



**PENNSYLVANIA  
REHABILITATION  
COUNCIL**

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**Annual Report for Fiscal Year  
2017-2018**



- Letters from Past / Present PaRC Chairs
- PaRC Accomplishments
- PaRC's Partnership with OVR
- PaRC Federal Position Paper
- PaRC State Position Paper
- State Plan Attachment (2016—2020)
- Standard of Expectations
- PaRC Recruitment Video & OVR Customer and Business Success Story Videos

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.



[www.facebook.com/Pennsylvania-Rehabilitation-Council](http://www.facebook.com/Pennsylvania-Rehabilitation-Council)

This report covers the activities of the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2017 and ending September 30, 2018. Alternate formats and additional copies are available upon request. Contact:

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

[www.parac.org](http://www.parac.org)

Pennsylvania State Law requires the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) publish an annual program report on a different time line than this product. Therefore, traditionally, the PaRC does not include OVR data in its report. The OVR Program report may be requested from:

Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

1521 N. 6<sup>th</sup> Street

Harrisburg, PA 17102

**COVER PHOTO:** Picture of the Capitol at Harrisburg, PA



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# Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council Members October 2017 – September 2018 (Including Category of Representation)

David DeNotaris, OVR Executive Director, (Ex-Officio Member until May 2018)

Ryan Hyde, Acting OVR Executive Director, (Ex-Officio Member from May 2018)

Julia Blackwell – Client Assistance Program

Mary Brougher – (Chair 2017 – 2018) - Business/Industry/Labor

Mary Ann Cowfer – General Advocacy

Lynn Dell – State Department of Education

Cindy Duch – IDEA

Robert F. Fox, III – (Member at Large 2017-2018) - Physical Disabilities

Passle Helminski – Cognitive Disabilities

Leslie Kelly -- Sensory Disabilities / Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Pat Leo – (Until August 2018) Intellectual Disabilities - VACANT

Dr. David Mann – Current / Former Customer

Juliet Marsala – Rehabilitation Counselor

Robert Mecca – (Until July 2018) Community Rehabilitation Provider - VACANT

Jody Saitsky – (Until July 2018) General Advocacy

Matthew R. Seeley, Esq. – Statewide Independent Living Council

Claire Senita -- Young Adult

Lorie Silvestre – (Until June 2018) Business/Industry/Labor - VACANT

Heidi Tuszynski (Until July 2018) Mental Health - VACANT

Koert Wehberg, Esq. – Sensory Disabilities / Visual

Frederick Wright – Business/Industry/Labor

Vacancy - State Workforce Development Board

Vacancy – Business/Industry/Labor



## **A Message from Our Past Chair:**

It has been my great pleasure to serve as chair of the PA Rehabilitation Council. As members, we are honored to volunteer our time to provide advice to the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) about how well its programs and services match the needs of people with disabilities and members of the business community. We have front row seat to this topic, as over 50 percent of our Council members are living with a disability.

While we each have our own story and unique experience, we are, to a person, committed to advancing what is right and just for people with disabilities, including advancing meaningful competitive employment. We certainly enjoy weighing in on legislative matters, reviewing policies, and staying abreast of transition, education and workforce development opportunities. This year, we have also created energy and the platform for innovation, by leveraging social media technologies and building data frameworks.

Our Council is committed to the great work of expanding employment for Pennsylvanians with disabilities and engaging the business community through workforce partnerships and solutions. As we collaborate with OVR over the coming year, we look forward to celebrating the acceleration of the pace of employment, engagement and advancement of Pennsylvanians with disabilities. OVR's commitment to partnership-focused hiring models and investment in students with disabilities, through successful pre-employment transition services programs fuels the pace of acceleration.

Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." We are inspired to take action and hopeful and confident about the future...employment equity for Pennsylvanian's with disabilities.

Lead on!

Mary Brougher



## A Message from Our Incoming Chair:

At each Rehabilitation Council meeting, we start the day by reading the Council's mission statement:

*"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."*

In this letter I provide background information about why this mission is so important to the Commonwealth. After reading the letter, I hope those of you who are not familiar with the Rehabilitation Council and its work will understand its role in helping people with disabilities in the Commonwealth.

Relative to others, people with disabilities are less likely to be employed and more likely to require assistance from federal and state programs. In August 2018, 30 percent of working age people with disabilities were employed, compared to 74 percent of working age people without disabilities (University of New Hampshire 2018). Because people with disabilities often cannot work, government expenditures for their support are substantive, totaling \$498 billion in just federal expenditures in federal fiscal year 2014 (Livermore et al. under review).

Although people with disabilities often encounter substantive employment barriers, many of them still want to and (with assistance) can work. For example, among Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income recipients, 40 percent want to work and 20 percent are taking steps to achieve that goal (Livermore 2009). Helping such people achieve their employment goals can improve their well-being and decrease government outlays for their support.

The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is dedicated to helping Pennsylvanians with disabilities obtain and maintain employment. OVR is Pennsylvania's unit of the Vocational Rehabilitation program, which is a program funded primarily by the federal government but administered at the state level to provide supports and services to people with disabilities who wish to work. In federal fiscal year 2014, OVR served 19,348 program eligible individuals and, among those who exited the program that year, saw 8,546 exit with a job (Rehabilitation Services Administration 2015).

The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council is a group of diverse stakeholders who provide feedback to OVR about the services it provides and educates policymakers in the

Commonwealth about issues affecting employment for people with disabilities. To do this, we dialogue regularly with OVR about its policies and performance, educate lawmakers and Commonwealth staff about OVR and employment topics more broadly, and support laws and policies that assist OVR and promote employment for people with disabilities. The Council includes representatives from a variety of backgrounds, including business and labor, people with various types of disabilities, current or former OVR customers, and other organizations in the Commonwealth whose mission aligns with that of the Council. Throughout the Rehabilitation Council's annual report, you can read more about the Council and its specific activities.

I look forward to leading the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council this year to advance its mission. If we can be a resource to you for helping people with disabilities in the Commonwealth, please contact us. The Council members and I look forward to working with you.

Best regards,

David

#### **References:**

Livermore, Gina, Marisa Shenk, and David Stapleton. 2018. "Federal Expenditures for Working-Age People with Disabilities in Fiscal Year 2014." Under review.

