 2,613 reported in 2024. Holly reports that the decrease in numbers is likely an impact of the closing of priority categories. She anticipates there will be more of an impact in the next quarter report. In terms of personnel, the Division of Field Services currently has 297 positions with 32 vacancies. There are 136 counselors with three vacancies. 88 administrative specialists with 27 vacancies. There are 21 managers and 12 Employer Services Job Placement Specialists.

Holly provided an update on Order of Selection (OOS). On May 14, 2025, OVR closed all priority categories. Since that time, very few new Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) have been implemented. A small group – less than 5 – were allowed to develop plans due to Counselor error. Individuals who had IPEs prior to that date have continued to receive services. New applicants have continued to receive assessment services as needed in order for Counselors to determine their eligibility for the program. OVR has received 3 appeal requests that were specific to OOS. Two have been resolved in favor of the agency without any requests for further appeal from the consumer. The third appeal is in process. There are currently 1,994 individuals on the wait list. Thirty-seven cases have been closed from the wait list. 1,492 individuals are in Priority Category 1, 442 individuals in Priority Category 2, 57 individuals in Priority Category 3, and 3 individuals in Priority Category 4. In terms of open cases, there are currently 4,142 individuals in IPE implemented status, 702 in application status, 2,026 in employed status, 1,694 in job ready status, 4,717 in training status and 2 in trial work status. There are a total of 12,579 individuals actively receiving services (not including those in potentially eligible status who are receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services). Holly reported office location changes, with the most notable being the closure of the Florence location. Staff in this office have been relocated to the Covington Career Center. Staff will continue serving their respective districts, just sharing office space. There are two positions, a counselor and an assistant, currently located in Whitesburg that will be moving to the Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College in Whitesburg in the coming months. Holly reported that moving staff in the Madisonville location to another location there is in the works as well. This concluded her report.

The Kentucky Business Enterprises (KBE) Division

Corey Marcum, Kentucky Blind Enterprises Division Director, provided the report. There were three bids this quarter, consisting mostly of post office locations around Louisville. Two have not yet been decided. The remaining location was split into two opportunities, and those were awarded to Sean Dorsey and Stephen Miller. There is an Emergency Dining Opportunity available that applications will be accepted for through the end of August. The Louisville Dispatch Center, a new location, is set to close on Friday, July 25th. The location was not successful at this time. There have been two retirements within the division: Jennifer Wright, the Assistant Director, and Steve Connell, a food service evaluator. Corey reported a new account at Kentucky State University, making the program the first of its kind to be doing collegiate food service. This opportunity starts August 1st. There is a new location in Louisville, the Louisville Dispatch Center at the 151 Market. This location will be open 24-hours, 365 days a year. Corey reported KBE is working with the Boone National Guard Center to create a convenience store on base to provide an additional opportunity for a lite vendor. This would be an unmanned, hybrid market, similar to what is already set up in the Cabinet for Human Resources (CHR) building. Two staff have been returned to KBE from their UI detail because of increased workloads. KBE is currently undergoing an asset changeout in partnership with National Vending for their vending machines, swapping out roughly 200 vending machines in different locations around the state. The partnership with Farmers Fridge has been growing and are hoping to install locations in the Louisville and Fort Knox areas soon. The machines specific to Farmers Fridge do not cost the agency any money and the vendor receives 10% of the proceeds from the location. That translates to roughly \$1 earned from every transaction for the vendor. Corey reports there are currently 81 youth working under KBE's summer jobs program in hospitality. KBE has participated in a national life skills program for blind youth this quarter, as well as presenting at INSIGHT and WINSIGHT. They are planning to host kids from the UK PATH program on July 14th to learn more about the KBE program. They participated in the Kentucky Local Food Summit at the University of Kentucky on how to incorporate and use best practices in sourcing locally, Kentucky-produced products in business. This concluded his report.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC) Division

