



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2020 - 2021

The Mission of the Council is to inform and advise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Legislature and the Governor on the diverse issues affecting employment of people with disabilities.



Like us on Facebook



This report covers the activities of the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021. Alternate formats and additional copies are available upon request. Contact:

**Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council
Support Project
55 Utley Drive
Camp Hill, PA 17011**

(Voice): (888) 250-5175

(TTY): (717) 737-0158

(Email): parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org

Current and past reports are also available on the PaRC website:

parac.org

Pennsylvania State Law requires the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) publish an annual program report on a different timeline than this product. Therefore, the PaRC reports the most recently available OVR data. For a more detailed OVR report, you may request OVR's Program Report from:

**Pennsylvania Office of Vocational
Rehabilitation
1521 N. 6th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102**

Cover Photo Description: Pennsylvania State Capitol Complex photographed at night with the fountain illuminated by purple lighting in the foreground

PaRC



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Message from the PaRC Past and Current Chair	1
PaRC Members/Category of Representation.....	2-9
PaRC Member Story	10
Council Responsibilities Under the Rehabilitation Act	11
Partnership with the Office of Vocation Rehabilitation (OVR)	12
2020 Pennsylvania Vocational Rehabilitation Highlights	13-14
PaRC Accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2020-2021	15-19
PaRC Zoom Meeting Photo	20
PaRC State Position Paper (2020-2021)	21-22
PaRC Federal Position Paper (2020-2021)	23-24
PaRC Committee Goals (2021-2022)	25-26
State Plan Attachment (2020-2024)	27-29
OVR Success Stories	30-32
PaRC Member Expectations	33
PaRC Appointment Request Form	34
Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year 2022	Inside Back Cover

A Message from Our Past and Current Chair Passle Helminski



Dear Fellow Pennsylvanians, Governor Wolf, Secretary Jennifer Berrier (Labor and Industry), Mark Allan Schultz (RSA Deputy Commissioner), Shannon Austin (OVR Executive Director), OVR State Board Members, OVR Administrative Staff, and the Legislature:

It is my honor to have been elected to serve as Chair of the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) for another year. The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council will continue to fulfill its mandate under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Most importantly, the Council has continued to collaborate with OVR, which has reopened the Order of Selection (OOS) for Pennsylvanians who are Most Significantly Disabled (MSD). We are hopeful that this will further ensure that all Pennsylvanians with disabilities, who are eligible for OVR services, can move towards the goal of competitive integrated employment.

Similarly, the Rehabilitation Council will continue to educate the General Assembly on legislation that removes barriers to employment and the advancement of Pennsylvanians with disabilities, especially within the Commonwealth's Civil Service hiring framework. The Council maintains involvement in the reporting of the Client Assistance Program, Department of Education/BSE, Disability Rights PA, Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Office of Administration, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Statewide Independent Living Council, and Workforce Development Boards. Strengthening these relationships and working together will positively affect successful employment and independent living outcomes for Pennsylvanians with disabilities.

As we continue to meet virtually but remain steadfast during this time of uncertainty, I am grateful for the continued collaboration with all PaRC stakeholders throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. These valued partnerships help to ensure that Pennsylvanians with disabilities accessing Vocational Rehabilitation services, are served in a timely, efficient, and empathetic manner. As Chair, I look forward to resuming in-person meetings as soon as it is safe to do so and sharing the same space with the many allies and advocates of the PaRC mission.

Respectfully,

Passle Helminski BA, MA, MFA



*Photo Descriptions:
Top: Passle with Representative Bizarro
Middle: Passle and her service dog
Bottom: Passle with Governor Ridge*

PaRC Members

Including Category of Representation
July 2020 - June 2021

Shannon Austin

Ex-Officio Member

Shannon Austin is the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).

"Individuals with disabilities can never be boxed in because their imaginations are too BIG. OVR staff are here to support and explore their possibilities so that they can achieve their employment aspirations. The PaRC is instrumental in our work in fulfilling our mandate!"



Jeanette Alexander

Category of Representation:
State Department of Education

Committees: Legislative/Public Awareness and
Transition/Education

"I joined PaRC as a representative of the Bureau of Special Education to utilize my knowledge and expertise to support students with disabilities during their transition to after school age services."



Deb Arcoleo

Category of Representation:
Intellectual Disabilities

Committees: Legislative/Public Awareness
and OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer
Satisfaction

Cindy Duch, Member at Large

Category of Representation:
Parent Training and Information Center

Committees: Executive and Chair of
Transition/Education

"As a Director at the Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center and the PA Parent Training and Information Center: I felt like I could effectively represent the families of children birth to 26 on the Council. My son uses OVR services and the PTI continually talks to parents and youth who are eligible for OVR services. Being on the Council has been a great experience. Especially satisfying at this time, is seeing firsthand the collaboration between OVR and the PA Department of Education/Bureau of Special Education come together to create better outcomes for transition age students."



Paul Fogle

Category of Representation:
Current/Former OVR Customer

Committee: OVR Policy/State
Plan/Customer Satisfaction



William Frase

Category of Representation:
Community Rehabilitation Provider (until July 2021)

Committees: CareerLink/WIOA, OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer Satisfaction and Social Media/Outreach

"I joined the PaRC to support OVR's efforts to serve job seekers with disabilities and employers because of my experiences as a parent of a child with a disability and an employment services professional."

Passle Helminski, Chair

Category of Representation:
Cognitive Disabilities

Committees: Chair of Executive and participates in all other PaRC committees

"I want to make our mission statement a living, breathing part of everyday life, which is the reason I wanted to become a member of the PaRC."



Michele Leahy

Category of Representation:
Mental Health

Committees: Executive, Chair of Social Media/Outreach and Legislative/Public Awareness

"I believe that employment is imperative for people with disabilities to be considered equal in our society. As a person with a disability it's important to me for employers and our community in general to realize our ability to contribute through competitive employment. PaRC's mission truly fits my personal philosophy of saying yes to access."





Juliet Marsala, Vice Chair

Category of Representation:
Rehabilitation Counselor

Committees: Executive, Legislative/Public Awareness, and CareerLink/WIOA

"Employment is a pathway to posterity and a significant Social Determinants of Health. I joined PaRC to increase equitable access to employment for people living with disabilities and help employers embrace the vast amount of value and talent that people with disabilities offer."

Anthony McCloskey

Category of Representation:
Veteran

Committee: Legislative/Public Awareness

"I joined PaRC because I wanted to ensure there was someone present to represent the unique challenges faced by the community of disabled Veterans. As a disabled veteran, I think I can provide a valuable perspective to the committee."



Michelle Paonessa

Category of Representation:
Sensory Disabilities

Committee: OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer Satisfaction



Steve Pennington, Esq.

Category of Representation:
Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Committees: OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer Satisfaction and CareerLink/WIOA

"As the advocate for individuals seeking services from OVR, my focus has been to ensure that there is synergy between agency policy and the work being done by counselors in the field to help customers achieve a meaningful career."

Kara Donatucci Pham

Category of Representation:
Business/Industry/Labor

Committee: CareerLink/WIOA

"I joined PaRC because I thought my experience in Human Resources and my experience as a parent of a child with an intellectual disability would complement the mission of the organization. My experience is employment and programs of inclusion would lend insight to other organizations like OVR that support inclusion in the workplace."



Laura Princiotta

Category of Representation:
General Advocacy

Committee: Social Media/Outreach

"I joined as a representative of the employment provider community who has worked with OVR for almost 30 years. I've seen the positive impact made when people who are funded through OVR obtain employment, and I want to support the continuation of those positive outcomes."



