

Kentucky Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation

Meeting Minutes – Zoom

July 26th, 2021

Call to Order – David Allgood

Chair called to order this quarterly meeting of the Kentucky Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation at 9:00 am on April 26, 2021, Zoom Meeting platform.

Welcome/Roll Call – Samantha Cook

Members Present: David Allgood (Chairperson), Joe Cowan, Cora McNabb, Todd Stephens, Kelly Knoop, Chris White, Cathy Jackson, Susan Farra, Matt Davis, Theresa Thomas, Lynn Florence, Phil Donahue, Kellie Smith, Tyler Levy, Nicky Wright

Guests Present: Carla Ruschival, Adam Ruschival, Chithra Adams, Katie Wolfe Whaley, Jacob Smith, Robert Finlayson, Dondra Meredith

Staff Present: Samantha Cook, Alan Gullett, Corey Marcum, Chris Sheeting, Kristen Beach, Kellie Scott, Helga Gilbert, Heidi Kesterson, Holly Hendricks, Jennifer Withrow, Brent Sturgill, Jonathan White, Melissa Peel

It was determined that a quorum was present.

Executive Director's Report – Cora McNabb

Cora thanked everyone for his or her service to the Counsel and for representing the disability community.

Cora announced that she had been out for about a month at the beginning of June. After having a stent placed in her heart she is now back to work full time and participating in cardiac rehab. OVR Staff did a wonderful job in her absence preparing for the RSA monitoring.

The RSA offsite monitoring started last week July 19, 2021. These meetings occur every Monday, Wednesday and Friday of every week until almost the end of August. The monitoring may extended into September with final reports and Corrective Action Plans. In between the meetings with RSA, OVR continues preparations completing documents required and answering questions given by RSA.

The RSA has so far looked at the organizational structure of the agency and the cabinet. They are interested in how OVR interacts with the cabinet, data performance and performance of the agency.

They have interest in the factors that affect OVR's ability to perform and with that have discussed the merger of the two agencies in 2017. OVR worked with the counsel and committee on the merger and RSA acknowledged that this is still in the early stages of the merging policy processes.

At this time, Cora does not have any concerns about the RSA monitoring but is sure there will be areas for improvement.

The State Regulations are continuing to be worked on and the deadline is for the changes is approaching.

Division Directors are working on their portions of the biennial budget and have a deadline at the end of this week for those.

Finance and Administration has approved the purchase of the new Case Management System (CMS). OVR is awaiting on the release of the RFP and working with OVR Technology Services and the Commonwealth Office of Technology on the request for information release. The new CMS will move OVR towards electronic records and provide better, more accurate data reporting.

Division Directors' Report

Becky Cabe – Executive Directors Report

Becky Cabe was absent.

Helga Gilbert – Blind Services Division

Continue to serve virtually and in person thru the Orientation and Mobility, Bioptic, Independent Living programs and the McDowell Center.

Heidi Kesterson – McDowell Center

The Center is serving 47 students at this time. Forty are vocational rehabilitation students and seven are Independent living students. Eight day students have returned and 39 returned virtually.

There has been a positive realization thru the pandemic that more individuals have been reached by providing services virtually. The Center is serving individuals from 22 counties across the state. This is higher than with in person services before the pandemic.

The PAC program was held virtually again this year and seven individuals attended. This year's theme was Super Heroes and each participant received a "power pack" that was

either dropped off or mailed. They each wrote about finding their super powers throughout the camp. Lessons were from each of the five categories of Pre-ETS. There were many pictures taken especially of the cooking lessons with their families in the evenings. The camp ran for 2.5 hours per day and a couple of the repeat students worked in the mornings on work readiness type of activities. The hope is for next year's PAC to be in person.

The Center is waiting on approval for a part time virtual instructor position and a full time assistive technology instructor. There are pending interviews for a Personal Adjustment Counselor and a Recreation and Leisure position. The Recreation and Leisure position will be a full time position to provide some evening and weekend opportunities for students. The Consumer Services, Orientation, and Mobility has an Administrative Specialist position that is pending approval to post.

During the pandemic, the Work Experience Team has worked to develop a relationship with the Red Cross and at this time, there have been six students to complete the virtual work experience on a wide variety of opportunities thru them. Work Experience continues to reach out to other employers, call volunteers,

The Center is taking all referrals but only accepting day students. None of the State Centers has been approved for residential services. When the residential services start back, the virtual opportunities will remain available and may require another full time instructor position be added.