Livermore, Gina. 2009. Work-Oriented Social Security Disability Beneficiaries: Characteristics and Employment-Related Activities. Washington, DC: Center for Studying Disability Policy Issue Brief 09-05.

Rehabilitation Services Administration. 2015. FY2014 State Vocational Rehabilitation Performance. Available <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/rsabvrs/resources/fy2014-state-voc-rehab-performance.pdf>. Accessed 30 September 2018.

University of New Hampshire. 2018. nTIDE August 2018 Jobs Report: Return to Positive Trend for Employment of Americans with Disabilities. Available <https://researchondisability.org/epm-rrtc/epm-news/2018/09/07/ntide-august-2018-jobs-report-return-to-positive-trend-for-employment-of-americans-with-disabilities>. Accessed 30 September 2018.



## 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.



*PaRC Council Members Matthew Seeley, Esq. (seated), Claire Senita (seated), Passle Helminski (2nd from left back row) and Bob Fox (far right) with Representative Murt's staff during Legislative visits.*





## Our Partnership with the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

This has been another busy year of growth and transition for the Council and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). OVR has supported 7,885 persons with disabilities into the workforce this past year. The number of students who received pre-employment transition services was 25,601. The average hourly wage of individuals employed is \$13.28. More businesses look to OVR as a resource in finding qualified workers to meet their needs and assist them with other disability questions such as accessibility.

The members of the PA Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) take their responsibility of advising OVR and reporting on the status of employment for persons with disabilities in Pennsylvania seriously. Members understand how employment greatly impacts an individual's quality of life.

Thank you to our Council members for the many volunteer hours of work they provided this year and to our outgoing officers and committee chairs as we welcome this coming year's new officers and chairs.

The PaRC wants to thank the OVR staff for continuing to build the strong partnership between OVR and the Council. A special thank you to our OVR liaisons, Ms. Lee Ann Stewart and Ms. Cheryl Novak.

OVR continues to make strides in implementing the new requirements under WIOA and strengthening their partnerships with Education and Workforce Development, Office of Developmental Programs and others.

Pennsylvania is an Employment First state. This summer, OVR and the Office of Administration with 15 state agencies had a very successful pilot project that provided a paid twelve-week summer internship to 18 current college students with disabilities. Additionally, OVR and their partners continued their successful Summer Academies for high school students with blind/visual and deaf/hard of hearing disabilities. The academies were held at Penn State main campus in State College.

The Council is looking forward to the coming year with more opportunities for Pennsylvanians with disabilities to achieve their employment and life goals through the supports they receive from OVR.

Overview of Committee Outcomes from their mandated work and other activities this year are listed by Committees.

The Council had five standing committees this year in addition to the Executive committee - Legislative and Public Awareness, Policy/State Plan/Customer Service, Transition and Education, CareerLink/WIOA, and Social Media/Outreach.



## What We Accomplished as a Council This Year (2017-2018)

Forty conference calls were held by these committees this year. Listed below by committee is the major work and activities of each committee for the year.

### Executive Committee

- The PaRC completed and submitted their 2016 - 2017 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 2017. To view the 2017 Annual Report and other reports from previous years, go to [www.parac.org](http://www.parac.org).
- The committee and staff planned and held four quarterly Council meetings this year. Educational presentations (speakers) this year on topics related to Council responsibilities included: Mr. Ryan Hyde, Acting OVR Executive Director, a discussion and Q & A time on various topics. Mr. Steve Pennington, Esq. and Director of the PA Client Assistance Program(CAP) and Ms. Julia Blackwell, CAP Advocate on Civil Service; Mr. Michael Gamel-McCormick, Disability Policy Director, Special Committee on Aging, Senator Bob Casey's office (canceled due to weather); Mr. Zach Ross, Budget Analyst, Senator Hughes office; Mr. Steve Pennington, Esq., Director of PA Client Assistance Program and Ms. Julia Blackwell, CAP Advocate on Increasing Employment in the Commonwealth for persons with disabilities; Dr. David Mann provided a PowerPoint presentation on statistical data requested by the committees; Ms. Peri Jude, Chief Executive Officer, Disability Rights PA, discussed various issues in PA related to employment for persons with disabilities; and Deputy Secretary Sharon Minnich, Office of Administration and Deputy Secretary Walsh and Mr. Swarthout, Talent Management, both with the Office of Administration, discussed alternative pathways to employment for persons with disabilities in the state.
- This year the Executive committee and staff invited the OVR State board members to one of their Full Council meetings; the OVR State board reciprocated in inviting Council members to their meeting the next day. This strengthens the partnership between the two groups and assists them in their overall purpose of improving employment for persons with disabilities in PA.
- The Executive committee is responsible for reviewing/monitoring the Council's budget on their conference calls as well as at quarterly full council meetings, the Member at Large, reports out to the Full membership on the Council's budget.
- The Chair/designee provided four quarterly progress reports on PaRC activities to the OVR State Board during 2017 – 2018.
- The Executive committee handles recruitment for the Council. One new appointment was made this year to fill the vacancy for the Labor representative to the Council. The Executive committee and Full Council have approved a representative for our vacancy in the Business category and are currently waiting on this appointment. An ad was designed and placed in a local Veteran organization's literature in an effort to recruit a veteran to the Council.
- 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, Parent Education Network, State and Local Workforce Development Boards, Disability Budget Coalition, Disability Rights PA, PA Transportation Alliance, Governor's Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, "I Want To Work," and the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils.