Alan Gullett, Division Director of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC), provided the report. Graduation was held on June 13th. There were 119 graduates, and a former graduate was the keynote speaker for the event. The

current enrollment sits at 115 students, with 19 additional beginning in the coming weeks so that number is expected to reach into 130 students toward the end of August. There are 12 vocational evaluations scheduled in the next two weeks. The work on the assisted living unit that was mentioned at the last quarterly meeting has been completed. There are still some minor issues with plumbing and water drainage in the restrooms but those are in the process of being resolved. Through June of this year, CDPVTC has served 266 consumers and have received 190 referrals. This is an increase from 204 reported in June of 2024. So far in 2025, 77 out of 120 counties have been served. Alan reported CDPVTC has conducted 70 tours through June; 59 were in-person with 279 participants. 11 were virtual with 99 participants. Alan mentioned the ongoing work with the "apply here" button being applied to the webpage that will make it easier to access center services. They are evaluating adding a fork truck training building to the center. This program currently operates out of a single classroom and tennis court area, and with the program being one of the most popular ones at CDPVTC, they are hoping to add a better facility for this training. The program graduated 31 students just last year and the employment rate is one of the higher ones in the area. Adding a structure that can be used year-round would greatly benefit the program and its students. Alan reported several students are going off-site to do work experience at local business. Three of those have begun paid work experiences: two with the City of Paintsville and one with Sunny Days Carwash. This concluded his report.

Program or Other Reports

Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Beth Metzger, CAP Coordinator, provided the report. The report will cover federal fiscal year October 1st through the current date. During this time, information and referral services was at 30. This is an increase of 13 for this quarter. There are 17 open cases, which is an increase by two this quarter. CAP has closed 9 cases, an increase from 7. Beth reported a case spotlight, *Exhibit A*, to highlight the ways that CAP and OVR collaborate for the benefit of individuals. Beth reported that an ongoing project with Protection and Advocacy (P&A), OVR Pre-ETS, and the Department of Justice and Justice Youth Development Center to improve support in the Columbia area. CAP visited Adair Youth Development Center (YDC) to discuss the adult life resources with the new facility superintendent. Beth reported this unfortunately did not seem to be an area of priority for the superintendent. While the superintendent and assistant superintendent have ideas to improve, they don't always receive the support to do so from upper management. CAP also visited the Lake Cumberland YDC to discuss the same project. They expressed

interest in a possible Pre-ETS provision in the future. Due to Order of Selection, federal funding of CAP has been uncertain, which will cause this project to be put on hold for now. Beth announced P&A will be having virtual public forums on July 31st for input on priorities and federal language. In the current proposed federal budget, CAP funding has been zeroed out. Member Terrie Terlau asked “do we know what it means that CAP funding has been zeroed out? What does that mean? What can we expect?”. Jeff Edwards, Director of Protection and Advocacy and fellow board member, responded “Right now, there has to be a CAP, but there doesn’t have to be funding. So, we are figuring out exactly what that looks like here in Kentucky and then also nationally”. Member Veronica Willis-Oldham posed the question “In the example [see *Exhibit A*] you gave where the consumer was no longer able to participate, in that situation, when they choose to come back and resume services, because we are in order of selection, would they have to reapply and go through the same process again, or could they pick up where they left off?”. Jonathan White responded “if the VR case was closed, then yes, that individual would have to come back and reapply. If only the CAP case was closed, and the VR case remained open, then that individual would not have to reapply and would not be impacted by order of selection”. This concluded the report.

