

F-2 | Meeting Minutes – 2nd Quarterly Meeting

Kentucky Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation

SCVR

April 22, 2024, 2nd Quarterly Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Meeting

Physical Location: Transportation Cabinet, 200 Mero Street, C109, Frankfort, KY 40601
Zoom Platform

Members Present:

David Allgood, Chair; Joe Cowan, Vice-Chair; Cora McNabb, Executive Director; Todd Stephens, Member-at-Large; Necholyia Wright; Chris White; Danielle Burton; Brianna Sweatt; Kellie Smith; Kelly Knoop; Kelly Bass; Terrie Terlau; Jeff Edwards; Johnny Collett; Veronica Willis-Oldham; and Allison Johnson.

Members Absent:

Jade Finley and Benjamin Henderson.

Staff Present:

Alan Gullett, Brian Clevenger, Corey Marcum, Helga Gilbert, Holly Hendricks, Jennifer Withrow, Amy Small, Kristen Beach, Susie Edwards, Jonathan White, Chris Sheeting, Kathryn Spears, Lisa McKinney and Lametta Isaacs.

Guests were present.

Executive Directors Report

Executive Director of Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Cora McNabb, provided the report. The development of the new Case Management System (CMS) continues. There have been delays as staff work with business associates and developers to make sure the functional block requirements are met. However, the target, and tentative, date for implementation is December 31, 2024, given the delays. The State Plan has been submitted, and OVR's portion of the plan has not received requests for corrections as of yet. Cora has attended various meetings and conferences on behalf of the agency since the last Council Meeting and gave opening remarks at the two-day Individual Placement and Supports (IPS) conference in Bowling Green.

The Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA) has released another Demonstration/Innovation Grant-Creating a 21st Century Workforce of Youth and Adults with Disabilities through the Transformation of Education, Career, and Competitive Integrated Employment Model Demonstration Project. OVR is partnering with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), the Human Development Institute (HDI) and Disability Determination as well as some local workforce areas on this grant with a focus on Youth and on technology, which is due July 8. OVR is partnering with HDI, Mathematica and Disability Determination on the most recent release of the Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program grant, which focuses on youth and work incentives and due June 3rd.

OVR is hosting a separate two session statewide staff conference in May. Trainings will range from customer service, grants management, substance abuse to conflict resolution. By having two separate sessions for staff, offices will not experience an interruption in services. Cora and Susie Edwards, Deputy Director of OVR, attended the Council for State Administrators in Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Spring Conference in Bethesda, MD earlier this month. The new Commissioner for RSA, Dante Allen, presented the following priorities that remain solid for both RSA and CSAVR: 1) Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Staff; 2) Outreach for the VR Program; and 3) Financial Stability of the VR program that assures states are able to draw down its money through match and expend their money. An increased focus was on assistive technology, particularly AI, and how it affects the disability community.

Agency Common Performance Measures are as follows:

- PY 2024 Proposed Negotiated Level is 61.0% for Emp 2nd qtr. after exit.
- PY 2024 Proposed Negotiated Level is 49% for Emp 4th qtr. after exit.
- Median Earnings 2nd qtr. after exit is \$7,923.
- Credential Attainment Rate is 29%
- Measurable Skill Gains is 32%

Chris, councilmember, questioned whether the median earnings 2nd qtr. after exit were considered low. Cora explained that for the quarter the number was actually high, and that we are ahead in this quadrant. Todd, councilmember, asked whether there were any comparisons after closure with previous years or unemployment. Staff explained that it has increased; but obtaining this information after closing needs improvement.