### **Legislative and Public Awareness Committee – main activities/work**

- Members continued to maintain a network of federal, state, and local level contacts to assure exchange of relevant and current information.
- Members identified and followed proposed State and Federal legislation that affect the VR system and issues impacting the employment of persons with disabilities.
- Members worked with Full Council to draft action steps to improve state and non-state hiring as well as state contractor hiring and disability supplier diversity.
- Members worked with State Elected and Appointed Officials to facilitate an Expedited Hiring Process so that people with disabilities in Civil service and non-Civil Service have an alternative path to employment with the State, similar to Schedule A on the Federal level.
- Members updated State and Federal Position Papers regarding the employment needs of persons with disabilities in the State.
- Members educated approximately eighty State Elected and Appointed Officials and their staff about the work of OVR and the impact of legislation/policy on people with disabilities to gain and retain employment.
- Members disseminated approved position papers concerning full funding for OVR, hiring practices within the State, accessible transportation, and a Disability Caucus.
- Members continued to build upon their relationship with the Governor's Cabinet and Executive Officials, more specifically, the Office of Administration (OA) since Act 71 has passed which moves the administrative functions for recruitment and hiring of civil service-covered positions to OA.
- Three members attended the National Rehabilitation Association's Government Affairs Summit which afforded them the opportunity to meet with Senator Toomey and Senator Casey in Washington, DC. Members also dropped off additional packets of information to approximately 10 PA Representatives.

### **OVR Policy/State Plan/Customer Satisfaction Committee – main activities/work**

- Members reviewed and made recommendations on the following 7 OVR policies: School-to-Work Transition, OVR Low Vision Services, Vehicle Modification, Placement Equipment Purchase Procedures, College Policy, Essential Procedures and Supported Employment.
- Members continue to receive quarterly updates from OVR at their meetings on State Plan progress.
- Members review OVR's Customer Satisfaction surveys on a quarterly basis and offer recommendations. Members would like to see the response rate increased.
- Members continue to request statistical information from (University of New Hampshire) to review and assist them in analyzing how changes in various policies are impacting persons with disabilities.
- Two members participated on OVR's College Policy workgroup this year to provide input.

### **Transition and Educational Services Committee – main activities/work**

- Members participated in the PA Department of Education's (PADES) annual conference and the Statewide Transition conference. Resource materials were provided at both conferences to those who attended.

- A member/partner from the Bureau of Special Education, Department of Education participated and provided reports on their programs at our quarterly meetings and conference calls.
- Three members attended the Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC) new OVR staff orientation and training on November 7th. The Committee Chair also provided a presentation to the new OVR staff on the mission and goals of the Council.
- A committee member asked that a question be added to OVR's Customer Satisfaction survey on transition services regarding the number of school-aged students (16 – 18 years old), who are working part-time and/or had a summer job.
- With the passage of WIOA, there is even more emphasis on providing transition services to youth with disabilities. OVR has been updating the committee on current/future services they will be providing in this area during scheduled conference calls.

#### **CareerLink / WIOA Committee – main activities/work**

- The committee continued to monitor concerns related to CareerLink accessibility with OVR staff during scheduled conference calls. Mobile site accessibility was a concern in the NW part of the State. The local workforce development board had a third party assessment and protocol completed to assure compliance with the ADA and WIOA.
- The Director of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) provided quarterly updates on what is happening across the state regarding projects, CareerLinks, 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. The Council would like to have a SWDB member appointed to the Council as soon as possible; they are mandated in the Rehabilitation Act as a required member.
- Members reviewed the Technical Assistance Circular RSA-TAC-17-05 WIOA Annual performance report submission. Members were pleased to learn that PA is on target.
- One member who visited their local CareerLink learned about a Disability Navigator, who assists with job club groups and helps individuals secure OVR and other services.
- Members have a goal this coming year to start reviewing quarterly statistics from CareerLinks regarding services provided to persons with disabilities.

#### **Social Media / Outreach Committee – main activities/work**

- Members and staff completed the final edits to six videos this year in the fall of 2017. In early 2018, the six videos were posted on the PaRC website at [www.parc.org](http://www.parc.org) and on the Council's FaceBook page. The videos show successful OVR customers and business partners.
- List of PaRC videos:
  - [PaRC Recruitment](#)
  - [PaRC Dream Partnership](#)
  - [PaRC Herr Foods Inc.](#)
  - [PaRC Aha Moment](#)
  - [PaRC Keystone Blind Association](#)
  - [PaRC Assistive Technology](#)
- The committee is focusing on outreach and working with OVR to determine where in the state more outreach is needed (rural, urban, underserved, minorities, etc.) and the best way to reach out to these populations.

#### **Members participated in the following this year:**

- Governor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities
- 10/16/17 member attended hearing at the Capitol with "I Want to Work"
- Members/staff participated in National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) teleconference calls throughout the year
- Three members attended the Annual Disability Awareness Day for the PA Legislature hosted by Senator Tartaglione on October 23, 2017

- Three members attended the orientation and training at the Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC) at the invitation of OVR. A presentation was also provided to the new staff on the mission and goals of the Council.
- A member attended the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils' training in Greenville, SC on 11/10/17 - 11/12/17
- Two members attended the PADES Conference in Valley Forge in December 2017 and provided materials at our resource table
- Three members attended the OVR College and Other Post-Secondary Training in April 2018 at OVR Central office in Harrisburg
- One member attended the OVR Benefits Planning Webinar regarding OVR's new provider agreement on benefits counseling on February 8, 2018
- One member attended Rep. Dan Miller's 5th Annual Disability Summit in Pittsburgh on March 23, 2018 and manned the PaRC resource table
- Three members attended the National Rehabilitation Association's Disability Employment Summit March 25 -27, 2018
- Two members participated in OVR's Strategic Planning Session Workgroup in State College on March 29, 2018
- Five members attended the OVR State Board meeting in Harrisburg on May 3, 2018
- One member attended the PA APSE Statewide Day on Employment



*PaRC Council Members - Julia Blackwell, Bob Fox, Heidi Tuszyński, Passle Helminski with her service dog and Claire Senita (seated) meeting with legislators and staff during legislative visits.*



# PENNSYLVANIA REHABILITATION COUNCIL

## 2018 Federal Position Paper

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.

The Rehabilitation Act plays an important and necessary role in:

- o supporting the employment of persons with disabilities and empowering them to become independent
- o helping integrate the work place and community

The PaRC respectfully submits the following position paper for your review and consideration.

### **Implementation of the Rehabilitation Act** **(Title IV of the Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act)**

The Rehabilitation Act as it exists provides states the freedom to administer programs, which are responsive to the needs of its customers. It is essential that a dedicated funding stream from the federal government continue in Pennsylvania. In 2017 alone, the federal, state and local taxes paid by competitively employed customers of OVR throughout Pennsylvania averaged approximately **\$50,321,995**.