Field Services Application Process

Holly Hendricks, Division Director of Field Services, gave a presentation on the application/intake process to become a consumer with OVR, at the request of the board from the last quarterly meeting. Holly began her presentation with stating that anyone can refer themselves or someone else for OVR services. There is no requirement about who can or cannot refer someone for services. Holly provided the contact information for each OVR office and referenced the webpage for the local office lookup on OVR’s website. Once someone has contacted their local VR office or Central Office, and they’ve said they want to make a referral or apply for services, the following information will be collected: name, address, date of birth, last 4 of SSN, current work status, phone number and email, referral source, impairment and cause, alternate contact information, and parent and guardian information, if applicable, vision/hearing impairment, and meeting type preference (virtual or in-person). This is a lot of information, but necessary to pair the individual with the correct counselor to begin their case. This information is then entered into the OVR Case Management System (CMS). Holly reported that the way each office operates varies based on the employees in that location, (if a counselor serves a caseload in the area the individual has called their local office, but may not physically be located in that particular office) which determines whether or not the application for services is completed during that initial phone call or not. The goal is to complete the referral and application information all within the

same call, but there are some instances where a counselor may have to contact the individual after the referral information is taken to then complete the application process. If an additional appointment is made to complete the application, OVR staff will provide written confirmation through email or regular U.S mail about the appointment date, time, and location, along with any additional information they may need to provide during the appointment. Information needed at the application are as follows: identification documents, medical or psychological information, guardianship documents, if applicable, and verification of Social Security. The individual will also be asked about their employment history and useful information to apply towards resume and skill development. If an individual is unable to locate any requested documentation, they may provide contact information to the entities for OVR to request the paperwork on their behalf. Once this information has been collected, the next step will be to complete that application. The counselor will get to know the individual and determine if they are eligible for services. The counselor will collect more information that helps determine eligibility, like family situations, transportation, how they plan to participate in training and employment, etc. The counselor will review the consumer guide with the individual, discuss programs and services available and the general OVR process of the individuals case. The individual is informed of their appeal rights as a consumer, they discuss eligibility, what that means and what's required to determine it, priority categories are discussed, individualized plans for employment (IPEs) and the requirement of the IPE in order to receive services beyond the initial assessment. The individual is made aware of their responsibilities and expectations throughout the program and the role of the counselor in the process. The counselor reviews with the individual the process OVR uses to purchase services and items through vendors partnered with the agency, and how each of those services or items must be authorized. They discuss voter registration and how to access the registration process. Case closure is discussed so the individual will know under which circumstances a case may be closed. The individual is made aware of how employment will impact their Social Security benefits, if applicable. Both the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTTC) and the Charles W. McDowell Center for the Blind are discussed and the services each center provides. Signing the application indicates the individuals official request for services, it authorizes the collection of data, and that the individual has been truthful with their personal information provided to OVR. This is backed by legal language at the bottom of the application that addresses these topics, and counselors review this with the individual to ensure complete understanding. The counselor will determine if any assessments are needed to further determine eligibility and offer vendors for the individual to choose from. Member Veronica Willis-Oldham posed the question "with regard to the assessment, is that something OVR pays for?". Holly responded "yes". Using all of

the discussion and information made available by the individual, the counselor will determine eligibility. This must be done within 60 days of application. If eligible, the individual will receive more information about developing their IPE. They will be informed of their category assignment, open or closed, and provided with information and referral services accordingly. If they are not eligible, the individual will also be made aware of that decision. Holly informed the council that wait times to apply can vary from office to office. Staffing levels and volume of referrals can impact the wait time for some consumers. Member Michael Fein posed the question “how much of the application process is done virtually versus in-person?”. Holly responded, “thanks to the pandemic, we learned how to do the entire process virtually, so if individuals want to receive services virtually from beginning to end, they can absolutely do that, or if they want to receive services in-person, they can do that, too”. Michael posed another question “if it’s being done virtually 80% of the time, can you move applications to places that have the capacity at the moment versus waiting for a geographic location to be available?”. Holly responded, “we have done that on occasion when we have real significant wait times, or we have other caseloads in other areas than can accommodate. Part of the complexity with doing that is the service providers available to that person. If you are in Louisville, and we asked a counselor in Elizabethtown to work with you, the Elizabethtown counselor is not going to be as familiar with the service providers in the Louisville area. It is possible, but for the most part, we have to keep people in their geographic regions”. Michael asked “so this is not a training issue? To get people trained on the services in a district from where they were located?”. Holly responded, “we ask that if they’re serving someone who’s in a different district than what they’re in that they work with the branch manager in the other district to make sure they access those resources, that they know the vendors that are available there”. Holly concluded the presentation by stating that the process is incredibly complex and always evolving. Staff trainings are a priority and happen often, and that OVR is welcome to feedback regarding the referral and application process.