The quarterly Corrective Action Plan (CAP) is due to RSA on April 30. Currently, we have resolved 7 of 11 findings, and the following corrective actions are still in progress: Corrective action 2.1.1 - Action: Develop internal control policies and procedures to ensure that the provisions of 34 C.F.R. § 361.47 are met and verified through accurate service record documentation. Corrective action 2.1.2 - Action: Develop internal control policies and procedures to ensure that the requirements at 34 C.F.R. § 361.40 and RSA PD-19-03 for the accurate reporting of data are met. Corrective action 2.1.3 - Action: Evaluate and assess the effectiveness of agency internal control policies and procedures to ensure compliance and accurate reporting of data elements submitted through the RSA-911 report. Corrective action 3.2.2 Inaccurate Financial Reporting - Action: In the first quarterly update after approval of the corrective action plan, develop and implement policies and procedures to: Accurately collect and timely report fiscal data on Federal financial reports, including the SF-425 and RSA-17; Ensure its internal controls address how the excess cash on hand is managed to ensure compliance with the Cash Management Improvement Act (CMIA) requirements and also note in the comments section of the SF-425 (and RSA-17) the reason for the excess Federal cash on hand; and Review and correct program income for all affected quarters for FFYs 2019-2020. The grantee should ensure its internal controls address how program income is reported and managed to ensure that program income is reported earned in the FFY in which the funds are received by the grantee and expended before requesting additional cash payments.

On May 1st, KWIB partner spotlight will be highlighting OVR, and the services provided. OVR's PPS Branch is working on different projects, which will be discussed next by Jennifer Withrow, PPS Branch Manager. Cora concluded her report.

Program Policy & Support (PPS) Branch

PPS Branch Manager, Jennifer Withrow, provided the report. The CMS Development has involved planning meetings with staff to develop ways of making it easier for vendors and staff to check the status of applications, processing payments, etc. while focusing on case reviews, vendors and authorizations. Staff, particularly, Resource Management Analyst, are working to make sure the program is designed correctly to function in order to help our counselors and admins with case documentation. Policies and procedures are a focus for consistency and clarification to ensure continued compliance with federal laws related to audits, but also those that help detail staff roles and expectations. Recently, the completed policies and procedures are related to the monitoring of contracts and vendors, as well as how counselors submit authorizations for grants staff to review and process. The Case Review Process has been revamped as part of our corrective action plan response. We now have a team dedicated to reviewing counselor cases.

We are prepared to send out the updated vendor annual and agreement. If a vendor does not have their vendor agreement in place by July 1, we will not consider them an active vendor until all the paperwork is returned. Therefore, we are encouraging people to get everything turned in on time. We are also looking at mapping out what types of vendors we have and where, so that we can then look at ways to recruit and retain more vendors, which includes reviewing service fee rates. The agency is determining what rates we can increase. A request for proposal to hire an agency to help us review all the rates more quickly has been closed. Currently, the department has one staff who performs rate studies. We are hoping that that process and the reviewing of rates move quickly.

An increase in the number of loans through our partnership with Appalachian Assistive Technology Loan Fund (AATLF) has occurred. Sarah Richardson oversees this project and continues to seek out a Kentucky bank. Jennifer concluded her report.

Division Director's Reports

Division of Blind Services

The Director for Division of Blind Services, Helga Gilbert, provided the report for McDowell Center, Bioptic Driving and Independent Living.

As of last month, the McDowell Center served students from 24 different counties across the state. Currently, there are 20 students in training, and the FF YTD number of active students is approximately 80. The training areas of Assistive Technology, academic remediation, Home Management, and Personal Adjustment Counseling have seen sizeable increases. We have increased instructional and dorm staff and are continuing to do so to meet demand for AT, O&M and dorm coverage. We've provided students about 265 training hours in the month of March in our work readiness/progressive employment program. American Printing House (APH) and Barrytown Recreation are two employers providing work experiences, currently. Federal fiscal YTD closures in competitive employment is 5, and these folks went on to a variety of career paths including office and administrative work, education, construction trade work, and social services. We are near completion of the planning stages for renovations, but we don't have any definitive start date at this time. The renovation will happen in 4 phases and involves all mechanical systems and all parts of the building, up and down. Final renovations to the dorm rooms will mainly deal with the bathrooms and shower accessibility, areas we were not able to