The Rehabilitation Act must be strengthened through implementing regulations to provide customers greater flexibility and control over the services and programs available to them.

**During this implementation period of the reauthorized Rehabilitation Act, we urge you to support the following:**

- Keep public Vocational Rehabilitation a mandatory program with single source funding.
- Dramatically increase funding to help support states such as Pennsylvania who are handling an increased need for vocational rehabilitation services for the veterans returning from active duty.
- The restoration of changes to the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) that reduced the standards/requirements to be a "qualified rehabilitation counselor" working with business customers on behalf of consumer customers, but especially for rehabilitation counselors working directly with consumer customers.
  - ❖ Increase the number of individuals pursuing master level degrees in vocational rehabilitation and their retention by restoring and increasing federal funds to support the education and training authorities of the Act (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Title III, Section 302).
- Continue screening returning veterans for brain injury, provide immediate services and require all commercial health insurance to cover brain injury rehabilitation for everyone.

- Increase funding for retraining/rehabilitating, the workforce population (adults 45 years and older), who need to keep working to remain financially independent.
- Promote career development and job advancement through the opportunity for post- employment continuing education and training by expanding the definition of and funding for “post- employment services” to include “training and other services necessary for career advancement and upward mobility”. This is necessary because of the increased emphasis on “transitioning” in the Act as reauthorized.
- Clarify when individuals must be advised of the right to request review of a decision made by vocational rehabilitation, and when they must be informed of the services available through the Client Assistance Program.
- Protect the due process rights of individuals who may want to request review of a vocational rehabilitation decision by requiring notification of state established timeframes in which a request for mediation or review must be filed.
- Require a minimum standard of training of all impartial due process hearing officers and staff.
- Significantly increase funds for the Older Blind Program to make up for the lack of increase since 2003 in order to keep up with the aging, blind population.

### **Transportation**

Transportation is an extremely important policy issue for people with disabilities. The lack of transportation options in many communities and the persistent gaps in compliance continue to create significant barriers to employment opportunities. Accessible, affordable and safe public transportation are key components for ensuring people with disabilities can effectively participate in the workforce.

- The PaRC supports changes to the public transportation system that will ensure the opportunities for people with disabilities to successfully obtain and retain employment. People with disabilities should have equal opportunity to utilize public transportation.

### **The Able Act**

- The PaRC supports an amendment to include all people with disabilities regardless of age at onset of disability.



*Representative Dan Miller speaking at the 05-02-18 PaRC Full Council Meeting*



# PENNSYLVANIA REHABILITATION COUNCIL'S LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE 2018 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.

Members are appointed by the Governor to the PaRC for their expertise related to specific categories of representation, as required in the Rehabilitation Act.

One of the goals of the PaRC's Legislative Committee is to educate and advocate for legislation in order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, as related to training and employment in the state of Pennsylvania.

With this in mind, the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council's Legislative Committee respectfully submits, with approval by Executive Committee and/or Full Council, the following position paper for your review and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council's Legislative Committee

## **Maintaining Full Funding for OVR Services to match all available Federal Funds**

Pennsylvanians with mental and physical disabilities as well as those who have sensory disabilities utilize services and programs funded by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). The employment services and community supports provided through OVR are available to people with disabilities to gain employment and become independent in the community in accordance with the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its re-authorization in Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.

OVR projects that in FY 2016-17, over 50,000 individuals will have active rehabilitation plans, with almost 10,000 becoming employed. More than 2,400 students are slated to transition from high school or college into employment with vocational rehabilitation services.

The Commonwealth must match Federal Title I funding awarded to OVR with 21.3% state dollars. The funding formula is of great benefit to the Commonwealth because every one dollar appropriated by the state for eligible services is matched by almost four dollars of federal funds. To assure that all available federal monies are drawn down each year, it is imperative that the Commonwealth appropriate sufficient funds in the state budget to match all available federal funds.

OVR requires \$50 million in state funding, which is needed for "Transfer to the Vocational Rehabilitation Fund" appropriation in the Labor and Industry Program portion of the budget in order to draw down and utilize all available Federal Funds and provide fully funded state services for people who have disabilities". This is especially important as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that 15% of these funds must be spent on Pre-Employment Transition Services. It is therefore vital that OVR be fully funded so that all eligible individuals in



the Commonwealth have access to these services, whether they are students or older individuals reentering the workforce.

### **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.*

### **Expedited Employment**

The PaRC supports the concept of Expedited Employment for people with disabilities in Civil Service, Non-Civil Service, and State Contractor hiring positions in order to make the Commonwealth a model employer.

### **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.*

*The PaRC supports the following action steps to improve hiring within the Commonwealth of PA:*

### **State Civil Service Hiring:**

#### **Expedited Employment (Section 501; Schedule A)**

- A process similar to Federal Schedule A Hiring Authority
- The state should establish a goal to hire at least seven percent of people with disabilities throughout all levels within every department throughout the Commonwealth and should strive to adopt the same hiring goals as the Federal Government of twelve percent representation for people with disabilities and two percent for people with "targeted" disabilities

### **Required Disability Awareness Training**

- Mandatory disability awareness training for all staff in supervisory positions should be completed periodically
- Suggested training topics to include but not limited to: reasonable accommodation training, disability etiquette, disability awareness, effective communications strategies, etc.

### **Pre-Employment Testing Considerations**

- The state should be urged to eliminate barriers and mitigate obstacles that the normal state hiring process places in front of persons with disabilities beginning with program accessibility, most importantly, the websites
- The state should evaluate barriers and obstacles to the hiring process at every step for applicants with disabilities. This includes how a job is posted, how applicants with disabilities are recruited, the application process, interview process, selection process, onboarding process, training and the state should identify retention strategies and evaluate alternative approaches that will enable a person with a disability to compete.