Kentucky was one of only four states chosen to be a part of a learning collaborative with the Institute for Community and Inclusion (ICI). This collaborative will mesh with the Work Experience at the McDowell Center in providing the consumers progressive opportunities with a variety of employers and consists of everything from a tour of a workplace all the way up to an internship. This also gives the employers a better opportunity for learning the capacities and capabilities of consumers. This will also provide Kentucky with a mentor state of another state that has been involved for the past four years with the collaborative.

Since January there have been about 21 consumers served by the O&M program. Three individuals completed and acquired licenses thru the Bioptic Driving program. Three more are actively engaged in the Bioptic Driving training and will be testing for their licenses within the next couple of months.

Since June the Independent Living Services and Older Individuals has been transitioning to a hybrid delivery model. By letting the consumer choose how they want services delivered, services can either be by phone only or mostly by phone and eventually in person training for devices and equipment at the consumer's home.

Caseloads went down a bit for all counselors but referrals are rising due to an effort to reach new groups. Counselors used marketing materials, reached out to eye doctors and did various things to bring in new referrals.

Blind Services is waiting on final approval from the Personnel office for the Deaf Blind Coordinator position. This has been vacant since Chad Hunt was promoted to the Branch Manager of Western Blind Services region. The hiring process continues for an Independent Living Services and Older Individuals Counselor position in the Somerset office.

Field Services Division – Holly Hendricks

Field Services have been heavily involved in the RSA Monitoring preparations and meetings. It has been a good learning experience so far.

DocuSign has been fully implemented. This provides a way for consumers to electronically sign forms and allow documents to be saved in the Case Management System. Early responses from the pilot program were positive and has proved to be beneficial for service delivery. Consumers can still choose to have forms mailed to them or sign in person.

At referral, consumers can indicate their preference for in person or virtual services. In a few months, there should be enough data to analyze the outcomes of virtual services. We are excited to be able to measure and ensure the effectiveness and make services accessible and available whether in person or virtual throughout the state.

There are currently 290 positions with 118 Field Counselors and 41 vacancies. The division continues to face the challenge of finding qualified applicants to accept the positions.

Holly introduced Kristen Beach as the new Assistant Director. She started May 16 and is supervising Social Security (Donna Osburn), Employer Services (Deana Wilson-Kimbler) and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (Amanda Friend). Jonathan White continues in his role as Assistant Director and supervises Transition (Veronica Dale), Community Rehabilitation Program (Ron O'Hair) and Rehabilitation Technology (Carol Weber).

Currently reviewing policies on work experience and purchasing computers for consumers.

Metrics Data January through June

- 31,313 cases served
- 16,308 potentially eligible
- 212 Average cases served by caseload
- 5,086 New referrals
- 3,073 New applicants
- 2,716 Newly eligible with a 29 day average from application to eligible
- 2,200 New IPEs with a 39 day average from eligible to plan
- 1,306 competitive integrated employment outcomes
 - \$17.39 Average hourly wage
 - 34 Average hours worked

Carl D Perkins Rehabilitation Training Center – Alan Gullett

There are 3-4 Vocational Rehabilitation consumers coming daily each week to complete the evaluation process. Four to five consumers are on campus completing drivers training.

The Center is expecting seven ALPHA consumers to return to residential in August. They will attend the local Kentucky Community & Technical College System.

Physical, Speech and Occupational therapies have about 15 consumers attending therapy regularly during the week.

From October 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, the Perkins Center has served 171 consumers in 64 of the 120 Kentucky counties.

There are 72 employees and 40 contract staff at the Center currently. Vacancies consist of a Physical Therapy Program Assistant and two Vocational Rehabilitation Program Specialist positions. Interviews were conducted and the positions should be filled in the next couple of weeks.

Work on the Biennial Budget may include some improvements for the Forklift Program training area. Since 17 students have completed and obtained a Forklift Industrial Truck lift Operators license the hope is for improvements to enhance the Forklift Program training area where the simulator was setup.

The Perkins FIRST initiative initially started in early 2020 as a marketing tool that would focus on Fiscal, Independence, Reaching, Staff and Tracking. Since it had barely gotten started when the shutdown occurred it is being revamped and will hopefully start back September 1. The Fiscal team has already identified some cost savings with replacing outside lighting and a redo of a medical waste contract. The Independence team will report monthly success stories to the Field and Central Office and will cover the media, Facebook page, cabinet newsletter information and

high light student's achievements. The Reaching team will attend district meetings give monthly reports with information for each district and region, conduct satisfaction surveys with consumers, field staff and vendors and focus on center tours. The Staff team will focus on staff certifications and will select an employee of the month and conduct other activities to boost morale. The Tracking team will be responsible for tracking referrals within each district and region, will track disabilities and impairment codes of referrals, monthly PEO's and the programs that are getting those employment outcomes, job sectors and will be fielding staff and consumer ideas and issues.

