

CAC MINUTES
Friday, January 13, 2023
10:00 a.m. OVR DuBois District Office

In Attendance: Bob Mecca, LIFT; Adam Bell, PA Link; Andrew Pennington, CAP; Chris Palmer, OVR; Diana Kreydt, PSU DuBois; Christy Patterson, OVR; Melissa Franklin, OVR; Chris Roken, OVR; Marsha Dippold, Dickinson Inc; Kelly King, The PEAL Center; Kip Stossmeister, LIFT.

Welcome & Introductions: Bob Mecca opened the meeting. There were no questions or changes to October 2022 meeting notes.

OVR Updates

Chris P. shared that the DuBois DO is working on a new strategy for getting word out on OVR services. We are working on a flier that can be distributed and a monthly email blast. Each of our field staff are responsible for reaching out to different populations. We have a lot of referrals that come in naturally through high schools, audiologists, etc., but we are looking at other types of disabilities and those who haven't been involved recently. Other plans include provider meetings and making sure we are reaching the Deaf population. We would appreciate any help you can give getting the word out once we have materials.

District offices are being charged with submitting one success story a month. Some of DuBois' success stories include My Works Program in summer up in Elk County, Collaborative Efforts and NDEAM events.

DuBois DO is in the process of hiring a VRC, CA2 and fiscal assistant staff.

Guest Speaker

Kip Stossmeister LIFT's Adaptive Technology Specialist was guest speaker. He shared a power point on Tech Owl and other programs available through LIFT. Tech Owl is a federally funded nonprofit. LIFT is one of 8 Tech Owl resource centers in the state. Through Tech Owl's Connect with Tech Program, individuals are getting tablets from the Dept of Health and CDC to do telemedical appointments. Anyone that lives in their 6 counties can get online, fill out an application and if approved get one of the tablets. There is no age limit, income requirements or disability requirements. This program is available due to the area we live in and the medical services available. It can assist individuals who can't easily leave their home to be able to consult with medical services out of the area. Individuals who need assistance with completing the online form can call Kip.

Kip also discussed the Lending Library. There are over 10,000 different items that individuals can go on and borrow. You can borrow up to five items for five weeks to try them out before purchasing. The Del Soro fund may be able to help with some of the purchase cost of AT equipment.

TDDP is a free special phone program. Individuals must have a disability; it does have an income limit of 200% of the area's poverty rate. They are moving away from TTYs as the infrastructure to support them is no longer available.

Kip will get the power point to Bob Mecca, LIFT Director, who will forward to the CAC members. There is valuable information there about other programs as well. You can also access the website at techowlpa.org

Kip also reminded the CAC that LIFT has an Exchange Program where they take gently used equipment that has been cleaned up and try to find new homes for it. They can help many people this way.

Check out AT Corner with Kip and Marty on LIFTs Facebook page. He does regular updates.

Chris Palmer, OVR, mentioned that after the AT events in the fall, we did have a few people who tried to access the Connect with Tech program and got hung up on some of the questions. Kip indicated that most people get hung up on the “why do I need the tablet?” He advised that individuals respond that they can not leave their house easily and then towards the end of the application, in the comments section note that they live in a county that has limited health coverage. Chris added that Career Link staff have shared this information and find that people don’t follow through because of some of the questions. Kip advised that one of the questions asks if the individual already has a computer or tablet. Equipment that is over 2 years old is really considered outdated. He reiterated that he is willing to help anyone fill out the application. Chris asked if he had anything that was shareable – something that could help individuals complete the application. Kip stated he would look over their information and provide a “cheat sheet” which could be used to aid individuals in completion of the application.

Missy Franklin, OVR, asked Kip about the turn around time. Kip advised that they are asked to tell everyone approximately 10 weeks as they sometimes have trouble getting the tablets or the cases for them due to supply issues.

Bob Mecca added that it’s important to remember that you only must meet one requirement – limited income, having a disability, primary language other than English, can’t leave home easily, don’t have housing, member of LGBTQ community, racial or ethnic discrimination, living in a place with limited healthcare or impacted by medical discriminations.

Member Updates

LIFT: Bob Mecca updated that LIFT is down to 4 people in the office. They are not sure what they are going to do yet with the vacant position.

If everyone looks up the PA Rehab Council, they asked Bob to write up his success story. They featured his story in their annual report.

They are doing the Expo this year and also a youth conference in early May. It will be virtual again. They are doing a fund raiser this year. Last year was the wine walk. They had 223 participants last year and raised about \$7500. They will be doing that again this year among other things.

Cindy will be spearheading events this year, including the Expo. They need to meet with the representative’s office first. You will need to contact Cindy if you wish to be a vendor at the Expo.

PA Link: Adam Bell had no new updates.

CAP: Andrew Pennington shared that OVR has updated their CAP information on most forms. They have been reaching out to federally funded CILs. They are having some issues with provider agreements and provider letters. Invoices are being sent to their office – especially with college funding. There seems to be confusion with the colleges. They haven’t had anything from DuBois DO, but from other offices. They have mentioned it to CO, but if anyone else is able to do that, it would be appreciated. Chris Roken thanked Andrew for bringing

it to our attention and stated that it sounds like OVR may need to change the language on the PO/invoices. They really appreciate the length everyone at OVR has gone to in order to get CAP's information out there on things. Andrew stated that CAPs information is listed first and he thinks people are just sending it to the first one they see rather than reading it in its entirety. He said it does happen some with closure letters, providers of AT and evaluations; mainly the issue is with college training providers.

The PEAL Center: Kelly King had no new updates.

PSU DuBois: Diana Kreydt stated that Penn State DuBois started back on Monday. Everything is going good. Her students did well last semester. She has a student with a disability who is interested in possibly attending a CAC meeting. Chris P (OVR) and Bob (LIFT) offered to do a conference call with her before next meeting if she would like.

Dickinson Center: Marsha Dippold said that they celebrated NDEAM by highlighting some of their success stories. A former OVR customer is working at the First United Methodist Church in Kane. His goal was to become a pre-school teacher. He is doing Phys ed, circle time, and snack time. They recognized First United Methodist Church as their Community Employer of the Year (inclusive employer). They were given signs they could post in their windows and were recognized on Facebook so others know they should support them. They are on Dickinson's Facebook page.

Dickinson is hiring new staff. One new person started, and they will be looking again. It takes a few months to get individuals up and running.

They are looking at doing some expanding in the Brockway area. They have been interviewing since September.

Marsha recently passed her Benefits Planning testing and is waiting on her certification to come through.

They are closing Elkwood Arts Shop. Items are being auctioned.

Upcoming Events

LIFT: Youth Conference, Wine Walk and Expo were previously discussed. They are looking at doing the Expo at ECC in the high school's cafeteria.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be held Friday, April 14, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at Dickinson in Ridgway. Marsha will have some Dickinson staff present at the meeting.