### **Update Job Descriptions/Changing Job Analysis**

- The state should review and update job descriptions to accurately reflect job duties

## **Creating an Internship for Students and Youth with Disabilities**

- The state should continue an internship that will provide students and youth with disabilities work experience

## **Create a New Job Classification for “Customized Employment”**

- Require state agencies to adopt policies and procedures to provide vocational rehabilitation services, including supported employment, to people with disabilities in the hiring process
- Require state agencies to develop positions that are customized to match agency needs with a worker’s skills, interests and strengths

## **State Non-Civil Service Hiring**

- An agency may noncompetitively convert to the competitive service an employee who has completed up to 2 years of satisfactory performance

## **Additional Recommendations:**

- **Disability Supplier Diversity**
  - The state should develop goals for increased spending with disability-owned business enterprises
  - The state should require commonwealth agencies to report on disability-owned business enterprise spending
  - The state should include disability-owned business enterprises within small-business subcontracting opportunities on large contracts
  - The state should include disability-owned business enterprises in small-business set aside contracts
- Make sure all new provisions would apply to the PA State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) as state universities employ ~12,000 people
- Recommend that state government create an “Accommodation Fund”
  - (1). This would be a reserve fund either centralized in the Office of Administration or a fund placed in every agency budget, which can be accessed to cover the costs of reasonable accommodations
  - (2). Currently, there are no designated funds to cover reasonable accommodations. If designated funds were allotted, this may resolve agencies hesitation to hire people with disabilities
- All procurements for Information Technology and Physical Plant construction/purchasing shall be reviewed by a panel with a majority of people with disabilities and accessibility experts to ensure that accessibility specifications have been built into the procurement process from the beginning
- Implement a public awareness campaign to encourage people with disabilities to apply for state employment
- Make sure general information and outreach materials have disability friendly language and images of people with disabilities

## **Collaboration of Services for Persons with Brain Injuries in Pennsylvania**

There is no bridge for continuation of services to individuals with brain injuries in Pennsylvania. People are being missed who have potential and never receive services because they are rejected too quickly.

## **Action Requested**

*Collaboration is needed between all state agencies working with persons with brain 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)**

The ODHH was established during FY 1988-89 under the Department of Labor and Industry and works to ensure all government programs and services are accessible to adults and children who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing. Persons contact ODHH regarding anything related to hearing loss such as sign language, hearing aids, interpreters, technology and legal rights. The legislative basis for ODHH is Act 184 of 1986.

The ODHH has three primary functions: advocacy (individual and system), information/referral and the administration of the Sign Language Interpreter & Transliterator State Registration Act, which was passed to protect consumers by establishing qualifications for sign language interpreters working in the Commonwealth.

The ODHH has never had a separate line item in the state budget and has been funded as part of the Department of Labor and Industry's General Government Operations line item. Despite the significant cuts in funding, the Secretary of Labor and Industry has maintained ODHH's funding. Since its inception, ODHH has not received a substantial increase in funding. The SFY 2015-2016 budget is \$562,505.00. With an increase in salaries and benefits and a minimum of \$60,000 allocated for staff accommodations, there are fewer funds to expand services.

#### ***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)**

After analyzing the Centers in Pennsylvania, as well as reviewing the practices and policies of some other states, the PA Council on Independent Living and Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council requests that the State of Pennsylvania establish a base level of funding of \$300,000 for Centers for Independent Living. This base would include any federal funds a Center might receive under Title VII, and Pennsylvania General Revenue Funds. No Center would be established for less than this amount, and those Centers who currently receive less than this amount would be provided funding increases to bring them up to this level.

Locally, CILs, which are non-profit organizations, are controlled by boards of directors, the majority of whom have disabilities. In addition, the majority of staff have disabilities. CILs serve all those who are touched by disability directly or within their family unit regardless of their age or diagnosis. Core services include information and referral; independent skills training; peer mentoring; and individual and grassroots advocacy. CILs are also instrumental in assisting many individuals not served by other programs in obtaining employment. Many reach out to businesses to educate them about disabilities. Many also assist individuals in transitioning from costly nursing facilities to much less expensive home and community based settings and services.

CILS have seen dramatic cuts over the last several years. It is time for the Administration and Legislature to make a commitment to the disability community by funding CILs at a level where they can remain a viable, robust and integral part of the community.

### **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; 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**

Transportation is an extremely important policy issue for people with disabilities. The lack of transportation options in many communities and the persistent gaps in compliance continue to create significant barriers to employment opportunities. Accessible, affordable and safe public transportation are key components for ensuring people with disabilities can effectively participate in the workforce.

The PaRC supports changes to the public transportation system that will ensure the opportunities for people with disabilities to successfully obtain and retain employment. People with disabilities should have equal opportunity to utilize public 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 in order to assist people with disabilities who use these rides to obtain, maintain, and/or regain employment.*

### **Disability Caucus**

The formation of a Disability Caucus will be a groundbreaking forum for Members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and their staff to discuss the many issues affecting people with disabilities who live in or visit Pennsylvania. The primary purpose of the Caucus is to inform, educate and raise awareness on issues affecting people with disabilities within the Legislature and throughout the Commonwealth. The Caucus membership shall be open to all members of the Legislature, and shall be Co-Chaired by a member of each major party.

### **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.*

**Latest update – July 2018**



## State Plan Attachment for FY 2018

### Input of State Rehabilitation Council

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 (FFY 2016)
2. PaRC Customer Satisfaction Survey
3. Review of items in 2016's Attachment 4.2(c)
4. Comments received at 2017 State Plan Meetings
5. Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Monitoring Report
6. Statewide Needs Assessment
7. Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment FFY 2017 & 2018 Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Institute on Disabilities at Temple University Project Proposal
8. Workforce Development Statistics
9. Local Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC) meetings and/or minutes as well as calls and meetings with CAC Chairs and the PaRC Executive Committee

### Commendations:

The PaRC's efforts have benefited from a strong partnership with the leadership of OVR. The PaRC commends OVR's leadership for:

- A. Encouraging and supporting stakeholder input, based on their involvement in the Pennsylvania Disability Employment & Empowerment Summit (PADES) and transition conferences, and the customer satisfaction advisory committee meetings;
- B. The number of hours they have committed to learn and implement new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations and provide the PaRC with WIOA Wednesday updates;
- C. The creation and implementation of Innovation and Expansion Grants.
- D. OVR participation in and support of local CAC meetings, participating in and developing minutes for calls and meetings with CAC Chairs and the PaRC Executive Committee; and
- E. Their leadership of postsecondary education opportunities for the intellectual disability community through the Access College Employment Success (ACES) grant to Dream Partners