John Seely

Category of Representation:
Business/Labor/Industry

Committees: Legislative/Public Awareness, OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer Satisfaction, and Transition/Education

Susan Soderberg

Category of Representation:
Business/Labor/Industry

Committees: CareerLink/WIOA and Transition/Education

"I joined the council as a representative of an organization that both hires many people with disabilities and provides services. The council gives me the opportunity to use my expertise to help ensure that people have the supports they need to move forward on a path toward self-sufficiency."



Susan Tomasic

Category of Representation:
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

Committee: OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer Satisfaction

"I am the Chair of the PA SILC and serve as the SILC representative on the Council."



William Del Toro Vargas

Category of Representation:
Physical Disabilities

Committees: Executive, Chair of OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer Satisfaction, Legislative/Public Awareness, and Social Media/Outreach

Robert Wallington

Category of Representation:
Business/Labor/Industry

Committees: Executive, Chair of CareerLink/WIOA

"President Fred Wright of AFSCME Local 1739 informed me of the importance of PaRC and its impact serving people with all disabilities to have a better quality of life. Over 28 years of my introduction professionally to people with disabilities, I believe that everyone, no matter of their ability, should have the right to be treated equally without discrimination or bias. I hope I can serve as well as everyone who have served previously to represent all people with disabilities in their desire for better quality of life."



Koert Wehberg, Esq.

Category of Representation:
Sensory Disabilities (until July 2021)

Committees: Executive, Chair of Legislative/Public Awareness and OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer Satisfaction

"I joined the PARC to advance gainful, integrated employment for Pennsylvania residents with disabilities so that they may live fruitful and fulfilling lives."



Carly Wolf

Category of Representation:
Young Adult (Until July 2021)

Current Vacancies on the Council:

State Workforce Development Board (SWDB)
Young Adult

Vacancies on the Council, as of July 2022:

Business/Industry/Labor
Cognitive Disabilities
Parent Training & Information Center
Intellectual Disabilities
Rehabilitation Counselor

Newly Elected PaRC Officers Fiscal Year 2021 - 2022

Passle Helminski - Chair
Juliet Marsala - Vice Chair
William Del Toro Vargas - Member at Large



Photo Description: Close up of the U.S. Flag

Photo Description: Headshot of Anthony McCloskey wearing a suit and red tie

PaRC Member Story

Anthony McCloskey

Category of Representation: Veteran

Anthony McCloskey is a Philadelphia native, a graduate of Central High School of Philadelphia (256), and the University of Maryland, where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting.

After high school, Anthony enlisted in the United States Navy where he served for over 15 years as a weapons specialist, and small arms instructor, until he was medically retired as a Chief Petty Officer.

He is a combat wounded veteran of the wars in Iraq & Afghanistan and proudly serves as an advocate for Disabled Veterans on the PA Rehabilitation Council.

He has worked for Comcast since 2015, where he is currently a Director of Product Management for Comcast's Cybersecurity Team and serves on the leadership committee for the Veteran's Network Employee Resource Group.

Additionally, Anthony serves as the Treasurer for the Philadelphia chapter of NAMIC, the National Association for Multi-ethnic diversity in Communications. Anthony currently lives just outside of Philadelphia with his wife, Nora, and his three sons.

Council Responsibilities

Under the Rehabilitation Act as Amended by WIOA 2014

Review, analyze, and advise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities, particularly those related to eligibility (including order of selection); the extent, and scope and effectiveness of services provided; and the functions performed by State agencies that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.

Partner with OVR to develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities in accordance with the VR State Plan. The Council and OVR evaluate the effectiveness of the VR program and submits reports of progress to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Commissioner.

Advise OVR on activities authorized to be carried out under the VR State Plan. Assist in the preparation of the State Plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations.

Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of Vocational Rehabilitation services and consumer satisfaction regarding functions performed, VR services provided, and employment outcomes achieved.

Prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Federal U.S. Department of Education Commissioner of RSA on the status of Vocational Rehabilitation programs operated within the State. Coordinate activities with other disability related councils within the State. Establish working relationships between the Council, the Statewide Independent Living Council, and Centers for Independent Living. Perform other functions consistent with VR services deemed appropriate by the Council.



Photo Description: PaRC Members, OVR staff, and guests attending a Full Council Meeting in-person prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Partnership with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

COVID-19 continued to impact the labor market and the delivery and direct management of services. OVR Executive Team, regional management, local District Administrators, and direct staff continued to provide services that will lead to competitive integrative employment. Beginning July 2021, OVR is reopening the Order of Selection (OOS) for Pennsylvanians who are Most Significantly Disabled. Of the 16,808 cases approved to move off the waiting list, as of May 2021, 10,309 Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs) have been developed, meaning they are now in the employment planning phase. More than 5,000 individuals receiving services from OVR were placed into employment during the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year.

Members understand how employment greatly impacts an individual's quality of life. PaRC members fulfil their mandate to advise OVR and report on the status of employment for persons with disabilities by reviewing OVR's customer satisfaction surveys from individuals using their services and the various policies pertaining to services OVR provides. PaRC members also participate on various workgroups formed by OVR to discuss a multitude of policies and topics and make recommendations. As needed, the PaRC makes requests to OVR for additional information to aid them in the understanding of an issue.

OVR staff provide quarterly reports on the progress of the current state plan goals at the PaRC quarterly public meetings. During the process of developing a new state plan, the council and OVR develop a timeline to meet the deadlines established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Through a series of meetings and worktime at PaRC public meetings the council makes their recommendations through their attachment called (description a) which becomes part of OVR's state plan. OVR responds back to the recommendations made by the Council. At this point, the state plan is put out to the public for comment through the PA Bulletin and a series of public meetings.





Image Description: Icon of geometric human silhouettes of different figures, standing and seated in wheelchairs, holding hands in a row


2020 VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION HIGHLIGHTS


 **54,549** individuals engaged with OVR ¹


 **12,060** new applicants


 **22,327** students received Pre-Employment Transition Services²

 **6,953** individuals placed into employment

 **\$14.11** average hourly wage of individuals employed

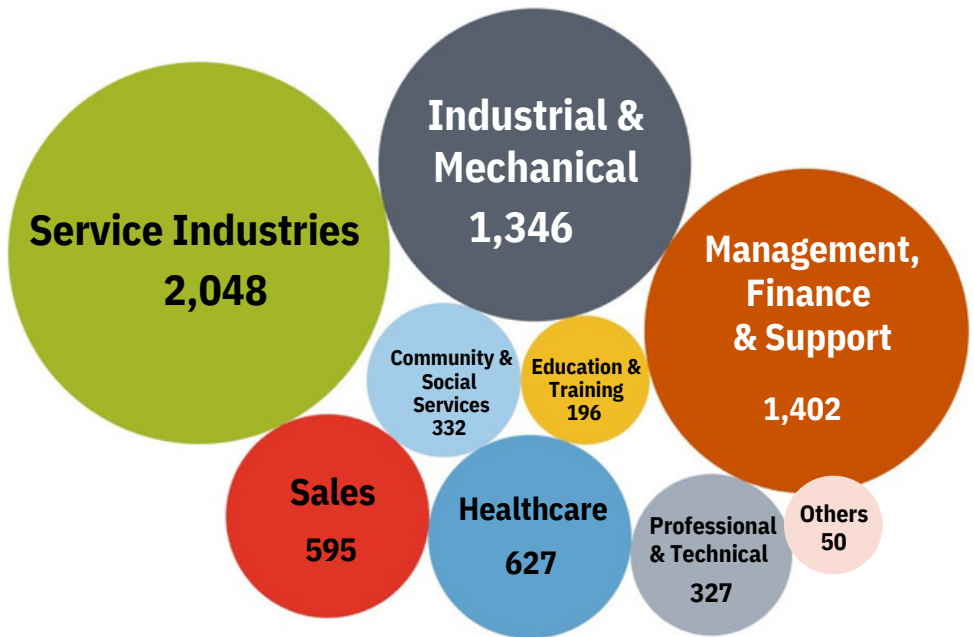
 **\$49.14 M** estimated annual government savings ³

 **\$6,918** average per person cost of services for an employment placement

 **11.7 months** projected time to recover investment



What occupations are OVR customers working in?



