

Minutes | 1st Quarterly SCVR Meeting

January 27, 2025

Hybrid Meeting

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

Zoom Option Provided

Members Present:

Necholyia Wright, Chairperson; David Allgood, Vice-Chairperson; Cora McNabb, Executive Director; Todd Stephens, Member-At-Large; Kellie Smith; Chris White; Danielle Burton; Terrie Terlau; and Johnny Collett

Members Absent:

Jade Finley; Briana Sweatt; and Allison Johnson

Staff Present

Corey Marcum; Holly Hendricks; Helga Gilbert; Alan Gullett; Susie Edwards; Kristen Beach; Jonathan White; Kelly Bass; Anthony Sturgill; Chris Sheeting; Kathryn Spears; Lametta Isaacs; and Lisa McKinney

Guests Present:

Jeff Edwards, Executive Director of CAP; Beth Metzger, CAP Coordinator; Jacob Fouts, Assistant Director; and other guests were present.

Welcome & Introductions

SCVR Chairperson, Nicky Wright, gave the welcome and called the meeting to order. A roll call was taken by Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Administrator, Lametta Isaacs. A quorum was established.

Executive Directors Report

Cora McNabb, Executive Director of OVR, provided the report. Cora gave a thorough presentation regarding the need to implement an Order of Selection (OOS). She defined OOS and provided the rationale as it relates to the agency's situation. Cora explained the steps to take in order to implement an OOS, defined OVR's priority categories and associated costs in each, how eligibility will be determined, and a thorough examination as to the reason the agency needs to implement the process of an order of selection. Holly Hendricks, Director of Division of Field Services, provided further information regarding the impact of the order and what the OOS would look like at OVR. A hopeful date to implement an OOS was discussed but ultimately would be dependent on the process of the Rehabilitation Services Administration's (RSA) federal guidance and approval.

David Allgood, Vice-Chair, commented on hearing aids being one of the big driving costs. He asked whether there was any other state that had a grasp on this. How could we look at managing this since it has been an issue for over 15 years and seems to be a problem? Cora answered this was one of the things during this process they sought council from Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistant Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM) and information was shared about a co-op that other states are joining. Holly added that they are working to implement cost sharing which will impact this cost. They will be training staff, but this will provide help, which is policy. Chris White, councilmember, asked about the referral list and where the responsibility resides. Holly briefly explained the referral process, including information for the client assistance program, and contact information for questions. Chris asked about follow-up resources being informed that VR will implement an order of selection. Holly mentioned that the public hearings have been scheduled and will hold a lot of information to fully inform the public and stakeholders. However, at this stage, CAP and Workforce have been informed and meetings are being had with stakeholders. Terrie Terlau, councilmember, wanted to understand how the degree of disability is determined. Holly explained that there is an assessment of functional disability, and training on this will be provided. For example, if someone is receiving SS, they are presumed eligible, but it must be determined. She went over how they select within categories and reiterated that SE will meet the MSD category. Terrie asked that the worksheet regarding eligibility and the PP presentation be shared. Cora concluded the report.

Division Director's Reports

The Division of Blind Services

Helga Gilbert, Division Director, provided the report. Helga provided staffing information for Division of Blind Services. She emphasized the uniqueness in the Orientation and Mobility (O&M) professional skill set, and the intense requirements to meet standards when learning of vacancies. The new vision requirements with license renewals have begun impacting the Center as they have seen more walk-ins for assistance and have been able to have the Center listed as a resource for those who are unaware of services. Bioptic Driving program statistics were given for the last quarter and full calendar year 2024 and the current priority categories of consumers and their status. McDowell Center statistics were given for students, completed trainings, average direct hours of instruction, paid work experiences and job readiness instruction from over 10 employers. She provided all dates of staff community engagement and events for the quarter. Helga discussed the new Lion's Low Vision Clinic's opening at the McDowell Center, which is 2 days per month for 3 months. This is filling a gap since the closing of the UofL clinic. The ribbon cutting is scheduled for February 6, 2025. Helga reported that Deafblind services have approximately 91 individuals with active cases who identify as Deafblind. Independent Living Services data was provided which included case numbers in FY25 and new cases as of October 1st. They are implementing a revision of the programs procedures manual to become an in-depth tool for new IL/OIB (Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind) counselors to utilize. O&M services will provide training to counselors for the Blind on how to read an eye report, working with people who are Deaf, Hard of hearing and Deafblind and Guide Dogs of America training O&M professionals. Outreach efforts through events and staff advocacy and more were discussed.