### 1. Transition

**ISSUE:** Support for students with disabilities age 14 to 21 is critical to creating an expectation of competitive, integrated employment as they transition into adulthood. For example, post-secondary education programs are beginning to demonstrate successful employment outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities. It is therefore critical that programs be available throughout the state to help transition age youth become working adults. The state plan specifically highlights the work of ACES grant and Dream Partnership's work in developing PSE programs. In a 2016 Executive Order, Governor Wolfe specifically recommends the continuation of the ACES grant.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. Work with the Youth Leadership Network and Youth Workforce Investment Boards.
- B. Continue developing and strengthening relationships with the Department of Human Services—including the Office of Developmental Programs—and Department of Education to provide services to transition age youth.
- C. Provide data assessing the effectiveness of the Early Reach program and other programs that target transition age youth.
- D. Continue to award and monitor innovation grants to programs developing pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.
- E. Continue to fund the ACES grant for continued expansion of PSE programs in PA. The ACES grant should contain student/parent outreach opportunities for students age 14 to 21.
- F. Document and share "Success Stories" to show youth and parents how services can help create positive employment outcomes.

## **2. Training for OVR Staff and Counselors of Consumer Customers**

**ISSUE:** The public face of OVR is, and should remain, one that is understanding and helps people with disabilities to achieve competitive, integrated employment goals.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. Continue working to improve consumer customer satisfaction.
- B. Develop and test strategies for improving response rates for the consumer customer satisfaction survey.
- C. Train placement counselors reinstated or VR counselors to do federal resumes and Schedule A paperwork to get some customers placed in highly competitive employment.

## **3. CACs (Citizen Advisory Committees)**

**ISSUE:** CACs are a critical connection between OVR and consumer customers. Each OVR district has its own process for CAC meetings and meeting notification.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. Take a more active role in the guidance and development of the CACs and have an open line of communication with the PaRC when issues arise.
- B. Issue a memo to district administrators on expectations for utilizing and promoting CACs.
- C. Gather and share best practices among the CACs.
- D. Continue to advise the CACs on using the PaRC's website for publically posting CAC agendas and minutes.
- E. Implement the recommendations on CACs sent by the PaRC to the OVR Executive Director in 2016.
- F. Discuss CAC progress and activities at district administrator meetings and training activities.
- G. Consider using OVR's social media platforms to advertise CAC meetings.
- H. Establish guidelines that allow CAC members to communicate with OVR central office staff when they need assistance.

## **4. Information Sharing**

**ISSUE:** Accessible and timely information is important to consumer customers (Pennsylvania's Workforce Development Plan [PY 2016-PY 2019], Page 110) because it allows greater engagement and involvement and leads to a positive customer experience.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. Use current technologies, such as e-mail and text messages, along with older communication technologies to communicate with consumer customers.

- B. Make sure all OVR communications are accessible.
- C. Make sure that accommodations such as captioning are available at all public OVR meetings.
- D. Review lead times for dissemination of information to make sure it is far enough ahead to ensure all stakeholders have sufficient time to review, react and respond to opportunities.

## 5. Partnership with the PaRC

**ISSUE:** Collaboration between PaRC and OVR has provided mutual benefit for reviewing policies and priorities.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. Continue OVR leadership’s collaboration with the PaRC.
- B. Continue PaRC involvement in developing, reviewing, implementing, and evaluating OVR policy.
- C. Include the PaRC in OVR training and activities.

## 6. OVR Staff and Counselors as Role Models

**ISSUE:** OVR counselors, managers, and other staff with disabilities provide positive role models and examples for people with disabilities. This is a benefit to both consumer and business customers because it demonstrates the employment potential of people with disabilities.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. Continue to recruit people with disabilities and other underrepresented groups into counselor and leadership roles within OVR.
- B. Review available hiring data and report on how the number of OVR staff with disabilities is changing over time.
- C. Have OVR counselors share OVR openings with customers as appropriate.

## 7. Policy Evaluation

**ISSUE:** Rigorous assessment of policy impacts is critical when OVR makes a policy change intended to achieve certain goals (or for which there is a concern about adverse consequences).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. For any substantive policy change, decide whether an evaluation is needed and if it is, create an evaluation plan.
- B. Monitor the outcomes of those affected by policy changes for a long enough period to understand the changes’ longer term effects.

## 8. Customer Choice

**ISSUE:** Long waiting times for orientation and mobility training create a barrier to timely, effective service provision.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. Customers who require orientation and mobility training should receive those services within 45 days of service approval.
- B. OVR should work to approve enough orientation and mobility training vendors so that it can provide services within the goal of 45 days.



*PaRC Council Members Cindy Duch and Heidi Tuszynski staffing the PaRC table at the 2017 PADES Conference in Philadelphia*



# PaRC Responsibilities and Goals for 2018-2019 by Committee

## Executive Committee

### Goals FY 2019

**Goal #1: 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.**

#### **Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Provide support and guidance on quarterly calls with CAC chairs. Also help develop a handbook/training manual, bylaws, agendas, invitations, topics/project lists, etc.
- 2.) Continue to attend OVR Board Meetings and invite board members to council meetings, special projects and retreats.
- 3.) Continue to partner with OVR, State Independent Living Center (SILC), Client Assistance Program (CAP), Disability Rights PA (DRPA), Governor's Oversight Board on Employment First and others on issues affecting persons with disabilities and employment.

**Goal #2: 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.**

#### **Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Past chair and chair should provide ongoing support and encouragement to new members. New council members should have opportunities to attend conferences and trainings to increase their knowledge base. New members should be given the opportunity to ask questions of both council members and OVR staff.

**Goal #3: 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**

#### **Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Attend conferences/trainings and expos to highlight both the Council and OVR Transition conference, PADES conference, NRA, NCSRC, Blind Expo, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Social Media and Outreach committee events, projects, success stories, etc.

**Goal #4: 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.**



**Steps to achieve the goal:**

1. Each member on the committee should provide input and help with these duties as listed in the goal.

**CareerLink/WIOA Committee**

**Goals FY 2019**

**Goal #1: Work with OVR to help the Workforce Development Board (WDB) to ensure each CareerLink is physically and programmatically accessible at all its locations.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Work with OVR and SWDB to review and improve all training practices; need to know what they are and if they are working.
- 2.) Work with OVR and SWDB to review and improve physical site locations.