Early Reach Initiative



590 Early Reach Outreach Events⁴



5,264 Student & Youth Attendees



840 Parent or Guardian Attendees



5,150 Professional Attendees

¹ Number of OVR customers who had an open VR case as of June 30, 2020, or had their case closed during the Program Year 2019

² Includes potentially eligible students and students with OVR cases, and both purchased and staff-provided services

³ Based on estimated income taxes, total average annual SSA reimbursement and SSA benefits that may decrease or end due to employed individuals achieving SGA levels established by the SSA

⁴ Early Reach programming promotes successful outcomes for youth with disabilities by increasing awareness of OVR services and the benefits of early career planning.

Note: All figures represent program activities during the 2019-20 Program Year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020).



Students who received Pre-Employment Transition Services

Work-Based Learning Services:

3,364



Job Exploration Counseling:

8,157



Counseling on Postsecondary Education:

6,209



IEP Meeting Attendance by OVR Staff:

4,666



Workplace Readiness Training:

7,588



Instruction in Self-Advocacy:

5,398

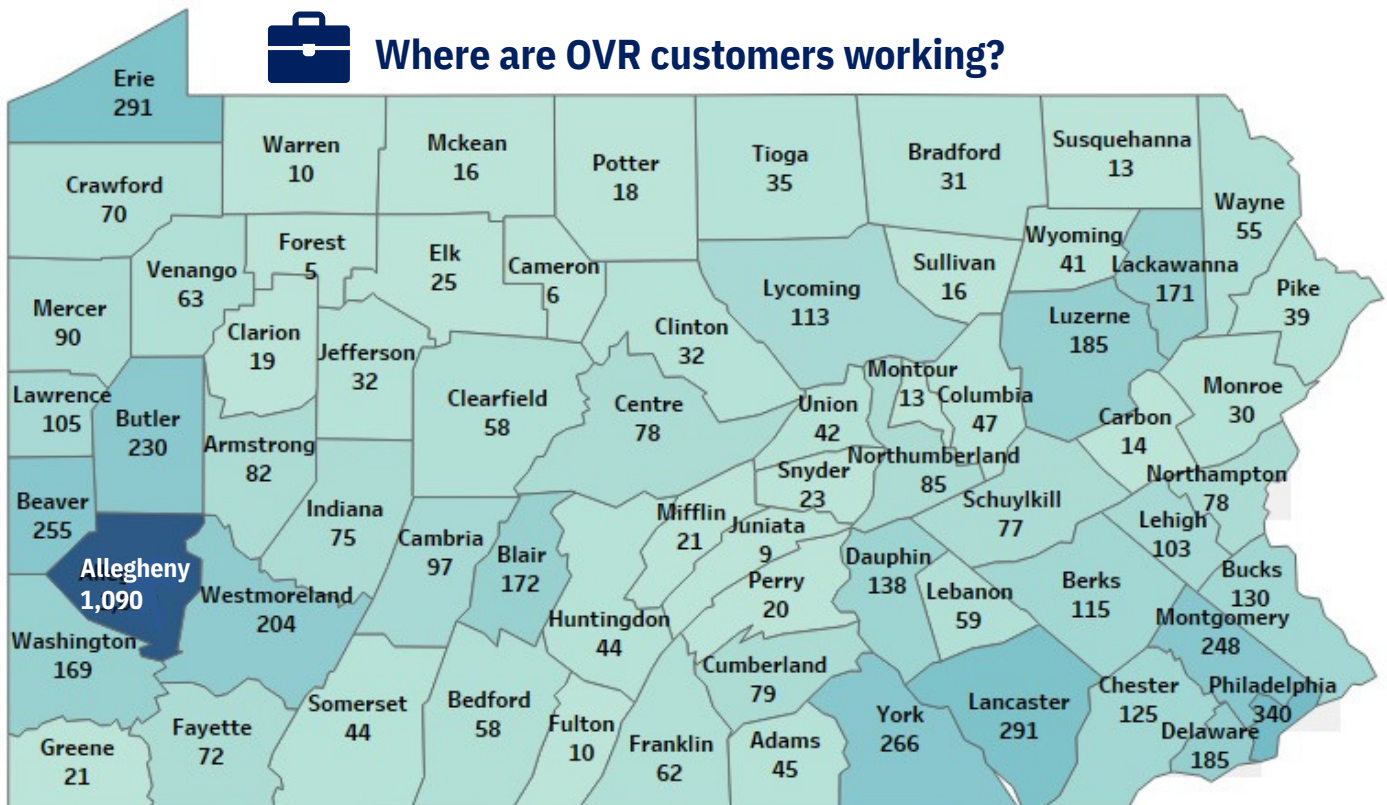


Independent Living Skills Training:

1,243



Where are OVR customers working?



The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations require that the employment outcome satisfy the following criteria to be permitted under the Vocational Rehabilitation program: (1) competitive earnings, (2) integrated location and (3) opportunities for advancement.

PaRC Accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2020-2021

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to pose its challenges, especially on those individuals with disabilities seeking employment. Through Full Council meetings and Committee work, members of the PaRC continued to collaborate and facilitate group discussion and the sharing of information to help Pennsylvanians with disabilities gain meaningful, sustainable, and competitive employment. Members continued to monitor the closing of the Order of Selection with regular updates from the OVR Executive Director on the number of individuals that OVR was able to provide services to again.

In addition to the Executive committee, the Council had the following five standing committees throughout this year: CareerLink/WIOA, Legislative & Public Awareness, OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer Satisfaction, Social Media/Outreach, and Transition & Education. Listed below by committee is the major work and activities of each committee for the year:

Executive Committee - Main activities and work:

- The PaRC completed and submitted their 2019-2020 Annual Report to their fellow Pennsylvanians, the Governor, Secretary of Labor & Industry, RSA Commissioner, OVR staff and State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, PA Legislators, Stakeholders, and State Workforce Development Board in December 2020. The 2020-2021 Annual Report will be completed and disbursed by December 31, 2021 as required by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
- The committee and staff planned and held four quarterly Full Council meetings and one Special Meeting during the 2021 Calendar Year. These meetings, normally attended in person at the Harrisburg Hilton Hotel, were held virtually due to restrictions and risk mitigation concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Informative presentations and reports on topics related to Council responsibilities included the following:
 - Ms. Shannon Austin, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Executive Director, provided a quarterly OVR Director's Report.
 - Ms. Lee Ann Stewart, OVR Division Chief of Policy, Staff Development & Training provided a quarterly Progress Report on the State Plan Goals.
 - Ms. Tara Okon, OVR Special Programs Rehabilitation Specialist and Ms. Kimberly Gerlach, OVR BJJS and Special Programs Rehabilitation Specialist provided updates on Vehicle Modification Policy.
 - Ms. Kimberly Robinson, OVR Division Chief, Transition and Section 511 provided updates on OVR School to Work Transition Policy and Section 511 update/ sheltered workshops.
 - Ms. Beth Ann Fanning and Mr. Doug Rand, OVR Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists provided updates on Supported Employment Policy.
 - Mr. Ralph Roach, OVR Business Services & Outreach Division Chief provided update on New Job Retention Services/Essential procedures policy and CareerLinks.