complete previously, as we were only funded to remediate moisture issues at that time. These new updates will enhance training areas for consumers, provide three more home management training classrooms, and provide additional office space for all the other OVR staff inhabiting the building. A new Instagram page for Blind Services and McDowell was and has grown to 192 followers. Two additional videos for transition students were released to make a total of seven now available to view. They can all be found on the Blind Services Resources Videos page of the agency website. Chad has been collaborating with the cabinet communications office regarding posting videos on the social media platforms. Through this collaboration we have begun posting shortened versions of the outreach videos on social media. The next video project will be an introduction to Orientation and Mobility training. The Statewide Deaf Blind Services Coordinator position is still vacant. It will be reposting shortly with a change in job classification to Administrator II, and a special requirement for ASL. O&M total cases served by the two on-staff itinerant specialists YTD is 31 individuals. Vendors are used to fill the need for additional training. And many consumers receive their first white cane training at the McDowell Center. McDowell Center has a new O&M who does a great job and has completed the interview and candidate selection process. It will be welcoming a 2nd O&M to serve students with an anticipated start date is June 1.

Currently, there are 270 bioptic drivers in Kentucky. The Bioptic Driving Program has already provided services to 35 consumer Federal fiscal YTD compared to 36 for 2023. The program now has a Program Administrator who helps with program development beyond the training services that our two main trainers and the Perkins center do out on the road. A position is posted for an Occupational Therapist who holds a CDRS (Certified Driving Rehab Specialist) certification, as we seek to expand staff to meet demand. Our wait list for training, for individuals in priority category 1, is 40. Our total list of referrals is about 85 individuals.

Currently, there are 496 cases documented in CMS for FY24. This includes both IL and OIB. So far, 98 counties have been served this fiscal year. Counselors are active with outreach opportunities with several events scheduled for this spring and summer including participation at the Optimal Aging Conference and the Optometric Conference. There was a recent joint effort between an IL/OIB counselor and an RCB to host a "Lunch and Learn" to educate potential referring agencies about the available VR and IL/OIB services. Seven outside agencies attended the event held via Zoom. Other educational type events are in the planning stages for other parts of the state. Work has begun on the policy manual update. Progress has been made recently on the IL/OIB side of the new CMS. Various staff are participating on the team for this project. A new counselor was just hired in Louisville and will be serving Jefferson and surrounding counties. Other upcoming and planned personnel additions are an assistant that would be housed in Louisville and an additional counselor position housed in the Owensboro area.

Terrie, councilmember, inquired about the Low Vision Clinic. Helga explained they are reviving the program back to life and have provided space for the clinic. Equipment has been donated and renovations are set to start in May. The project is promising, and they have already aligned an optometrist and office manager for the 3-day clinic. Terrie asked the proposed date of completion. Helga responded that the anticipated start date is May, and renovations are minimal and should happen rather quickly. Terrie asked for a summary of all staff openings. Helga provided the following openings: O&M for Owensboro; A counselor for Owensboro and an administrative assistant for Louisville for Independent Living; Deaf Blind Coordinator; Interviewing Supervisor for dorms and student center; and Bioptic driving program staff. Danielle, councilmember, inquired about competency testing for Deaf Blind Coordinator. Helga explained that they do not have an ASL test or competency, however, they do base on credentials and skills. Helga concluded her report.

Division of Field Services

The Director for Division of Field Services, Holly Hendricks, provided the report. The Division is currently focusing on ways to decrease the wait time for new referrals to see a counselor. We are

hiring additional counselors and additional assistants. We are closer to piloting a different process for taking applications. We are also soliciting counselor volunteers across the state to take applications on a few cases that will otherwise wait more than 8 weeks for an appointment. We are assessing ways to potentially re-structure the division to accommodate the increased demand for services. The Division is also developing changes to the Supported Employment fee schedules and structures as well as evaluating long-term Pre-Employment Transition Services delivery plans. We coordinated a Division Leadership Meeting in March that was conducted in conjunction with the annual OVR awards ceremony. We are also working closely with KDE on the implementation of the RSA DIF Grant and continuing to provide administrative support to the Employment First Council and SCVR. Regional Program Manager, Jenny Lampton, is currently participating in the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute (The Director, both Assistant Directors, and West Region Manager have already completed this program). The Division has been heavily involved in the planning of the OVR statewide training that will take place in May. One Field Services District listening tour meeting has taken place and the remaining 22 are scheduled throughout the year. Most of these will take place in field offices. The Division Director has continued to be heavily involved in the design of the new case management system, which involves multiple meetings each week.