**Goal #2: Identify, review and monitor the CareerLink reportage system for both the Department of Labor and Industry and Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC).**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Staff will continue to seek representatives from the EOC and State Workforce Development Board to report out on statistics / issues regarding employment for persons with disabilities.

**Goal #3: Increase the PaRC's participation in State and local WDB meetings.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Educate / advocate about the PaRC and OVR and learn about what these State and local boards are doing in the State.

**Goal #4: Work with OVR and WDB to understand all provisions of WIOA and how they impact persons with disabilities.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Members will review the WIOA weekly update from (OVR) and keep the Council informed.

**Legislative Committee**

**Goals FY 2019**

**Goal #1: Increase the PaRC's advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities in regards to obtaining and maintaining employment.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Continuously monitor, review, and prioritize pending State and Federal legislation that directly or indirectly affects the employment of people with disabilities. This would include making recommendations the Executive Committee and/or the Full Council to oppose or support particular State or Federal initiatives
- 2.) Make at least one trip to Washington to meet with the PA delegation to Congress, to position the PaRC as a resource to federal legislators concerning legislation and services for persons with disabilities.

- 3.) Visit state legislators in Harrisburg at least twice a year and their district offices to advocate for legislation that has an impact on the disability community, particularly related to employment.
- 4.) Continually monitor information, resources and disseminate information to the PaRC's Legislative Network through Legislative updates and Legislative Alerts.
- 5.) Educate and train new committee and Council members on how to advocate with legislators on the local level and nationally.

**Goal #2: Increase advocacy on behalf of the returning disabled veterans who are seeking employment and employment supports through Pennsylvania state services.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Invite speakers to at least one Full Council meeting, time permitting, from different veteran's organizations to educate Council members on how to advocate for support services and encourage reciprocal participation by Council members in their organization.
- 2.) Meet with Veteran Advocates in District Offices to gain a better understanding of the needs of returning Veterans seeking employment.

**OVR Policy, State Plan, and Customer Satisfaction Committee (OPSP&CSC)**

**Responsibilities:**

- 1.) Lead the Council's involvement in producing the VR Portion of Combined State Plan (Plan)
  - a. Develop the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council's (Council's) section of the Plan
  - b. Review and provide feedback to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) about its sections of the Plan
  - c. Attend public meetings for the Plan
- 2.) Review, analyze, and provide feedback to OVR and Council on OVR policies and procedures
- 3.) Review OVR customer satisfaction data and provide feedback to OVR and Council on the state of customer satisfaction

**Goals FY 2019**

**Goal #1: Maintain a positive working relationship with the Department of Labor and Industry, OVR and Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations.**

**Steps to Achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Use the OPSP&CSC to engage OVR and other partners about employment policies and procedures. Create dialogues with these partners that help advance the Council's mission.

**Goal #2: Support the development of the Plan.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Consulting OVR's timeline for development of the Plan, establish with OVR deadlines for OPSPC and Council involvement and input for the Plan. OPSP&CSC will work to have the Council meet its various deadlines regarding the Plan.
- 2.) Identify and review input into the Plan from:
  - a. The various OVR advisory bodies,
  - b. Previous public hearing comments, and
  - c. OVR customer satisfaction survey results.
- 3.) Review with OVR the status of and progress with the current plan during select OPSP&CSC meetings and at all Full Council meetings.

**Goal #3: Monitoring of OVR policies and procedures.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Participate in OVR workgroups formed to draft new policies or revise existing policies.
- 2.) Verify that Council staff has complete and current counselor manuals, numbered memoranda, etc. in the office reference library.
- 3.) Review any memorandums OVR sends to the Council.
- 4.) Ensure Citizen Advisory Committees' (CACs') access to OVR policies and procedures for review and comment, so that the Council may have an opportunity to incorporate CAC input into its own feedback.
- 5.) Evaluate the effects of program policy changes.

**Goal #4: Partner with OVR to review, evaluate and make recommendations based on results on the combined Customer Satisfaction Survey.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Evaluate data on a quarterly basis.
- 2.) Evaluate questions and recipients on an annual basis.
- 3.) Provide specific recommendations to increase survey responses and improve customer satisfaction.

**Goal #5: Partner with OVR to develop, implement and review the comprehensive statewide needs assessment survey.**

**Goal #6: 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 FY 2019

**Goal #1: Promote OVR and Council's mission through the PaRC webpage and Facebook.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Share stories each week on PaRC Facebook. Anything regarding persons with disabilities (pwd)/employment or interesting or viral videos/stories featuring pwd to engage audience and widen our online presence.
- 2.) Post a picture of each council member and a few "about me" sentences to Facebook once a week, so the public can know who is representing them each week or every other week.

**Goal #2: PaRC representation at various events across the State to promote PaRC and OVR.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Attend as many events each year as we can related to disability issues, employment, etc. across the State. Set up resource table, etc.

**Goal #3: Publish Success Stories from consumer and business customers to inform the public about OVR services, as funds are available.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Publish stories from OVR consumer customers each year or as funds are available.
- 2.) Publish stories from OVR business customers each year or as funds are available.

## Transition & Education Committee

### Goals FY 2019

**Goal #1: Participation at the Transition Conference and the PA Department of Education's (PDE), PADES annual conference for awareness on what the PaRC does and our purpose.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Participation in the Transition Conference.
  - identify who will attend
  - complete appropriate forms/payment for exhibiting
  - coordinate with attendees/staff what materials will be needed on Exhibit table
- 2.) Participation in the PADES Conference – TBA
  - identify who will attend

- complete appropriate forms/payment for exhibiting
- coordinate with attendees/staff what materials will be needed on Exhibit table.

**Goal #2: Improve communication with Bureau of Special Education (BSE) regarding transition.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Attend PA Secondary Transition Community of Practice State Leadership Team meetings.
- 2.) Ensure that PDE/BSE representative or designee reports at each Transition/Education Committee meeting.
- 3.) Ensure that a *State of Transition in PA* report from PDE/BSE is provided at each quarterly PaRC meeting.