The Council took a brief intermission.

Business Meeting

SCVR Vice Chairperson, Allison Johnson, called the meeting to order for business. Administrative Specialist Senior, Brooke McDaniel, provided the roll call, and a quorum was established. Councilmembers reviewed the minutes from the April 2025 quarterly meeting. Michael Fein made a motion to accept the minutes. Terrie Terlau seconded. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Allison Johnson, Vice Chairperson, provided the report. The committee was set to meet before the full council meeting, however, a quorum could not be established.

Nominating and Bylaws Committee

Allison Johnson, SCVR Vice Chairperson, provided the report. This committee did not have a quorum and did not meet, as there is currently only one member on the committee due to term expirations. This concluded the report.

Blind Services Committee

Allison Johnson, SCVR Vice Chairperson, provided the report. The committee met on July 3rd. In attendance were Danielle Burton and Terrie Terlau. Bree Sweat was absent. No guests were present. The minutes from the March committee meeting were reviewed and approved. The committee discussed council composition, and are requesting updates on the committee makeup during the full council session. Most importantly, a discussion on what constitutes a quorum. In the immediate future, this committee will focus on priority categories and order of selection updates. This concluded the report.

Consumer Services and Program Evaluation Committee

Allison Johnson, SCVR Vice Chairperson, provided the report. This committee could not coordinate a time for members to meet prior to the full council meeting. This concluded the report.

Policy and Planning Committee

Allison Johnson, SCVR Vice Chairperson, provided the report. Johnny Collett, Michaela Fein, and Allison were present for the meeting. The committee is planning to bring two recommendations to the council to be discussed during new business. The committee is recommending to the council that they request SCVR members be invited to the Pre-ETS Summit being held in September. The committee will also be recommending that OVR provide ongoing updates on the local collaboration project with the Kentucky Department of Education until guidance documents in that project are finished and public. This concluded the report.

Public Awareness and Legislative Committee

Kellie Smith provided the report. The PAL committee met on July 2nd. Members present were Kelly Bass and Kellie Smith. Jade Finley was absent. Chris White was present as a guest, as his term has expired. This is the first meeting of the committee for the year, so there were no items to discuss from previous meetings. The committee talked about legislative updates and discussed priorities. Order of selection was also discussed, and how the federal budget will/can potentially impact each agency. The committee discussed the Arthur Campbell, Jr. Award. There has not been a nomination since 2022 for this award and none have been received at this time. The committee is requesting that nominations be announced through the OVR Facebook page. The committee had many questions concerning the Annual Report, and discussed making recommendations to include more information about SCVR members and OVR staff in the report. Lastly, the committee discussed expiring terms. Members are attempting to recruit replacements for those that have rotated off. This concluded the report.

Old Business

Susie Edwards, Deputy Executive Director of OVR, provided an update on Order of Selection and the Priority Category definitions. The definitions are based on input that was provided by the council, through public comment, Education and Labor Cabinet leadership and legal staff, OVR leadership and staff, and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). The version presented will be updated in the State Plan amendments in March 2026 and what will be used as the State Regulation update for the 781 KAR 1:030 for Order of Selection. Legal staff are working to submit the update as an emergency regulation. This process usually takes 24 hours to complete once it is submitted. The updates are currently with OVRs legislative liaison to ensure it will meet criteria for an emergency regulation. RSA has helped tremendously with the wording to ensure the updates are in compliance. The State Plan will also include the OVR eligibility criteria, which has not changed. For the OVR eligibility criteria, in accordance with 34 CFR 361.42A, the following criteria are used by the VR counselor to determine eligibility for services:

- 1) an individual who has a physical and mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment.
- 2) an individual who needs rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities,

capabilities, interests, and informed choice with a goal of an employment outcome.