Numbers below reflect calendar year 1-1-24 through 3-31-23.

- 33,599 total cases served (45,277 served in 2023. 969 more than the same time period in 2023)
- 15,476 potentially eligible cases served (1,620 less than same period in 2023)
- 28,711 active cases (no accurate comparison available for same period of 2023)
- 221 average cases served by caseload (222 in same period of 2023)
- 4,683 referrals (640 more than same period of 2023)
- 3,214 new applications (261 more than same period of 2023)
- Average days from application to eligible 27 (26 in same period of 2023)
- Average days from eligibility to IPE 35 (36 in same period of 2023)
- 52 Credentials earned (10 more than in same period of 2023)
- 780 Measurable Skills Gains (125 more than in same period of 2023)
- 1,031 unsuccessful closures (67 more than in same period of 2023)
- 1,235 successful closures (189 more than in same period of 2023)
- 300 positions (144 Counselor positions – 15 vacant as of April 1) currently in the Field Services Division

Chris, councilmember, inquired about the Listening Tour information and area of focus. Holly explained the tour was well received and they have no particular agenda to gain valuable feedback from staff for open topics. Common topics discussed were communication with Perkins Center, service delivery, vendor capacity, SE provider, Audiologist, workload w/increased referrals, manageability, challenges of high school and utilizing administrative assistants in various ways to serve counselors. Chris commended the division for seeking staff input in this format. Allison, councilmember, inquired about what is driving these changes in number of cases. Holly explained that it is difficult to pinpoint; however, in one county a lawsuit created increase and we are more fully staffed. We are also seeing COVID related bounce back. Holly concluded her report.

Division of Kentucky Business Enterprises (KBE)

Division Director for KBE, Corey Marcum, provided the report. Bids were transportation: Lisa Kemp (Emergency Appointment) and Dant Clayton: Charles Dorsey. We will have a report from Pepsi on sales data on Thursday, the night of the 25th. He provided an update on Admin III and Food Service opening. Another update was provided from Vendors on quarterly training,

Sagebrush and Blast Innovation. Due to vandalism, they will install cages at all the rest areas, and those have been constructed by KCI. The following data highlights discussed were:

- Gross Sales: \$8,231,918
- COGS: \$2,674,021
- Total Payroll: \$3,881,830
- Unassigned Vending: \$232,604
- Set Aside: \$74,875
- Number Employed: 136
- Vendors: 7
- Staff: 6

There were no questions or comments. Corey concluded his report.

Division of Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center

Director of CDPVTC, Allan Gullet, provided the report. Enrollment at the Perkins Center is 127 and currently 112 are listed to graduate. The new Barista training program started 4/1 and is doing well. This program is an option under our Food Service Training. The following five updates were discussed:

1. ALU – We had a “kick-off” meeting last week (4/17) to begin planning and staging of area to be renovated. Contractors are in the building today beginning the work. Project is expected to be complete by October 2024.
2. PTAC – We have a bid to replace 25 PTAC units that are more than 20 years old and malfunctioning.
3. Gym Flooring – on hold until we can get other projects completed.
4. CARF – Center went through accreditation April 11th and 12th. No findings, 2 or 3 Recommendations and 2-3 Consultations. Many great strengths listed 1. Staff – dedicated to outcomes for students. 2. Technology and Risk Management Plans 3. Student-centered staff.