**Goal #3: Monitor the increase of competitive integrated employment options through the Employment First Law.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Participate in webinars – Devon Grant provides monthly through Employment First State Mentoring Program.
- 2.) PaRC is to have a representative on the Employment First Oversight Committee.

**Goal #4: Committee will monitor OVR and the Department of Education’s efforts to implement the best practices regarding transition throughout the State.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Coordinate with OVR and PDE/BSE on trainings being held by PaTTAN, PDE/BSE, OVR, PEAL Center, Etc.
- 2.) When possible, participate in trainings with PaTTAN, PDE and OVR.
- 3.) Review customer satisfaction surveys of transition.
- 4.) Reports from our PDE/BSE member at our quarterly meetings and on committee calls.

**Goal #5: 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.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Evaluate the steps being taken to ensure students without disabilities are being included in HGAC programs to ensure it is an integrated setting.

- 2.) Evaluate and monitor the resources at HGAC to ensure they are up-to-date and are conducive to attracting students to the programs.
- 3.) New council members are invited to participate in training at HGAC.

**Goal #6: Annually monitor and evaluate Innovation and Expansion (I & E) Grant contractor program outcomes.**

**Steps to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Become familiar with OVR's monitor of the I and E grants.
- 2.) Review reports as available with OVR staff person.



*PaRC Council Members Mary Brougher (far left), Passle Helminski with her guide dog (far right) and Claire Senita (seated) meeting with legislators and staff during legislative visits.*



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

## PaRC Standard of 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 s/he is 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 s/he 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 PA-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 [racucpca@ucpcentralpa.org](mailto:racucpca@ucpcentralpa.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.***



**Newly Elected 2018-2019 PaRC Officers:**

From L to R: Claire Senita – Vice-Chair; Juliet Marsala – Member-at-Large; Dr. David Mann – Chair



L to R Back Row: Heidi Tuszynski, Koert Wehberg, Esq., Representative Dan Miller, Mary Brougher, Passle Helminski, Julia Blackwell, Bob Fox, Lorie Silvestre.

L to R Front Row: Dr. David Mann, Matthew Seeley, Claire Senita.





# Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council

55 Utley Drive, Camp Hill, PA 17011

voice (717) 975-2004 or (888) 250-5175 tty (717) 737-0158 fax (888) 524-9282  
email [racucpca@parac.org](mailto:racucpca@parac.org) [www.parac.org](http://www.parac.org)

## APPOINTMENT REQUEST FORM

NAME		
* HOME ADDRESS (include geographic region – i.e. western PA, southeastern PA, etc.)		
PHONE	FAX	EMAIL (if applicable)
EMPLOYER (if applicable)		
ADDRESS		Underline the category/categories that you could represent on the council (underline as many as apply):
PHONE	FAX	
PLEASE CHECK WHICH APPLIES TO YOU: <input type="checkbox"/> Appointment <input type="checkbox"/> Reappointment <input type="checkbox"/> Current Member Changing Category of Representation  (responding to these questions is voluntary) -- ARE YOU: A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO  If Yes, Nature of Disability _____  A FAMILY MEMBER OF A PERSON W/ A DISABILITY? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO  If Yes, Nature of Disability _____		State Independent Living Council (SILC) Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Client Assistance Program (CAP) OVR Customer (Past/Present) Human Resources Investment Council (HRIC) State Dept. Of Education Rehabilitation Counselor Community Rehab Provider Education Service Provider Business/Labor/Industry Physical Disability Cognitive Disability Sensory Disability Psychiatric Disability Intellectual Disabilities General Advocate
**ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING (if applicable)		
OTHER AFFILIATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS		
BRIEFLY DESCRIBE HOW YOUR SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, ETC. MATCH THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REHABILITATION COUNCIL.		
SIGNATURE		DATE

*\*Please Attach a Resume or Brief Biography and two written references. Documents should be emailed to [racucpca@parac.org](mailto:racucpca@parac.org) in word document format.*

**NOTE:** A member appointed to finish out the term of their predecessor **IS NOT** eligible to serve out two, three year terms for a total of six years. The member would serve the number of years left in their predecessor's term plus one additional three year term.

\* This information is required by the Executive Office for all appointments made by the Governor.

\*\* Please Note: RC appointments are by individual, not organization. Alternates may attend as members of the general public, however they may not vote on any action items. Form revised 03/17.

**FOLD**

**RETURN ADDRESS**

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

**FOLD**



# Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council

55 Utley Drive Camp Hill, PA 17011

voice (717) 975-2004 or (888) 250-5175

TTY (717) 737-0158 fax (888) 524-9282

email [racucpca@ucpcentralpa.org](mailto:racucpca@ucpcentralpa.org) [www.parac.org](http://www.parac.org)

## Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year 2019

- ❖ March 6, 2019 (Wednesday)  
Harrisburg – Hilton & Towers
  
- ❖ May 1, 2019 (Wednesday)  
Harrisburg – Hilton & Towers
  
- ❖ August 21, 2019 (Wednesday)  
Harrisburg – Hilton & Towers
  
- ❖ October 23, 2019 (Wednesday)  
Harrisburg – Hilton & Towers

**These meetings are open to the public. For more information or for persons who require special arrangements including a sign language interpreter, real time captioning, or alternate format, contact the PaRC Office at (717) 975-2004.**

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

# PENNSYLVANIA REHABILITATION COUNCIL

55 Utley Drive, Camp Hill, PA 17011

(717) 975-2004 — 1-888-250-5175 (Voice) — (717) 737-0158 (TTY)

EMAIL: [racucpca@ucpcentralpa.org](mailto:racucpca@ucpcentralpa.org) — WEBSITE: [www.parac.org](http://www.parac.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

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



**PaRC Council Members: Back Row L to R : Robert Fox, III, Cindy Duch, Lynn Dell, Julia Blackwell, Passle Helminski with her service dog, Frederick Wright, Koert Wehberg, Esq. and Leslie Kelly. Front Row L to R: Matthew Seeley, Esq, Dr. David Mann, Mary Brougher and Claire Senita.**

**ABSENT: Juliet Marsala and Mary Ann Cowfer**

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