- Mr. Rod Alcidonis, Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services Director provided update on BBVS and Accessibility of OVR's Satisfaction Surveys for Blind and Visually Impaired.
- Governor Tom Ridge, Chairman of the National Organization on Disability (NOD) presented on the new initiatives related to employment services for people with disabilities.
- Mr. Michael Gamel-McCormick, Disability Policy Director, Special committee on Aging for Senator Robert Casey presented on the New Administration's plans, policies, and legislation pertaining to employment of people with disabilities.
- Staff from the Office of Administration, Mr. Chris O'Neal, Director, HR Delivery Centers and Mr. Jason Swarthout, Director Talent Management Office provided update on Civil Service/state employment for persons with disabilities.
- The PaRC Chair/designee attended and provided quarterly PaRC activities/work to the OVR State Board, State Workforce Development Board (SWDB), Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), and other PaRC stakeholders.
- The Executive committee is responsible for recruitment and maintaining the required Categories of Representation as mandated by the Rehabilitation Act. Governor Wolf appointed seven new members during this past year: Mr. Paul Fogle was appointed to represent the Current/Former Customer category, Mr. Anthony McCloskey was appointed to represent the Veteran category, Ms. Michelle Paonessa was appointed to represent the Sensory Disabilities category, Ms. Kara Donatucci Pham was appointed to represent the Business/Labor/Industry category, Ms. Laura Princiotta was appointed to represent the General Advocacy category, Ms. Susan Tomasic was appointed to represent the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) category, and Ms. Carly Wolf was appointed to represent the Young Adult category.
- One Ad Hoc committee completed updates to the PaRC Bylaws and the Decision-Making Matrix to improve transparency, committee workflow, and the PaRC member approval process.
- The Executive committee continued their working relationships with other disability related Councils and agencies in the state/country some of which are mandated including: OVR State Board, OVR Citizen Advisory Committees, Statewide Independent Living Council, Client Assistance Program, Department of Education/BSE, Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, PEAL Center (IDEA), State and Local Workforce Development Boards, Disability Budget Coalition, Disability Rights PA, PA Transportation Alliance, Governor's Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Employment First Commission and the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils.
- Officers of the Council participated in the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) 2021 Disability Summit online and various NCSRC trainings.
- The Council was a sponsor of the Disability Pride Virtual PA, a 10-day celebration of embracing people with disabilities as part of their outreach/advocacy.

Legislative and Public Awareness Committee - Main activities and work:

- Members invited the following individuals to present at a Full Council meeting to maintain a network of federal, state, and local level contacts to assure exchange of relevant and current information:
 - Mr. Michael Gamel-McCormick, Disability Policy Director, Special Committee on Aging for Senator Bob Casey presented on Senator Casey's disability related legislation and funding for VR services.
- Members identified and followed proposed State and Federal legislation, that affect the VR system and issues impacting the employment of persons with disabilities including legislation pertaining to COVID-19.

- Members invited Ms. Amanda Wolf, Policy Development and Research Specialist, to a PaRC Legislative and Public Awareness Committee Conference Call. During this meeting they discussed the Civil Service Commission (CSC) policies, accessibility, and other issues and legislation surrounding the employment of people with disabilities.
- Members disseminated approved position papers concerning full funding for OVR, hiring practices within the State, accessible transportation, and a Disability Caucus.
- Members continued to develop collaborative relationships with other organizations to maximize combine legislative impact for people with disabilities.
- Members informed State Elected and Appointed Officials and their staff on the following:
 - The need to facilitate an Expedited Hiring Process so that people with disabilities interested in Civil Service and non-Civil Service jobs have an alternative path to employment with the State, similar to Schedule A on the Federal level; the committee supports HB1548 (An Act amending Title 71, in civil service reform, providing for excepted service hiring and promotion authority; and imposing duties on the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation).
 - The significant consequences for Commonwealth residents with disabilities who want to work, as well as the Commonwealth itself as a result of OVR closing the Order of Selection due to the financial impact that Pre-Employment Transition Services had on OVR's budget.
- Members continued to inform State and Federal Governments on the impact their decisions about COVID-19 can have on OVR and most importantly the state's economy and workforce.
 - More specifically, the members stressed the importance of full funding of OVR, legislation, and disability related efforts related to COVID-19 so that individuals can continue to work or return to work following a pandemic.

OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer Satisfaction Committee – Main activities and work:

- Members continued to provide input on the following OVR policies: Vehicle Modification, Supported Employment, and OVR School to Work Transition Policy.
- Members will participate in OVR's Financial Needs Test (FNT) Policy workgroup beginning July 2022.
- Members began reviewing the 2020-2024 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Combined State Plan for the 2-year modification period covering July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2024.
- Members continued to review OVR's Customer Satisfaction surveys on a quarterly basis and offered recommendations to OVR on any areas of concern.
- OVR has contracted with Temple University Institute on Disabilities to conduct the current Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). The purpose of the CSNA is to inform OVR and the PaRC regarding issues and needs of individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth. The current CSNA research project covers the time period of October 2019 to September 30, 2022.

Transition and Educational Services Committee – Main activities and work:

- Due to COVID-19, participation at the Transition Conference and the PA Department of Education's (PDE) PADES annual conferences this year for outreach and awareness were limited in both conferences. There were no in-person conferences this year.
- A responsibility of the Transition and Education committee is to monitor OVR and the Department of Education's efforts to implement the best practices regarding transition throughout the State.

- The committee continues to improve communication with the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) regarding transition. Jeannette Alexander, representing PDE/BSE on the Council provides quarterly updates. We continue to look forward to a greater focus from PDE on Transition activities and activities that are being provided to students in PA as a result of the PDE/OVR MOU and the MOU Toolkit.
- The committee has been monitoring the increase of competitive integrated employment options through the Employment First (EF) Law. PaRC has representation on the Employment First Oversight Committee (EFOC) with Ms. Cindy Duch (representing IDEA) and Mr. Steve Pennington, Esq. (representing the Client Assistance Program) on the committee. The EFOC is working with other agencies to collect data that is relevant to the implementation of EF. The third report of the EFOC has been sent to the Governor in October 2021.
- There has been consistent review of customer satisfaction surveys of transition with OVR. There remains a very low percentage of surveys that are returned to OVR. OVR contends that it is difficult to have individuals return surveys. PaRC has brought up to OVR the comments that are made on the surveys as areas in need of improvement within OVR and its District Offices.
- On a quarterly basis the committee, also reviews information collected for Act 26 (Work Experience for High School Students with Disabilities Act of 2016) provided by OVR.
- The committee receives periodic updates from HGAC staff on how they evaluate policies and training programs at Hiram G. Andrews to assure that students are receiving top technical training and certifications in an integrated setting, so that graduates are job ready.
- Members advised OVR on issues concerning funding and transportation for students that are utilizing transition and other services at Edinboro University.
- Committee members met with Ms. Eva Weiss, a research associate from Temple University regarding the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) the preparation for collection of data, survey language, necessary adjustments due to Covid-19 restrictions, and other issues concerning surveys for students receiving transition services.
- Committee members reviewed the MOU toolkit that was developed with PaTTAN and PDE with OVR staff and provided feedback and information regarding concerns and challenges that the pandemic is having on the employment opportunities of students in transition services. PaRC did have a member on the MOU Toolkit committee to contribute information that was relevant from the youth and family perspective.
- Provided feedback, research, and discussion with OVR regarding the continued integration and recruitment of HGAC and the compassionate responses to students reported for truancy during Covid-19 pandemic.