The recommendations were: 1) to identify leadership guide succession planning. The history and knowledge of the staff have been very critical to the success of the organization. A succession plan could ensure continuity of quality program outcomes; 2) Although the organization does conduct annual unannounced tests of each emergency procedure, it is recommended that the tests be analyzed for performance that addresses areas needing improvement, actions to address the improvement needed, implementation of the actions, and whether the actions taken accomplished the intended results. The test should be evidenced in writing, including the analysis.

5. Center Video – we are hoping to complete this by July 1

Alan concluded his report.

Other Reports

Consumer Rehabilitation Program (CRP)

CRP Branch Manager, Ron O’Hair, provided the report. In regard to provider capacity, there are currently 89 SE providers, 20 Individual Placement and Support and 8 Customized Employment. The sustainability survey for PY 22-23 identified SE Supervisors, and the CEO/Executive

Directors as 74% unsustainable. Ron explained the current payment model and proposed changes which included a new hybrid model focusing on hourly and outcome based rather than primarily outcome based. Rate setting research and methodologies with other national organizations are underway. They are looking at other states and labor statistics, basically checking the data to determine these settings. The plan is to have them by July 1st; and CRPs will be provided training via webinar. Communication regarding implementation will be provided to staff and CRPs within a few weeks. Training for CRP will start the 2nd or 3rd week of June.

Chris, councilmember, inquired about the assumption that CRP are lifelong service providers, and asked how often could they be looked at for billing—fee schedule or hourly? Ron explained the process and included that much of the factors he is asking about is included in this schedule. There are other factors that may need to be looked at and taken into account. Chris asked whether follow up services continue after services. Ron explained, If youth, our agency can pay for those services, which is currently in place. There are limits for those who are considered to be a youth with a disability, which is a person with a disability between the ages of 14-24. David, Chairperson, asked if CRPs are involved in decision making. Ron explained that CRPs are provided the opportunity and asked to complete surveys and they provided us with information. Ron concluded the report.

Client Assistance Program

Justice Program Administrator, Elizabeth Metzger, provided the report. Between January 2, 2024, and April 15, 2024, CAP had 22 information and referrals and represented 6 cases. During this time, they have participated in systemic advocacy activities including exhibit booths at high schools, employment rights trainings and several collaborative meetings. They have also spoke with OVR managers regarding CAP intake and OVR denial notices. Beth concluded the report.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Katie Whaley, UK HDI, provided the report. She presented a PowerPoint presentation to explain the survey. Chris pointed out that there seems to be similarities among the last reports. She answered that anything outside the margin of error is noted. He asked whether barriers were observed. Katie confirmed, and explained this was seen with communications and misunderstandings. She asked to keep in mind that OVR is not involved, and they are receiving the notification from an outside source. Customers are also presented with a lengthy statement that explains they are not required to take the survey with other stated language (which may deter them). Some surveyors say they didn't know their case was closed. Katie concluded her report.

Annual Fiscal Report

Amy Small, Division of Fiscal, provided the report. For State Expenditures through March 31st, OVR is currently around 78% spending. The current cash balance is \$1.6M. OVR is currently at around 61% matched of the Federal Fiscal Year 2024 (FFY24) grant. The 2024 award will be \$67.2M requiring an \$18.2M match. We plan to reallocate a minimum of \$4M as we do not foresee OVR spending the full award. This will also reduce the amount required for Pre ETS which is 15% of the final award after reallocation. There are currently 45 vacancies that Fiscal would like to see filled or abolished by July 1st. If the vacancies were filled, this would help in spending and if not planning to fill the abolishment will help with the budget. There are some vendors that do not send invoices on time and stresses the importance of contacting the vendors to ensure these invoices are not delayed. Receiving these necessary invoices would increase spending patterns. The program lead overseeing the contract with any vendor.

Chris, councilmember, asked that abolishment regarding positions be explained. Amy explained this helps with budget due to the money being held and allocated for the positions. By abolishing this it opens room for the budget and frees up for operating. Cora added that they have not had trouble establishing positions. Some people have been denied positions due to PPS being so large. In taking away vacancies, monies can be pushed into other needed areas. Amy concluded her report.