Terri Terlau, councilmember, inquired about the new Deaf Blind Coordinator. Nicky Wright, Chairperson, asked about the implementation of OOS effects on bioptic driving. Helga responded they are not sure about the impact yet. They have trainers at Perkins providing bioptic driving and several vendors that can start in February. An impact may be seen in more referrals into the driving program, which may be a good outreach opportunity. Terri, councilmember, asked about OOS and what would happen if a person failed the test, and if they did not have several functional limitations would this place them in a closed category. Helga explained that in the program only OVR is permitted to provide an

evaluation to determine a category. Outside of OOS, evaluations will still be done. Cora explained that it is different with Independent living as the criteria is a little different, and they are not a part of the OVR grant. Bioptic are exempt from driver's test. There will be individuals that we may not be able to help, but only if they fit into Priority Category 1. We must make sure we are spending monies on those with the most significant disability. Helga explained the age range for older blind is the 55+ population. With referral and resources, they will work with anyone, even pre-ETS. However, the vast majority are in 55+ category. Terrie, councilmember, inquired about the process of selection for a position that is a senior administrator. Cora briefly explained the process.

Division of Field Services

Holly Hendricks, Director of Field Services, provided the report. Holly provided case data for calendar year January 1, 2024, through December 30, 2024. She reports the division has placed significant emphasis on addressing the increase in referrals and minimizing wait times for consumers seeking to meet with a counselor. To address this challenge, the Owensboro district is piloting a new process aimed at streamlining the referral and intake procedure. In this model, referrals initially meet with an intake counselor who processes the case through eligibility. Once eligibility is confirmed, the consumer is then assigned to a caseload counselor who works with them to develop the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and assists in the implementation of services. This approach has been showing promise, and we plan to expand it statewide in July 2025 to better serve our clients and improve service delivery. Starting October 1st, new fee schedules and structures for Supported Employment Services were successfully initiated. This update represents a key step in aligning service delivery with current needs and ensuring that we continue to provide high-quality services. These changes are expected to have a positive impact on both consumers and service providers. Our ongoing collaboration with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) on the Disability Inclusion Fund (DIF) grant continues to advance efforts related to Pre-Employment Transition services. This partnership ensures that students with disabilities have access to early and effective supports, preparing them for success in the workforce. We are committed to improving these services and will continue to work closely with KDE to address emerging needs and challenges in this area. The division continues to provide vital administrative staff support to the Employment First Council. We have concluded our Listening Tours with the district offices. Due to current budgetary restrictions, we are reassessing our approach for the upcoming year.

The new case management system's projected go-live date is April 2025. Due to the projected go-live date for the new CMS, there may be an impact on the timing of services to consumers. This project is a critical priority, as the new system will enhance our ability to track cases, manage referrals, and improve overall service delivery.

The Kentucky Business Enterprises (KBE) Division

Corey Marcum, Division Director of KBE, provided the report. Corey reported that they have one bid which is for the Hall of Justice one of our larger facilities from Brad Holland. They hosted a successful statewide training of blind vendors, including training on equipment, leadership and a food/product show in October. They attended Blast in Nashville with 11 vendors in attendance and 6 staff in November. New Pre-ETS Coordinator, Cory Canterbury, started on November 16, 2024, and he will work with blind youth and their educators. He attended Blast on his first day. They worked with Kentucky State University (KSU) to be the first Business Enterprise Program (BEP) to operate a university dining plan at a state university. There was an issue with KSU giving notice to the incumbent, causing the contract start date to be delayed. The agency has received training and is ready to start placing out the new electronic lock system. We are the first BEP in the country to be using such technology. They are also the first in the nation to use the electronic lock. Corey showed and described what the electronic lock looked like and discussed the value in having the lock. Cora inquired as to how many machines they have. Cory answered and explained that each key leaves an audit trail as well which is helpful to understand the last time a machine was opened. KBE received a much-needed box truck in October, which will be used to transport equipment across the state. We can now move assets in our time, and not when another truck is available. They completed a Serve Safe training/recertification for blind vendors, which is a national health safety certification for food providers. With eight vendors receiving training. They had another positive meeting with the Army regarding contracts at Ft. Knox for the previous quarter.