CareerLink / WIOA Committee - Main activities and work:

- The Director of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) provided quarterly updates on what is happening across the state regarding projects, CareerLinks, employment, etc. This committee also is working to ensure persons with disabilities can access the CareerLink sites physically and programmatically.
- The SWDB is a mandated partner on the Council. Members continue to recruit a SWDB member and in the interim, have created a “permanent” position (not specific person) to the Council. Individuals are not appointed; however, names are submitted to the Governor’s office for record purposes.

- The committee also invites staff from the Equal Opportunity Commission to provide a report on their work on their quarterly committee calls regarding CareerLink accessibility reviews which have been delayed this year due to the pandemic.
- Members continue to work on increasing their participation/involvement in State and Local Workforce Development boards on behalf of persons with disabilities.
- Members continue to review and provide feedback regarding accessibility training for CareerLink staff, increased accessibility at CareerLink locations and their website technology.
- Members continue to review and offer feedback on reports from the Employment First oversight, EEO, and SWDB regarding accessibility at all 62 CareerLink sites.

Social Media / Outreach Committee - Main activities and work:

- The committee continues to promote and increase awareness of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and the Council's mission through the PaRC Facebook page and other social media platforms as deemed appropriate.
- The committee obtained a new Domain Name; PaRehabilitationCouncil.org and created branded email addresses for the PaRC, staff, and the chair of Social Media Committee.
- The PaRC Facebook page has increased in activity.
- The committee implemented an update of the PaRC website with emphasis on streamlining all social media platforms to increase the PaRC's outreach to the public.
- The committee developed requirements based on Federal Standards and regulations to ensure the PaRC website is fully accessible as well as created project guidelines to establish a refresh of the PaRC digital brand and update the use of its web technology. The new website will also include, but is not limited to, the following key features:
 - Layout that is visually pleasing, easy to navigate, and accessible.
 - Provides repository for weekly newsletter that is publicly accessible.
 - Platform that is responsive to maximize mobile functionality.
 - Provides ease of content management.
 - Integrates with social media platforms.
 - Incorporates search engine optimization (SEO).
 - Captures traffic data through Google Analytics.
 - Increase and promote more information on state and federal initiatives surrounding employment for persons with disabilities.
 - Provide the public with information on PaRC meetings and events.
- Members drafted a job description to recruit web designers for the PaRC website project and after a thorough review process of proposals, members identified and hired a web designer with the objective of creating a new website to be released next fiscal year.



Photo Description: The city skyline and river in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Meeting Virtually but Remaining Steadfast in a Time of Uncertainty



Image Description: PaRC Members attending a Full Council Meeting virtually on Zoom, left side from top to bottom; Passle Helminski, Rob Wallington, Jeanette Alexander, Cindy Duch, and Sue Soderberg. Right side; Juliet Marsala, John Seely, Michele Leahy, Susan Tomasic, and Michelle Paonessa. Members missing from the photo: Deb Arcoleo, Paul Fogle, William Frase, Anthony McCloskey, Steve Pennington, Esq., Kara Donatucci Pham, Laura Princiotta, William Del Toro Vargas, Koert Wehberg, Esq., and Carly Wolf.



PaRC 2020-2021 State Position Paper

The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) is mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1998, as amended by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) 2014, to review, analyze, and advise the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities, particularly those related to eligibility (including order of selection); the extent, scope and effectiveness of services provided; and the functions performed by State agencies that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services. The PaRC's Legislative Committee respectfully submits, with approval by Executive Committee and/or Full Council, the following Position Paper for your review and consideration:

Sustain Full Funding for OVR Services to match all available Federal Funds

Action Requested:

- Funding for the "Transfer to the Vocational Rehabilitation Fund" needs to be at least \$50 million for non-profit commonwealth organizations especially since the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that 15% of funds must be spent on Pre-Employment Transition Services. This will allow OVR's level of funding to remain constant with previous years and ensure that OVR is able to draw down all available Federal funds.
- Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged our economy, especially people with disabilities, who, under normal economic conditions, have lower rates of employment than those without disabilities. State governments must work to prioritize and address the needs of people with disabilities and the impact their decisions about COVID-19 can have on OVR and most importantly the state's economy and workforce. Full funding of OVR, legislation and disability related efforts related to COVID-19 is imperative to ensure that individuals with disabilities can continue to work or return to work following a pandemic.

Expedited Employment

Action Requested:

- The PaRC recommends, through legislation or regulatory action, for the State to establish an Expedited Hiring System so that people with disabilities in Civil Service, Non-Civil Service, and State Contractor hiring positions have an alternative path to employment similar to Schedule A on the Federal level.

Collaboration of Services for Persons with Neurological Injuries in Pennsylvania

Action Requested:

- Collaboration is needed between all state agencies working with persons with neurological injuries to ensure that there is no break in services from in home services to employment services. Additional dedicated funding is needed for this population.

Adequate Funding of the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)

Action Requested:

The PaRC agrees with the Disability Budget Coalition's recommendation as follows: To the extent feasible, increase the state appropriation for the ODHH to \$650,000; authorize ODHH to increase its staff for all its offices or its contracting, or both, at its discretion, within the increased budgetary allocation; move ODHH's budget from the Labor and Industry General Government Operations line item to a separate line item within the overall Labor and Industry budget.

PaRC supports the following regarding Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

Action Requested:

- Line item appropriation of \$2.7 million which will enable the CILs to: maintain quality staff and a stable location, effectively deliver services that facilitate transition from nursing homes and other institutions to the community, provide assistance to those at risk of entering institutions, and facilitate transition of youth to postsecondary life (the fifth IL Core service) and provide reasonable benefits; increase the number of individuals served; and lower the cost per individual.

Transportation

Action Requested:

- Transportation Network Providers, like Uber and Lyft as well as all taxi service providers must be required to provide accessible vehicles on demand to people with disabilities. In addition, they should likewise be required to show that all drivers have been educated/trained on the requirements of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act; especially with respect to the provision of service to individuals who use service or guide dogs. The State must work with Amtrak and the Federal Government to ensure that all train stations in the Commonwealth are physically and programmatically accessible, which is not the case today. The Rural Shared Ride System should be regionalized to enable transportation providers to cross County lines to assist people with disabilities who use these rides to obtain, maintain, and/or regain employment.

Disability Caucus Action Requested:

The PaRC encourages both the House and Senate to establish a bi-partisan and bi-cameral caucus to review and support legislation that would enable people with disabilities to have equal opportunity in all aspects of their lives and to be productive and contributing members of their communities.

The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council's Legislative and Public Awareness Committee support the following State Bills:

SB390: An Act amending the act of June 13, 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), known as the Human Services Code, in public assistance, further providing for nonemergency medical transportation services.

SB852: An Act relating to the delivery of services and programs to persons with disabilities; conferring powers and duties on the Office of the Governor; establishing the Office for People with Disabilities and the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities; and providing for the powers and duties of the office and the advisory committee and for funding of the office and the advisory committee.

HB539: An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in licensing of drivers, further providing for Medical Advisory Board.

HB986: An Act amending the act of June 13, 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), known as the Human Services Code, in public assistance, further providing for nonemergency medical transportation services.

HB113: An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, providing for students with disabilities at institutions of higher education.

HR74: A Concurrent Resolution declaring that the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is committed to equal rights for individuals with cognitive disabilities to technology and information access and calling for implementation of these rights with deliberate speed.

HB1363: An Act establishing a bill of rights for individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism; and conferring powers and duties on the Department of Human Services.



