

# Minutes | 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly SCVR Meeting

October 28, 2024

Hybrid Meeting

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

Zoom Option Provided

## Members Present:

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Necholyia Wright, Chairperson; Cora McNabb, Executive Director; Chris White; Danielle Burton; Briana Sweatt; Allison Johnson; Terrie Terlau; and Johnny Collett.

## Members Absent:

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David Allgood, Chairperson; Todd Stephens, Member-At-Large; Kellie Smith; and Jade Finley.

## Staff Present

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

## Guests Present:

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Jeff Edwards, CAP; Beth Metzger, CAP; Veronica Willis-Oldham; Mykal Leslie, UKHDI; and other guests were present.

## Welcome & Introductions

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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

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Cora McNabb, Executive Director of OVR, provided the report. OVR is in the carry over year for expending the Fiscal Federal Year (FFY) Award of 2024 beginning October 1, 2024. The status of the awards was provided in detail for Older Blind, Basic Support, Supported Employment, KATS and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Along with Cora, the Deputy Director, Susie Edwards, attended the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) conference, and Cora presented along with two other states. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) reported that currently there are only eight states that are in Order of Selection and no VR funds nationally were returned to the treasury for 2024. RSA thanked the state VR agencies for working hard to make sure all federal dollars were spent. OVR is forecasting there will be no funds returned to the treasury or for reallocation in 2025. Across the nation performance measures are up in most states. OVR met all its common performance measures except credential attainment (which is not being counted on a federal level at this time). OVR implemented the new service fee memorandum for Supported Employment October 1. OVR is contracting with a national organization, the Public Consulting Group (PCG), on a rate study of all its rates. OVR's experience with PCG has been extremely positive and beneficial. OVR has provided PCG a list of vendors to involve in the stakeholder groups. The SCVR Executive Committee will be invited to participate as a stakeholder. The entire study will take around one year to complete. The final reporting on the FFY 2021 monitoring report for the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) is due to RSA on October 30, 2024, and the first quarterly report for Pre-ETS. Effective July 1, 2024, OVR split the Program Policy and Support Branch into two separate branches—Program Policy and Quality Assurance and Grants Management and System Support. The Pre-ETS Summit for Educators was held in September to provide information regarding the needs and availability of services for students. The Inclusive Workforce Summit was held the end of September sponsored by OVR, RETAIN and the State Chamber of Commerce. Over 350 participants attended, including Human Resources staff, area employers and other organizations. The disability community was well represented at the event. The new employee assigned to assist staff with personnel actions, Olivia Horn, was introduced. Chris White, councilmember, inquired whether a plan to spend the money was in place. Cora confirmed there is a plan for spending the money and offered to present it, if needed. Veronica Willis-Oldham asked about the spending of carry-over, and If spent, would we be looking at Order of Selection. Cora

responded that would be the mechanism used but may not be needed. Cora concluded her report.

## **Division Director's Reports**

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### **The Division of Blind Services**

Helga Gilbert, Division Director, provided the report. Helga reported McDowell Center student data for the 3rd quarter, including instructional hours, outings and career exploration in the community, student work experiences, and staff learning and engagement. Staff participated in over eight outreach events in addition to staff trainings. The Statewide Deaf Blind Services Coordinator position was filled and began on October 16th. Data for Independent Living Services was reported, and a focus was on growth, such as program outreach, technical assistance, program participant number increase to pre-COVID levels, evaluations of sun (light) shields participant increase and more. Bioptic Training program data was presented, and there are approximately 265 licensed bioptic drivers in the state. Information will be shared regarding the Low Vision Clinic opening November 14th and 15th. Helga concluded her report.

### **Division of Field Services**

Holly Hendricks, Director of Field Services, provided the report. The Division is continuing to focus on ways to manage the increase in referrals and minimize the wait time for new referrals to get scheduled to meet a counselor. Additional counselors and assistants were hired, and the department is working through the logistics a couple of pilot programs for taking applications. The Division has implemented changes to the Supported Employment fee structures, which have been well-received by providers across the state. The Transition Summit was held on September 25th and 26th, with great success. There is a continued partnership working with Kentucky Department of Education on the implementation of the RSA DIF Grant. The division continues to provide administrative staff support to the Employment First Council and SCVR. Field Services District Listening Tour meetings are ongoing, and positive feedback from staff has been received. Holly remains heavily involved in the design of the new case management system (CMS), which will soon begin user testing activities. Different staff contribute during the implementation for ensuring its effectiveness among other important aspects of the new CMS. Case and staff data was reported to reflect the calendar year January 1 through September 30th, 2024,

with case data comparisons from the same period the previous year. Holly concluded her report.