Kentucky Business Enterprises – Corey Marcum

The Purpose funds which are the vendor relief funds appropriated by congress was submitted and approved 45 minutes later.

In the last quarter there were three bids received. The L&N building that just reopened after a two-year remodel was awarded to George Duqay and he will leave the Gene Schneider building. The CHR building vacated by Justin Pervis to move to Louisville is now awarded to Larry Hall in addition to his existing facilities. In addition, the Gene Schneider building was awarded to Justin Pervis to add to his existing facilities. There is concerning evidence thru this bidding process that the vendor body is not looking for new locations or opportunities to grow. This is not just a Kentucky problem as evidenced by other states' blind enterprises having problems filling vendor spots as well.

A new Coca-Cola contract issued by the state changed the price structure that the vendors have worked under for the last five years.

The first micro-market was opened in the Mazoli building in Louisville and it has far exceeded the vendor and customers' expectations. The staff at the building are raving about the self-service kiosk model.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

University of Kentucky Human Development Institute (UK HDI) staff member Katie Wolf, Principal Investigator for the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, presented the results. This is the first year that UK HDI has completed the survey and it proved complicated to complete due to the pandemic.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

University of Kentucky Human Development Institute (UK HDI) staff member Chithra Adams, Division Director for Evaluation, presented the CSNA results.

Business Meeting

David Allgood called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Todd Stephens made a motion to approve the April 26, 2021 meeting minutes. Cathy Jackson seconded the motion, no one opposed and the motion carried.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee Report – David Allgood

Members Present: David Allgood, Cora McNabb, Kenneth Jones, Todd Stephens,

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Cora McNabb, Samantha Cook, Melissa Peel, Jonathan White, Kristen Beach, Alan Gullett

There was discussion about the RSA site survey. Cora reported that even though she had been out due to medical issues, OVR is doing a wonderful job preparing for the offsite visit from RSA.

OVR is working towards getting Pre-ETS staffed but the biggest barrier is the starting pay for state positions. Pay increases are being discussed at this time. Staffing is down by 45 positions across OVR and there are 212 cases per counselor. This is an amazing task for the OVR counselors.

The OVR is looking forward to a new tracking system. Hopefully this will make the counselors jobs easier.

There was around \$400,000 allocated for the Randolph-Shepherd Blind vendors in Kentucky. Some Blind vendors had true hardship due to closings of the state buildings during the pandemic. The money will be disseminated soon.

Ad-Hoc Bylaws Committee Report – David Allgood in the absence of Carla Ruschival

Members Present: Tyler Levy, Todd Stephens, Joe Cowan, Chris White

Members Absent: Carla Ruschival

Staff Present: Samantha Cook, Allan Gullett, Jennifer Withrow

The Council held a special meeting on June 21st and decided that more clarification will be presented to the committee before the next meeting a more explicit definition of the quorum.

The following changes were suggested to the bylaws during the Special meeting on June 21st:

1. The language of the preamble will change “disabled citizens” to “individuals with disabilities” since a person is not required to be a Kentucky citizen to receive services.
2. Throughout the bylaws “OVR” used in place of “Office of Vocational Rehabilitation” and “SCVR” used in place of “Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation”.
3. Becky Cabe will get with the Legal department regarding the staggered initial terms. There was more discussion about how to keep members of the council from rotating off at the same time to keep from losing representation.
4. Correct typographical errors throughout the bylaws.
5. The language on meeting visitors and/or guests will be changed from “appointed” to “invited” to committees.

Chris White made a motion to approve the above changes to the by-laws. Tyler Levy second the motion. Motion carried.

Blind Services Committee Report – Cathy Jackson in absence of Carla Ruschival

Members present: Cathy Jackson, Joe Cowan, Theresa Thomas

Members absent: Carla Ruschival

Staff present: Helga Gilbert

Counselors and instructors are back at the McDowell Center working in person with a few staff with medical issues working a hybrid schedule. The Center is working with

students on Orientation and Mobility Services. They will be hiring a full time employee for virtual instruction. There was some discussions about when dormitories would open. The dorms are being renovated at this time so instruction consists of day students and virtual trainings.

The committee asked for data specific to blind individuals and that will be presented at the next quarterly meeting.

Consumer Services and Program Evaluation Committee Report – Matt Davis

Members Present: Matt Davis (chair), Cathy Jackson, David Allgood, Phil Donahue

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Kellie Scott, Holly Hendricks

Old business: April Minutes reviewed. Matt made a motion to approve the April minutes and Cathy second the motion. Motion carried.