PaRC 2020-2021 Federal Position Paper

The Council is mandated by statute with informing and advising the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Legislature, and the Governor in PA on the diverse issues affecting employment of people with disabilities. This document summarizes the Council's position on key federal laws and policy issues.

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides for programs that help people with disabilities achieve employment and independence, such as vocational rehabilitation (VR). In order to access federal funding for these programs, states must appropriate some funding. This investment is good for taxpayers, for example, VR customers in PA who found competitive employment in state fiscal year 2018-2019 generated \$50,500,000 in savings, both from taxes paid and fewer benefits used.

WIOA can be strengthened if you support certain policy positions:

- Keep VR a mandatory program with single source funding.
- Increase funding substantially for providing VR services to veterans with disabilities returning to civilian life as well as continuing to screen injured veterans for traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Reverse changes to the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) that reduced the standards/requirements to be a qualified rehabilitation counselor working with business or customers.
- SUPPORT S.117: Disability Integration Act of 2019, S.260 & H.R.873: The Transformation to Competitive Employment Act, S.150 & H.R.582: Raise the Wage Act
- Require all commercial health insurance providers to cover brain injury rehabilitation.
- Promote career development and job advancement by expanding the definition of post-employment services to include training and other services necessary for career advancement.
- Clarify when to advise customers of their right to request mediation or due process through the Client assistance Program to review a decision made by VR.
- Require legal training for all impartial due process hearing officers and staff.
- Increase funds for the Older Blind Program to better service the growing aging, blind population.

Transportation

Accessible, affordable, and safe public transportation is critical for ensuring that people with disabilities can participate in the workforce. Unfortunately, many communities (especially rural ones) lack disability-friendly and accessible public transportation options, even when states are required by law to provide them. Consequently, we encourage you to support changes to the public transportation system that promote and enforce equal access for people with disabilities.

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (Able) Act

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (Able) Act provides for the creation of savings accounts for those who experience a significant disability before age 26. Money in these accounts can pay for disability related expenses and are not subject to taxes or considered for means-tested benefits. We encourage you to support an amendment to the Able Act that would allow all people with significant disabilities (regardless of onset age) to have such accounts.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged our economy, especially people with disabilities, who, under normal economic conditions, have lower rates of employment than those without disabilities. Federal and state governments must work to prioritize and address the needs of people with disabilities and the impact their decisions about COVID-19 can have on vocational rehabilitation and most importantly the economy and workforce. Funding, legislation, and disability related efforts related to COVID-19 is imperative to ensure that individuals with disabilities can continue to work or return to work following a pandemic.



Photo Description: The U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

PaRC 2021-2022 Committee Goals

CareerLink/WIOA Committee Goals

- Work with OVR to help the Workforce Development Board (WDB) to ensure each CareerLink is physically and programmatically accessible at all its locations.
- Identify, review, and monitor the CareerLink reportage system for both the Department of Labor and Industry and Equal Opportunity.
- Increase the PaRC's participation in State and local WDB meetings.
- The committee will review quarterly reports from the SWDB and inform the Council on issues related to WIOA.

Executive Committee Goals

- Continue to improve relationships and collaboration with the PA State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Citizen Advisory Committees and other stakeholder organizations in the Commonwealth to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served.
- Continue to provide leadership and guidance to new and all members and committees in accordance with the mission and bylaws of the Council and the Rehabilitation Act as amended by WIOA 2014.
- Continue to increase public awareness in Pennsylvania about OVR services and the Council's mission and responsibilities through increased attendance and participation by council members at stakeholder meetings, youth organization and disability and civic organizations.
- Continue oversight of the following: PaRC budget, quarterly meeting agendas, annual report, strategic planning, annual retreat, member recruitment, election of officers and annually review bylaws with any revisions with the members.

Legislative & Public Awareness Committee Goals

- Increase the PaRC's advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities in regard to obtaining and maintaining employment.
- Increase advocacy on behalf of the returning disabled veterans who are seeking employment and employment supports through Pennsylvania state services.
- Develop collaborative relationships with other organizations, which have similar missions and mutual legislative goals, to maximize our combined legislative impact for people with disabilities.

OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer Satisfaction Committee Goals

- Maintain a positive working relationship with the Department of Labor and Industry, OVR and Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations.
- Support the development of the Plan.
- Monitoring of OVR policies and procedures.
- Partner with OVR to review, evaluate and make recommendations based on results on the combined Customer Satisfaction Survey.

- Partner with OVR to develop, implement and review the comprehensive statewide needs assessment survey.
- Partner with OVR to review due process issues to assure good quality outcomes for consumer customers. OVR will share same report that goes to OVR Board on a quarterly basis.

Social Media/Outreach Committee Goals

- Maintain and update the PaRC Social Media Handbook that includes guidelines and best practices for effectively using Social Media.
- Promote and increase awareness of OVR and the Council's mission through the PaRC webpage and Facebook.
- Promote PaRC and OVR at various events across the State
- Publish Success Stories from consumer and business customers to inform the public about OVR services.
- Revamp the PaRC Website to update the appearance.

Transition & Education Committee Goals

- Participation at the Transition Conference and the PA Department of Education's (PDE) PADES annual conference for outreach and awareness to the public about what the PaRC does and the purpose.
- Improve communication with Bureau of Special Education (BSE) regarding transition.
- Monitor the increase of competitive integrated employment options through the Employment First Law.
- Committee will monitor OVR and the Department of Education's efforts to implement the best practices regarding transition throughout the State.
- To have OVR evaluate their policies and training programs at Hiram G. Andrews to assure that students are receiving top technical training and certifications in an integrated setting, so that graduates are job ready.



Photo Description: Bird's eye view of the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the City Hall Building



State Plan Attachment (2020 – 2024)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

(a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council.

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

- (1) input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;
- (2) the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and
- (3) the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) used the following sources to develop its recommendations to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR):

1. the PaRC annual report (Federal Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019);
2. OVR Customer Satisfaction Surveys;
3. review of items in 2018 State Plan Attachment (description a);
4. comments received at 2018 and 2019 Public State Plan Meetings;
5. participation in the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) monitoring (2019);
6. Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) FFY 2016 - 2018 OVR/Institute on Disabilities at Temple University;
7. local Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC) meetings and/or minutes; and
8. quarterly reports received from OVR at PaRC Council meetings.

Commendation: The Council supports OVR in their efforts to open the order of selection as soon as possible for the benefit of Pennsylvanians with disabilities seeking employment services through OVR.

1. The Closure of the Order of Selection (OOS) for All Categories

Issue: The closure of the Order of Selection (OOS) for all categories represents a significant challenge to people with disabilities having access to employment services when they are needed. OVR must develop appropriate internal controls and other adjustments in order to re-open the OOS as soon as possible and update the PaRC regarding progress on at least a quarterly basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS/MEASURABLE GOALS:

A. OVR provides quarterly reports (at a minimum) to the PaRC on how many people were added to and removed from the waiting list in each category each quarter.

- B. OVR provides quarterly reports (at a minimum) to the PaRC and the State VR Board on new application response times.
- C. OVR establishes a clear deadline for reopening the OOS with intermediate steps and goals to re-open the OOS on time. OVR provides quarterly reports (at a minimum) to the PaRC on progress and factors affecting progress toward achieving the goal of re-opening the OOS on a permanent basis by the deadline.
- D. Identify resources and opportunities outside of OVR for organizations to provide employment services to OVR customers on the waitlist.

2. Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC)

Issue: OVR's current fiscal problems require a review of HGAC's return on investment.