3) an individual who meets the criteria set forth above and who has been determined eligible for Social Security benefits under Title II or Title XI of the Social Security Act is presumed eligible and is considered an individual with a significant disability.

The Priority Categories are as follows:

Priority Category 1: individual with the most significant disability is an individual with a disability who has been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and requires multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time and experiences serious limitations in four or more areas of functional capacity in terms of an employment outcome.

Priority Category 2: individual with a significant disability is an individual with a disability who has been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, requires multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time and experiences serious limitations in three areas of functional capacity in terms of an employment outcome.

Priority Category 3: individual with a significant disability is an individual with a disability who has been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, requires multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time and experiences serious limitations in one or two areas of functional capacity in terms of an employment outcome.

Priority Category 4: individual with a disability is an individual who has been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and does not meet the criteria for priority categories 1, 2, or 3.

In accordance with 34 CFR 361.530, OVR will utilize the definition of an individual with a significant disability. Functional capacity means the capacity to perform past required in employment, mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills. Susie opened the floor for questions. Terrie Terlau posed the question “have these categories been approved by RSA?”. Susie responded, “yes, RSA had significant input in helping wordsmith [the categories] to ensure the language is accurate and accurately reflects the terminology required for federal compliance.” Terrie posed a follow-up question, “does this mean that we know anything about when order of selection will be changed?” Susie responded, “It does not. As I reported earlier in the Executive Directors report, there is still \$9M outstanding in obligated authorizations right now

so budgets are still being reviewed and we are applying for the reallocation money". Terrie asks "is the reallocation money in danger of being impacted by the some of the House and Senate bills that stop the availability of legislated funding?". Susie replied, "To my knowledge, no. This is already authorized funding that was out there that other states have now returned and this process of reallocation is the way that those funds can be redistributed for use". Michael Fein posed the question "does the application process, after its finished, have a clear-cut idea of the distinctions between Categories 1, 2 and 3? Is there a clear demarcation between each category that they can fit? Or are you doing any studies to find that there's inconsistency; some people getting Category 1, some people get Category 2." Holly Hendricks responded, "the eligibility worksheet that counselors use assists them in making sure the individual is assigned to the appropriate priority category. In terms of whether or not that's happening appropriately is assessed during the case review process". Michael asks, "is there a way to measure consistency across the state that says we've got consistent measurements that show we're accurately applying this standard to everybody who becomes a consumer for OVR?". Susie responded, "I don't know that we have an absolute answer for you, I don't know that that's being compared across districts, but when the Quality Assurance team looks at those case reviews they are ensuring it has been addressed appropriately. We will have to have a conversation as to whether it is reviewed outside of that in comparison". This discussion and responses concluded old business.

New Business:

Allison Johnson brought before the board two recommendations from the Policy and Planning Committee. The committee is recommending that the council request that each member be invited to attend the Pre-ETS Summit OVR is hosting in Louisville in September, so the full council has a thorough understanding of the current landscape of the provision of Pre-ETS services. Michael Fein made a motion to accept the recommendation. Terrie Terlau seconded. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously. Allison clarified that this would not be a mandatory event for council members to attend, just that an invite be extended to SCVR members should they wish to attend the summit. The second recommendation from the Policy and Planning Committee is that SCVR request periodic, ongoing updates on the local-level collaboration project being conducted with KDE until such a time as the documents and results from that project are publicly available. Michael Fein made a motion to accept the recommendation. Kellie Smith seconded. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously. This concluded new business.

Motion to Adjourn:

Allison Johnson opened the floor for a motion to adjourn. Kellie Smith made a motion. Jade Finley seconded. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion to adjourn carried unanimously.

Next Meeting Date: October 20, 2025