## **The Kentucky Business Enterprises (KBE) Division**

Corey Marcum, Division Director of KBE, provided the report. The following bids were discussed for: rest areas for the combined Woodford County and Simpsonville; Department of Corrections from Derrick Kromenacker; Synder/Mazzoli from Derrick Kromenacker; and City Hall Annex from Steven Miller. The division had vital trainings this quarter, including those with National Association of Blind Merchants (NABM) and blindness training at the McDowell Center. The most important hosted by RSA regarding “what are supplies” and “how to spend VR funds.” Staff visited the Perkin’s Center to tour their new Barista program in July. “A Cup of Commonwealth” will become an advisor for a KBE coffee program that we will pilot at the Transportation Cabinet. If this is positive, we will look at adding this in demand product to other locations. Blind vendors attended vendor shows with both Hackey and Gordon Food Services this quarter. The division had two successful program management review meetings at both Ft. Knox and Ft and the program received star ratings. Campbell. Currently, there is an open position for a Pre-ETS coordinator, and a selection has been made. The division discussed the status of the following four new goals for 2024: (1) Identify and license five new vendors; (2) Develop relationship with KSB, and other school systems; (3) Increase trainings for vendors and have at least 15 attend national trainings; and (4) Revise the rules and regulations and have changes to RSA by the end of the year. Terrie Terlau, councilmember, asked to elaborate on the box truck. Corey explained that they use to share box trucks. But now they will have their own, and it will be nice to be independent to keep commitment to vendors and schedule. Corey concluded his report.

## **Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC) Division**

Alan Gullet, Division Director of CDPVTC, provided the report. Enrollment numbers were discussed and the status of the new Barista training program, which is an option in the Food Service Training. The Center is exploring options to expand service into the community by offering online ordering and pickup. The Materials Management training area name was changed to Logistics on September 2nd. Training is now provided for a Certified Production Tech, Certified Logistics Tech and Certified Logistics Associate. Contractors have replaced all of the drywall and painting is near completion. Fixtures such as

lighting, sinks, showers, etc. are being put into place. There is concern about getting doors installed by the completion date due to availability of doors. The completion date has been pushed back to November 13th. The plan is to have Perkins Center maintenance staff work on the entire ALU from October 16th thru the completion phase and until the end of 2024 in hopes of opening the unit in January 2025. Core drilling is complete on the proposed forklift training site. We are hopeful bidding on this project will begin in January 2025. Perkins Center parking areas and driveway paving is currently being completed. We are also paving our overflow parking area. Work will be completed in early November 2024. Our Evaluation unit recently sent two staff to a Vocational Evaluation training in Oklahoma City. They are working on some ideas and were amazed at the use of AI in the evaluation process currently happening. Several Perkins Center staff attended the Vocational Rehabilitation Training Centers' meeting in Smyrna, Tennessee in late September, networking and learning with other training center staff from Centers in Michigan, Tennessee, Georgia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. The Center has live video on ELC and KCC YouTube channels, and social media. Staff are also working to add more. Alan concluded his report.

## **Program Reports**

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### **Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment**

Mykal Leslie, Principal Investigator at UKHDI, solicited feedback from the council of the most recent CSNA report. They are in the beginning phases of the new 2024-2026 CSNA report and would like to be aware of or identify any gaps that should be addressed as they prepare. The council provided feedback. Chris White, councilmember, found the information great and a nice cohesive structure. He thought it would be helpful to have comparing data of the 18–64-year-olds with the overall Kentucky population. Mykal will review this to find the best way to present the data since it is based on working age adults. Nicky inquired about performing a comparison with the 2024 CSNA the next time. Mykal affirmed that he would and stated that this was not done due to the switch in methodology. Mykal was pleased for the feedback and thanked the council.