Nicky, Chairperson, asked whether they will have a key for each individual machine and the cost involved. Cory explained that he did not have the exact cost, but it may be similar to losing a car key. Corey concluded his report.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC) Division

Alan Gullet, Division Director of CDPVTC, provided the report. Enrollment of 119 students and the calendar year 2024 ended with 356 referrals, which is down from 378 in 2023. Consumers were served from 84 of KY's 120 counties in 2024. other statistics were shared. Two on-line students are starting in January, one in GED and one in Office Technology as we work to expand services. Alan is concerned that the Center may lose consumers who do not know how to reach out or who to contact after learning about the Perkins Center. He would like to add an "Apply Here" icon or button to the webpage. This would connect staff with consumers directly and could lead them through the process with the Field Counselor. The Barista Training program is an option under the Food Service Training, and service has been expanded into the community by offering online ordering and pickup. A QR code is provided for placing and paying for orders. Contractors are on site completing tile work and fixtures. A walk-through is schedule on January 29th to do a "punch list." Hopefully, the unit will be opening in March 2025. Core drilling is now complete, and soil samples have been reviewed on the proposed forklift training site. We were hopeful that bidding on this project would begin in January 2025, but that will be determined at a later date. Perkins Center parking areas and driveway paving is completed, which included the overflow parking area. Alan concluded his report.

Program or Other Reports

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

Megan Collins, SILC, provided the report. She shared information regarding a new project they are working with OVR and Department of Education—SILC Youth Advisory Council. The mission statement was read to provide clarity to the purpose of the organization. You can find more information on the SILC website and Facebook page.

Client Assistance Program (needs revised for January meeting)

Beth Metzger, CAP Coordinator, reported that CAP has a new address—11 Mill Creek Park, Suite 100 Frankfort, KY 40601. For FFY 2024, CAP reported to RSA 41 information and referrals, 17 case representations, 13 training sessions, 516

people receiving training, 7 exhibit tables and other outreach events and 306 CAP related publications disseminated by agency at outreach events. CAP has partnered with OVR on a systemic Pre-ETS pilot project for youth housed at the Adair Youth Development Center in Columbia managed by the Dept. of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). This project can still go forward, even with an order of selection in place. The proposal sent to OVR was presented along with foreseeable benefits of the pilot program. Beth concluded her report.

The Council broke for lunch.

Business Meeting

The Council reconvened, and a roll call was taken by OVR Administrator, Lametta Isaacs. A quorum was established. SCVR Chairperson, Nicky Wright, called the meeting to order for business.

Committee Reports

There were no committee meetings in December.

Executive Committee

Nicky Wright, Chairperson, provided the report. A special meeting was held on January 13th for OVR to consult with the committee with details provided regarding proposed policy changes for the agency to implement an Order of Selection (OOS) and the need to hold public hearings.

Old Business

No old business was discussed.

New Business

Order of Selection (OOS)

Information regarding the implementation of an OOS will be distributed today after the meeting to the public. Cora wanted to ensure the full Council was consulted first, which began with the Executive committee special meeting. The Public

Announcement will be shared directly after the meeting, which includes links to the proposed policy changes and links to join the meetings. OOS information will also be posted to the OVR website and on the SCVR webpage. Given the information received by the agency, Nicky called for a motion to approve the implementation of an OOS. Chris White made a motion, and Kellie Smith seconded. Terrie Terlau was the only opposing member, casting a “nay” vote against the motion, which passed by majority.

Public Hearings

Four (4) public hearings will be held in February to make the public aware of the proposed policy changes and give the opportunity to comment. The following hearing schedules are:

02/13th from 10:00am -11:00am and 6:30pm - 7:30pm at the McDowell Center

02/18th from 6:30pm - 7:30pm at the Perkins Center

02/20th from 1:00pm – 2:00pm virtual only

Motion to Adjourn:

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

Next Meeting Date: April 21, 2025