RECOMMENDATIONS/MEASURABLE GOALS:

A. OVR should conduct a study at a minimum of every 3 years and report on the return on investment (compared to community-based VR services) for students attending HGAC. HGAC's yearly budget averages approximately \$23 million, which includes staff, operations, brick and mortar and other costs. Overall, the cost per customer is reported as significantly higher at HGAC than that of non-HGAC customers. The report must include:

- (1) an analysis on return on investment.
- (2) an impact statement on customer choice.
- (3) a review of the extent to which its programs are provided in an integrated setting.
- (4) an assessment of the availability of HGAC programs in the community; and
- (5) a determination of what other partners like the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) should be paying/contributing.

3. Conduct a review of OVR's statutory and regulatory obligations to obtain public comment and/or consult with stakeholders, providers, VR staff, and individuals with disabilities in the development, implementation, and amendment of OVR's policies and procedures.

Issue: Pursuant to 34 CFR 361.20, OVR is required to solicit public participation when it proposes to develop, amend, or otherwise modify substantive policies/procedures affecting OVR services

RECOMMENDATIONS/MEASURABLE GOALS:

A. OVR should provide quarterly information on the number and names of new/amended policies, such as a college policy or vehicle modification policy, being developed or in consideration for future development/modification, including how they differ from any existing policy and the potential number of customers impacted by the policy.

B. Inclusion of the Council in the development/amendment of the policy/procedure, the proposed timeline of implementation, including schedule of public comments and plans to educate stakeholders on the new/amended policy/procedure.

4. Strengthen Collaboration and Partnerships with Stakeholders

Issue: OVR has made significant changes to services without including key stakeholders

throughout the change development process. OVR needs to make sure that those changes will not unnecessarily reduce the achievement of outcomes in terms of quantity and quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS/MEASURABLE GOALS:

A. Before OVR makes any substantive changes, the PaRC will be informed of what needs to change and why, and what affected stakeholder representatives are being included in the change development process.

B. OVR provides (at a minimum) quarterly reports to the PaRC on all substantive changes either anticipated or currently in development with information on progress, including key stakeholder representative involvement and contributions to the process.

C. OVR provides annual reports (at a minimum) on feedback survey information from key partners.

D. OVR provides quarterly progress reports with measures of quality and quantity of outcomes for partnerships, programs, and services including pre-employment transition services, local workforce development boards, supported and customized employment, business services and PA CareerLinks®.

5. Review of OVR Policies and Procedures

Issue: Clarification is required regarding public participation in the adoption or amendment of OVR policy, and OVR’s obligation to consult with the PaRC, among others, on matters of general policy arising in the administration of the VR services portion of the State Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS/MEASURABLE GOALS:

A. OVR reports to the PaRC on a quarterly basis substantive policies and procedures under review which are subject to public meetings, non-substantive administrative changes, and policies on matters of general administration of the VR program which require consultation. Additionally, include quarterly reports on workgroups.



Photo Description: The State Capitol Building in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania



Photo Description: Adam performing an aerial skateboarding trick

Photo Description: Adam using an automated stamp machine at work

OVR Success Stories

For Adam, hard work has been the “Key” to giant success. After working for seven years at Giant Food Stores, Adam took on the challenge of a second job at Key Business Solutions, and OVR support helped make it possible.

Adam has a reputation at Giant as a steadfast and excellent employee, and his success there led him to seek the job at Key.

“I wanted to challenge myself and expand my skillset,” Adam said. “I like to stay busy and productive.”

In the summer of 2019, while still working at Giant, Adam resumed job finding and job development services, thanks to support from OVR. Having honed his skills in sales and customer service, Adam sought a job that would present an opportunity to develop a different set of skills. Key Business Solutions proved to be the perfect fit. He interviewed in August for a position as an Administrative Clerk, and by the end of the month was hard at work in his new role at the business consulting firm.

His favorite task is using the automated stamp machine to stamp and seal outgoing mail, but he’s a jack-of-all-trades around the office, filing papers, shredding documents, and preparing outgoing orders by selecting office supply items from the supply closet, packaging them, and scheduling a pickup with FedEx. Not only has Adam impressed his managers with his independence and ability to quickly learn new tasks, but his mother credits the job at Key for being the nudge he needed to finally get his driver’s license.

“Being able to drive has given him significant independence and led to many other things for him,” she said. “It’s even led to another work experience! Since he can drive, he was able to get paid to pet sit.”

Two jobs mean long days, but for Adam, kicking back at the end of a workday doesn’t mean slowing down: when not at his desk at Key or on the job at Giant, you can find him cruising around on his skateboard, classic rock coming from his earbuds. His story exemplifies the way that OVR opens the door to greater possibilities.

"You're trying to bring somebody along, help give somebody greater independence, and coaching is one of the most effective ways to do it."

When Hayden needed a new job, support from OVR helped him make a crucial career transition. Hayden had worked in the mental health field for nearly 40 years. In 2017, however, the agency he worked for closed its doors, and Hayden found himself looking for a job.

Hayden is visually impaired, and BBVS connected him with Community Integrated Services (CIS). CIS is a supported employment provider that helps people with disabilities find and thrive in meaningful employment.

"I met with someone from OVR, and he referred me to Jon at CIS," said Hayden. "As he was looking over my work history he said, 'You know, you'd be perfect for working right here.'"

CIS hired Hayden as a job coach, where he helps to support CIS participants at their places of employment across Philadelphia. Hayden was initially hired for a part-time role, but he excelled so much in his position that he's now working full time, with all the attendant benefits. He loves the job and will soon be celebrating two years at CIS.

"It's really interesting work," said Hayden. "You're trying to bring somebody along, help give somebody greater independence, and coaching is one of the most effective ways to do it."

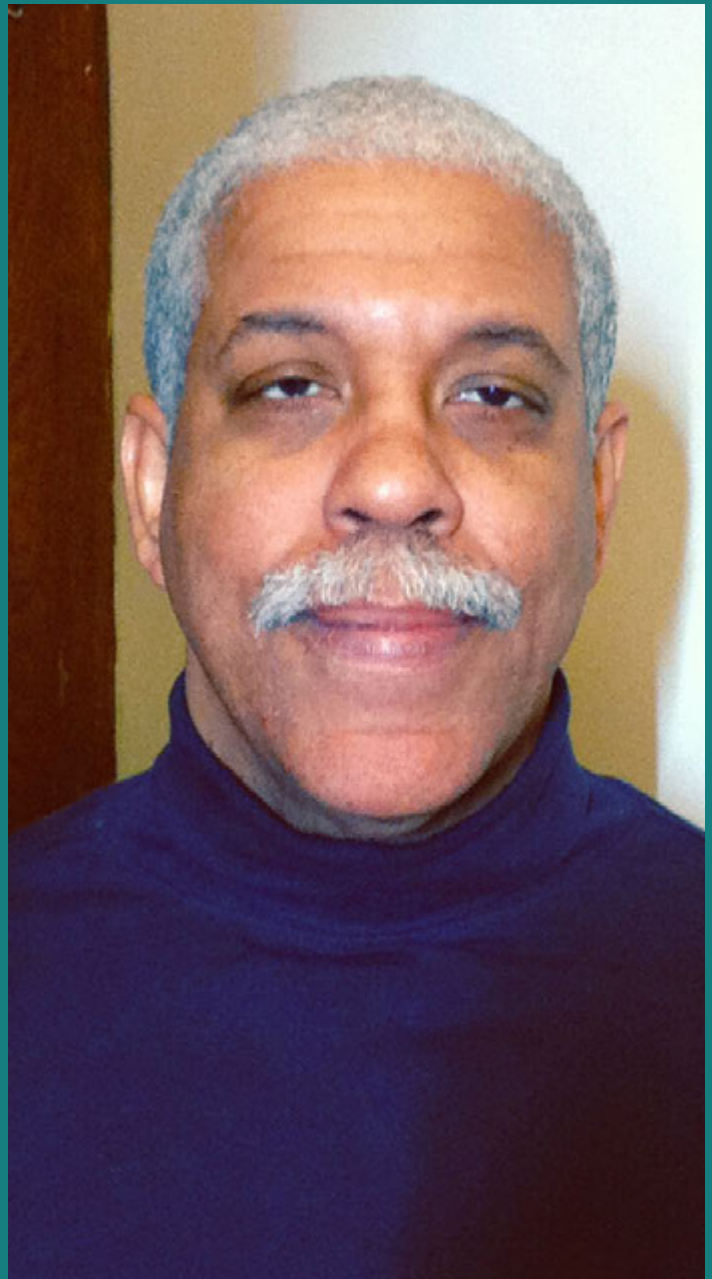


Photo Description: Hadyn wearing a dark blue sweater and smiling

OVR Services along with other supports including families, helps individuals attain competitive integrated employment, which improves their quality of life and strengthens our communities.

