

CAC Meeting Notes for 11/3/22

Attendees:

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| Amanda Turner | James Whitonis | Melissa Kinser |
| Andrew Pennington | Janice Werfel | Melissa Long |
| Andrew Rupp | Jessica Adams | Melissa Martin |
| Andy Wagner | Johnna Casale | Michelle Wright |
| Craig Schield | Kaytlyn Clapper | Nicole Fisher |
| Edward DeAgostino | Kiley Foley | Sherri Hack |
| Holly Hollenbach | Kristie Sharer | Steve Kechisen |
| Jacki Thornton | Lyn Frieda | |

Craig Schield opened the meeting. Craig introduced Jessica Adams as the presenter.

Jessica is the COO of Deafstone Services. With her was Director of Deaf Blind, Adam Drake. Jessica detailed the mission and services provided, and the Deaf Blind Support Service Provider services statewide, which is a vendor for BVRS in providing support employment for adults. She displayed a map indicating the various areas being served.

Jessica shared presented handouts, which were sent out to the CAC members during the meeting. The handouts included instructions for anyone wanting to provide SSP services. The handouts described in further detail what services SSPs do and do not provide, as well as the process to become an SSP. Adam Drake emphasized Act 57 (Sign Language Interpreter and Transliterator State Registration Act of 2004) roles.

An SSP training is coming up at the HGAC on Dec 9-11. It is free to attend, with understanding that the person trained will work for Deaf Blind for at least 40 hours.

Jessica shared contact information both West counties and East counties, as well as her own contact information.

Adam Drake advised there are 14 SSPs and volunteers in the Western area, and that they are actively recruiting additional SSPs. ODH (Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing) is the one who does the training and approval for the SSPs. Shannon White will be teaching the training. She is already qualified as an SSP. You must be 21 years of age or older to participate.

Jessica asked if anyone had questions. Melissa Martin asked about types of Pre-ETS services provided. Jessica replied they provide group services, all Pre-ETS services, professional community experience. Information on the summer program will be forthcoming.

Jessica said if anyone wants to reach out regarding specific needs, they will provide information about the services they can offer for a specific person/case.

Andy said if anyone didn't get the handouts, to reach out to him or to Lyn Frieda for the handouts.

Andy then turned the meeting over to Craig. Craig inquired whether anyone else from the outside wanted to add their name to the list of attendees.

Craig provided a hiring update. He is still acting as the District Administrator for BVRS. He is not sure of the plan going forward but will share that information when he has that. He has been Acting DA for 9 months.

BVRS has 8 vacant positions, a Business Services Rep was just given a final offer and will start on December 5, 2022. All interviews for VRCs have just been completed and the paperwork sent to HR. Our goal is to have them here before the end of the year. An interview for a VR Supervisor was just completed, and they will be having interviews for an Early Outreach Coordinator.

Craig advised that he is coordinating with Andy Wagner for set up the 2023 meeting schedule, which will be provided shortly.

Craig said that if anyone is interested in advocacy, all of our valuable CAC members, it's important for us to have you involved.

NDEAM events were held in October. All events went well, and they were able to spotlight disabilities and share our services with the communities.

Central Office has a lot of "acting" positions and roles, including Bureau Director for both BVRS and BBVS. The Executive Director position is also currently an "acting" role, but Craig anticipates this will be formalized in January.

Craig then turned the meeting over to Andy.

Andy gave an update regarding BBVS hiring. One O&M position was posted and was reposted 3 times, with no applicants. That is currently on hold. The office also has 2 VRC openings, with one added onto the list because of an individual who was working out of class and who is now permanent in that position. We are in the process of interview for those two openings.

Andy thanked Altoona BRVS for the cooperation and participation in the NDEAM events, as well as DuBois BVRS.

BBVS participated in a White Cane Day in State College. White Cane Day is in October every year.

Andy advised that the former District Administrator, Anne Stollo, retired on October 14th, so Andy is the acting District Administrator until that opening is posted.

Andy asked if anyone had any questions. Seeing none, he asked if Craig had anything further.

Craig said he wanted to mention the great meeting with the Blair County CareerLink, and that great success their partnership is with us.

Craig asked if Andrew Pennington had anything he wanted to share. Andrew advised he was appointed Deputy Director of CAP services, effective October 1st. They have been working with Central Office and that the caseload is heavy due to many people going back to work. Andrew did ask about the minimum education requirements. Before the METs were expanded, there were a lot fewer people on their list for interviewing; they had only 1 prior to the change, and then had 17 after the change in MET requirements! Andy shared that BBVS also received a lot more applicants. Andrew then asked were there were issues regarding provider capacity in Pre-ETS employment services. Craig said yes, previously, but that they now have one very new provider, but they definitely need more providers, and they are trying to recruit more providers. There was discussion regarding

providers for Fulton County and people in that area being on a wait list. The more rural the county, the more difficult to find providers. Andy voiced his agreement with difficulty finding low vision doctors and other providers for those rural areas. There was a lot of discussion regarding the hurdles that customers face when they reside in the more rural areas. Andy said that providers of Assistive Technology services is also a big concern.

Craig asked if anyone else had anything to add. Craig said he and Andy were available to reach out to any time; no need to wait until the next meeting.

Craig also asked that people reach out to anyone who would be interested in participating in the CAC.

Craig then closed out the meeting.