The Work Incentive Programs for KY remain Goodwill and CAL but their areas were moved around a bit. A training was provided to staff regarding benefits counseling and was well received.

Chithra Adams presented the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) overview during the main SCVR meeting. There were some questions about changes/differences from last year's report. The CSNA contained questions about technology and most said their needs had been met.

There were some changes suggested to the Consumer Satisfaction Survey closure letter to inform consumers that they will receive emails or phone calls from UK HDI. It was also suggested to add the case number to the closure letter along with a link to the survey. That way the consumer could complete the survey and UK could still link it back to the case information. Issues related to providing the link on the closure relate to some questions linked to the services, which the consumer received, knowing which year the case was closed, etc. In addition, they will determine the feasibility of switching to performing the surveys every quarter. If the full Council agrees then HDI will take this recommendation back to their team and get back with this Council. Todd Stephens made a motion to accept the recommended changes, Joe Cowan second the motion. Motion carried.

Case reviews continue to be performed each month although in a more brief form.

Any topic suggestions for the next meeting should be emailed to Kellie Scott.

Cathy made a motion for the meeting to be adjourned and Dana second the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Policy and Planning Committee – Nicky Wright

Members Present: Nicky Wright, Susan Farra, Theresa Thomas, Lynn Florence, Kelly Knoop, Kellie Smith

Members Absent: Amy Luttrell

Staff Present: Chris Sheeting, Jonathan White

The Policy and Planning Committee met today, discussed informed choice, and tried to come up with some ways to measure it. Jonathan White, the assistant director, gave a summary of informed choice. When it comes to consumers receiving information to assist with informed choice, if that consumer has a guardian, that person needs to be involved. The committee also discussed informed choice when it comes to choosing a vendor, specifically a Certified Rehabilitation Program (CRP) for services. There are stats for vendors, and they are vetted and a survey is available to grade them. Specifically, when it comes to CRPs, there is also a survey and statistics are kept including successful closures. As OVR staff, we must make sure we are not biased against new CRPs or CRPs that we have a bad experience making sure not to exclude them as options for consumers.

There is an option in CMS where CRPs in a particular zip code can be printed out. A good point was brought up that it may depend on transportation and which place is closest to the consumer. It may also depend on when they can get in to be served by that CRP.

The OVR staff present clarified the definition of a vendor. The committee also wondered if the consumer could call and meet the vendors themselves. We also wondered how other organizations, i.e. workforce partners and even other states measure informed choice. Jonathan mentioned that staff is always reminded to offer informed choice to consumers and they are responsible for doing it. They are reminded that the consumer and the counselor are partners, and we are doing rehabilitation with someone and not to someone.

Someone asked if a reported negative experience with a vendor was the only way to measure a vendor and whether OVR included a quality control team? The OVR Staff admitted that consumers might need more guidance and counseling when it comes to making an informed choice.

Public Awareness and Legislative Review Committee – Tyler Levy

Members Present: David Allgood, Todd Stephens, Chris White, Kelly Smith

Members Absent: Tyler Levy

Staff Present: Brent Sturgill, Jonathan White, Kristen Beach, Samantha Cook

Old business:

During the PAL committee meeting in April, there was a recommendation to provide a training session that would train the full council on all the different waiver programs in KY. Samantha Cook will reach out to either Jeff White or Pam Smith to see if they are available to present this information at a future council meeting.

New Business:

Review prior Meeting Minutes: Everyone received them by email and no comments made.

Item #1: Annual Report

Samantha went over the 2020 Annual Report as a reference to the committee. She then shared her outline and proposed a new format for the 2021 Annual Report. She asked the committee for feedback. There were lots of feedback and recommendations from the committee. Todd Stephens proposed a theme that the committee liked.

Item #2: Employer Awards

We have tried to get nominations two different times and we still have not received any nominations. The committee decided to skip/forego the Employer Awards this year and pick that up again next year. We did get a recommendation from the committee to recognize employers that were deemed essential and worked through the entire pandemic.

Item #3: Arthur Campbell Jr. Award

The deadline is 08-31-21. We have received one nomination so far. We will send that out again and try to share as much as possible in order to maximize the number of nominations.

There was no New Business discussed.

There was no Old Business discussed.

There were no Public Announcements.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:11pm by David Allgood. The next general meeting will be a hybrid meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, 9am on October 25, 2021.

Minutes submitted by: Melissa Peel

Approved: 10/25/2021