### **Client Assistance Program**

Beth Metzger, CAP Coordinator, provided the report for the time period between July 22nd and October 7th of the current year. There were 19 Information and Referrals, and 8 cases were represented. Beth has spoken with Holly Hendricks,

Director of Field Services, to provide trauma-informed training for OVR staff and to remind counselors about professionalism in case notes and emails to providers. Nicky Wright, Chairperson, asked if there are professional training to help the counselors? Is there a way to show the counselors a better way to get the information they need. Some info may be needed. Beth confirmed that counselors have a level of ethics that should be followed that is included in their educational program. Johnny Collett, councilmembers, inquired about the number of counselors at OVR, and he was glad to hear this was an isolated event. More discussion regarding this topic occurred. Kristen Beach, Assistant Director of Field Services, explained that a mentor program to work with new counselors is in place. Beth concluded her report.

**The Council broke for lunch.**

## **Business Meeting**

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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. Council members reviewed the July Minutes. Johnny Collett made a motion to approve the minutes, and Briana Sweatt seconded. The minutes were approved. There were no abstentions or opposition.

## **Committee Reports**

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### **Executive Committee**

Nicky Wright, Chairperson, provided the report. Recommendations for appointment have not been received as of yet. The following six vacancies have received application and resumes: SILC, Business, Industry and Labor, Committee of Blind Vendors, OVR counselor, CAP and representative of individuals with disability. We have not found an interested citizen to be a representative of an individual with a disability who may have difficulty representing themselves. Committee structures during this period of seven vacancies were discussed. Appointments to committees may need to be implemented in order to balance responsibilities until we receive appointments. We are looking to utilize the nominating and bylaws committee on an as needed basis or ad hoc. We are working on the determining if the committee is still in ad

hoc status as it was previously. There were no recommendations made to OVR. The meeting adjourned.

## **Public Awareness and Legislative (PAL) Committee**

The committee did not have a quorum and were unable to meet.

## **Consumer Services and Program Evaluation (CSPE) Committee**

The committee did not have a quorum and were unable to meet.

## **Blind Services Committee**

Danielle Burton, Committee Chair, provided the report. The committee met on September 26, 2024, via Zoom. The committee listened to reports provided by several staff from Division of Blind Services. Patrice Ising is a teaching artist at McDowell and described different arts and crafts projects that she utilizes for therapy, including common games, etc. that are not based on visual accessories. Division Director of Blind Services, Helga Gilbert, discussed the new clinic and low vision exams which will be open not only to McDowell students but the public as well. Gay Pannell discussed a theme of growth for the Center and staff. She provided updates on staffing, caseloads and iPhones for Independent Living Specialist to better hold demonstrations. Heidi Kesterman provided quarterly data for the Center and other hiring efforts for an O&M instructor. There was no old or new business. Additional information was shared by members related to conferences and conventions. There were no recommendations made to OVR. The meeting adjourned.

## **Policy and Planning Committee**

Allison Johnson, Committee Chair, provided the report. The committee met on September 24, 2024. A presentation was provided by Jennifer Withrow, Program Policy and Quality Assurance Branch Manager. She gave an overview of the branch's responsibilities, which includes policy and procedure development for the agency. She explained the agency's current workings of a new policy and procedures manual and provided an example of a new policy relevant to the council. The committee discussed the most recent CSNA and viewed it as valuable for OVR. The committee had questions regarding the collaborative effort between KDE and OVR particularly regarding the IPE and IEP goal alignment. This will also be a topic at the next meeting and Allison will provide more



information. The committee made a recommendation that Jonathan White, Assistant Director of Field Services, review information about Pre-ETS at the next quarterly meeting. The meeting adjourned.

## **Nominating and Bylaws Committee**

Chris White, Chairperson, provided the report. The committee discussed current vacancies and discussed the update for Business industry and labor as having received an application and resume. Suggestions for a representative of individuals with a disability who have difficulty representing themselves or are unable to do so due to their disability. Nicky Wright indicated that she would be willing to serve on the committee and will discuss this at the Executive committee meeting. There was discussion regarding the status of the committee being ad hoc or changing it to ad hoc due to vacancies on the council and utilizing the committee more effectively. There were no recommendations to OVR. The meeting adjourned.

## **Old Business**

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No old business was discussed.

## **New Business**

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No new business was discussed.

## **Additional Information**

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There will be no committee meetings in December due to the current vacancies and the upcoming holidays that will affect meeting the quorum.

## **Motion to Adjourn:**

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Nicky Wright, Chairperson, entertained a motion to adjourn. Johnny Collett made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Briana Sweatt seconded. There were no abstentions or opposition. The meeting was adjourned.

**Next Meeting Date:** January 27, 2025