Rachel is a kind, friendly person who always strives to do her best! She began participating in Employment Services with UCP in September 2020 when she completed Community Based Work Assessments. Based on the results of her assessment, Rachel initially felt she would like to work at a bakery.

She began working in the Newport Weis Market Bakery in May 2021. By the end of July 2021, the on-the-job experience revealed that the bakery wasn't the best fit for Rachel after all. So, she along with her UCP job coach and Weis Store management explored other options.

Rachel was offered a position stocking shelves and has been enjoying that—and doing a great job at it—ever since. Rachel currently works anywhere from three to five days a week.

Many Special Thanks!

PaRC members would like to express their appreciation to Grady Chambers, Communication Coordinator for Community Integrated Services (CIS) and the entire team at CIS for providing the PaRC with OVR Success Stories this year.

We would also like to thank Blake Bilger Program Manager, Employment Services UCP and Lynda Bowen, Senior Communication Specialist UCP for providing Rachel's Success Story.

We would especially like to thank Adam, Hayden, Rachel and her family for graciously sharing their stories.

Spotlighting the important work and successful attainment of employment that is made possible through OVR services is the foremost mechanism for the PaRC to fulfill its mission. In short, this is what it's all about.



Photo Description: Rachel opening a box of groceries at her job



If you are interested in becoming a PaRC member, please review the standards below that members have developed.

PaRC Member Expectations

Active Participation:

In order to fulfill its federal requirements, the Rehabilitation Council must have active participation by its members. Active participation is defined as:

- Attend all four (4) of the scheduled full Council meetings in any fiscal year. Severe weather and personal emergencies are understandable exceptions.
- Participate on at least one standing committee or ad-hoc committee during the fiscal year.
- Respond to action items during or between Council meetings. Examples may include, but are not limited to:
 - Review of support documents for meeting action items.
 - Review and return of surveys, draft documents, etc. when requested.
- Attend Office of Vocational Rehabilitation public meetings, State Board meetings, Consumer Advisory Committee meetings, etc. when feasible.

Represent the Rehabilitation Council in Meeting and Work Groups:

Although members represent diverse constituencies and points of view, it is important for the Rehabilitation Council to speak as a single entity in meetings and work groups. The Council recognizes that individuals may also wish to convey additional opinions or information during discussions. In order to assure consistency without restricting members' actions, the following guidelines were adopted on April 14, 1999:

If a Rehabilitation Council member is serving on a rehabilitation related work group, committee or is giving testimony as a **designated and official spokesperson of Council**, the following guidelines will apply:

- The Council member shall state that they are representing the Rehabilitation Council.
- The Council member shall state the Council's official position on the subject being discussed if one exists or is known. If the Council's official position is unknown or has not been developed, the Council representative shall indicate that they will request the Council's office to forward the position or ask the Council to review the subject and render an official position if one is needed.
- The Council member may have a different, personal opinion on the subject being discussed. If this is so, the Council member should state that it is a personal opinion and not the official position of the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council.
- The Council member shall not commit financial support and/or other resources of the Council to any non-RC committee, workgroup, function, etc., without the previous authorization of PA-Rehabilitation Council.
- In order to receive reimbursement for expenses occurred while acting as a designated Council spokesperson, the member shall follow established procedures for obtaining reimbursement.

These objectives are meant solely to improve and expedite the accomplishments of the Rehabilitation Council, so as to, better the lives of persons with disabilities. Your cooperation and time are appreciated.

If you are interested in becoming a member and can meet the expectations, please complete the Appointment Request Form on the next page and return to: Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council Office, 55 Utlely Drive, Camp Hill, PA, 17011. Also, forward a word document of your resume and two references familiar with your disability related work/experiences to parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org

When the appointment request form, resume and references have been received in the office, the PaRC members review them and make recommendations to the Governor's Office.

The Governor appoints all members.



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council

Mailing Address: 55 Utley Drive, Camp Hill, PA 17011

Voice: (888) 250-5175 TTY: (717) 737-0158 Fax: (888) 524-9282

Email: parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org Web: www.parc.org

APPOINTMENT/REAPPOINTMENT REQUEST FORM

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

HOME PHONE/CELL PHONE

EMAIL

EMPLOYER (if applicable)

EMPLOYER ADDRESS

EMPLOYER PHONE

EMPLOYER EMAIL

Check the category/categories that you could represent on the council (check as many as apply):

- Representative of the PA Statewide Independent Living Council.
- Representative of a parent training and information center established pursuant to Section 671 of the individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Representative of the Client Assistance Program (CAP).
- Qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation programs.
- Representative of community rehabilitation program service providers.
- Representative of business, industry, and labor.
- Representative of disability advocacy groups representing:
 - (I) Individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities, and
 - (II) Individuals' representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves.
- Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services.
- Representative of the State educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities who are eligible to receive services under this title and Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Representative of the State Workforce Development Board.
- Young Adult
- Veteran
- Other – Please Specify _____

KEY AFFILIATIONS AND ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATION

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE HOW YOUR SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, ETC. MATCH THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REHABILITATION COUNCIL.

SIGNATURE

DATE

Form revised 10/21

**Please attach a resume or brief biography and two written references. Documents should be emailed to parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org in word document format.*

FOLD

RETURN ADDRESS

**Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council
55 Utley Drive
Camp Hill, PA 17011**

FOLD

Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year 2022

- **February 23, 2022 (Wednesday)**
- **May 18, 2022 (Wednesday)**
- **August 3, 2022 (Wednesday)**
- **October 19, 2022 (Wednesday)**

PaRC Full Council meetings are open to the public. The location of the meetings is to be determined.

For more information or for persons who require reasonable modifications or accommodations including a sign language interpreter, real time captioning, or alternate format, please contact the PaRC Office at:

Phone: (888) 250-5175

TTY: (717) 737-0158

Email: parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org

We welcome any questions or comments you may have and appreciate your interest in the work of the Council.



The PaRC is a member of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, Incorporated (NCSRC).

PaRC

Back Cover Photo Description: Silhouette of a person wearing a ballcap seated in a wheelchair with open arms, raised in a 'V', facing the sunset

Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

55 Utley Drive, Camp Hill, PA 17011

Voice: (888) 250-5175 • TTY: (717) 737-0158

Email: parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org • Website: www.parc.org

Submitted To:

The Pennsylvania Legislature

The Rehabilitation Services Administration

Tom Wolf, Governor of Pennsylvania

The State Board of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board

The Pennsylvania Department of Education

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA 2014.



Production of the Annual Report is supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Contract #4000021640. Printed on recycled paper.

Like us on Facebook 