The Council broke for lunch.

Business Meeting

The council reconvened, and a roll call was taken by Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator, Lametta Isaacs. A quorum was established. SCVR Chairperson called the meeting to order for business. Council members reviewed the Minutes from the January quarterly meeting. Member-At-Large, Todd Stephens, made a motion to accept the minutes. Vice-Chair, Joe Cowan, second. No oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Chairperson David Allgood provided the report. The committee accepted the January minutes. Members discussed the Strategic Planning that will take place June 10th for the 1st session and June 20th for the 2nd session with the Executive Committee. Recommendations for appointments were discussed. All new members were appointed to committees and committee schedule dates were presented in June to occur before the July quarterly meeting. Member certificates and an employer award would be discussed later during the business meeting. The committee adjourned. David concluded the report.

Public Awareness and Legislative (PAL) Committee

Kellie Smith, Committee Chair, provided the report. The committee met on March 28th and accepted the December minutes. The Arthur Campbell Jr. Award, custodial rights bill and Medicaid unwinding was discussed. The committee will discuss having Sarah Richardson discuss outreach efforts at a future committee meeting. Kellie concluded her report.

Blind Services Committee

Danielle Burton, Committee Chair, provided the report. The committee met on March 27th and approved the December minutes. Reports were given by Chad Hunt regarding the McDowell Center, Bioptic Driving program, Independent Living services, staffing, Orientation and Mobility and outreach efforts. The committee had discussions regarding the KADB Retreat and updates regarding Newline. The committee adjourned. Danielle concluded her report.

Consumer Services and Program Evaluation Committee

Briana Sweatt, Committee Chair, provided the report. The committee met on March 27th and approved the October minutes. A presentation of the CSS survey results was given by Katie Whaley, and discussions were had regarding the primary impairment demographics and results. The progress of the CSNA was discussed and HDI will be reporting the final results at the July quarterly meeting. Kellie Scott gave an update on benefits counseling. The committee adjourned. Briana concluded her report.

Policy and Planning Committee

Nicky Wright, Committee Chair, provided the report. The committee met on March 27th and the December minutes were approved. The committee discussed the Work Experience Program, addressing a question from the previous meeting. A brief overview of the committees work in the state plan and there was a discussion regarding a recommendation. The committee discussed whether there was action in place to ensure CRPs are paid timely. The committee added membership pipeline to its agenda and made members aware to the need. Nicky concluded her report.

Nominating and Bylaws Committee

Chris White, Committee Chair, provided the report. The committee met on March 28th and the December minutes were approved. The importance of building a membership pipeline through current members was discussed. Nominations for officer positions were submitted and discussed. An application to fill Committee of Blind Vendors was received and submitted. Concern was expressed about the use of acronyms during meetings interfering with the ability to understand discussions. The committee would like the use of acronyms to be limited; and when used, explained. Chris concluded his report.

Old Business

No old business was discussed.

New Business

David, SCVR Chairperson, recognized members Joe Cowan, Vice-Chairperson and Kelly Knoop for their dedicated service to the Council, and they will receive Certificates of Appreciation by mail. The Employer Award was presented to a representative for Tropical Smoothie in Owensboro for hiring individuals with disabilities in the supported employment program and providing an inclusive and supportive environment. They build on the natural skills of the employees and are receptive to information provided by employment specialist.

Todd, Member-at-Large, facilitated the election of officers. There were no nominations from the floor. For the position of Chairperson, the council nominated Nicky Wright.

Danielle Burton moved the nomination. Terri Terlau, second. All in favor, nomination carried unanimously. For position of Vice Chair, the Council has nominated David Allgood. Danielle Burton moved the nomination. Joe Cowan, second.

Motion to Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was requested by Chairperson, David Allgood. Todd made a motion to adjourn. Briana Sweatt seconded. The meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting Date: July 22nd, 2024