



# Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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## OVR Policy & State Plan / Customer Satisfaction Committee Minutes for May 2, 2023

### Members Present (P)

### Not Present (NP)

Lynn Heitz (P)  
Julia Grant Barol (NP)  
Paul Fogle (P)

Michelle Paonessa (NP)  
Susan Tomasic (P)  
Jeanette Alexander (P)

Robert Wallington (P)  
Jessica Keogh (P)  
Lorie Brew (P)

**Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present:** James Whitonis, Cheryl Novak, Tracie Maille, Danielle Frascella, Danielle Schmidgall

**Project Staff Present:** Chris Todd, Michelle Gerrick

**Interpreters Present:** Sharon Costa

### CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Lynn Heitz called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM.

### ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions.

### APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

***MOTION was made by Ms. Susan Tomasic to accept today's agenda and past meeting minutes. Mr. Rob Wallington seconded the motion. All were in favor.***

### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

#### OVR Updates

#### Driving & Vehicle Services Policy

- Ms. Danielle Schmidgall provided review and updates for the Driving and Vehicle Services Policy including public comments and clarifications to requirements for providers. The primary policy change is consolidating it from 8 different policies into

one policy with attached forms. Criteria for customer services has been updated to include barriers to transportation, employment and student status, active documented job search, access to a vehicle, ability to afford a vehicle, viability, and cost effectiveness of services, and explored comparable benefits. A newer service being offered is Learner's Permit tutoring which is offered to customers with documented cognitive functional limitations or have attempted to pass the permit test twice without success. Non-adaptive driver training criteria and requirements have also been updated. These services are provided by a Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS), Driving Rehabilitation Specialist (DRS), or a licensed driving instructor. OVR may offer up to 30 hours of non-adaptive driver's training at a time to assist customer with skills needed to obtain a driver's license followed by an evaluation to determine if additional training may continue with family and/or other entities. Adaptive driver training is for individuals that require equipment to be installed in their vehicle and provided by a CDRS and DRS. Vehicle modifications policy changes include modifications must meet standard set by conversion manufacturers, final checkout required for high tech modifications provided by CDRS, DRS, and OVR.

- Mr. Paul Fogle inquired if a customer would only receive services if they were able to afford a vehicle.
- Ms. Schmidgall explained that is only one of the criteria for services and that it can be waived if necessary, depending upon other factors. The waiver would be determined by the District Office Administrator.
- Ms. Lynn Heitz shared safety concerns of driving, liability concerns for OVR, and inquired who determines an individual receives a driver's license.
- Ms. Schmidgall explained that decision would ultimately come from the PA Department of Transportation (PennDOT).
- Ms. Cheryl Novak explained that there are multiples layers of checks and balances to the policy and processes including applying for the driver's permit test, requirement of failing the permit test twice before receiving tutoring services, OVR assistance being provided, and OVR assistance is not unending and is part of the comprehensive evaluation and vocational exploration. Reported that the Department of Labor and Industry's legal team has reviewed the policy during its development, provided input, and has not had those types of concerns. The Commonwealth ultimately issues the driver's licenses, not OVR.
- Ms. Heitz explained that in order to have enough time for review the Policy Committee would like to request that the Employment Supports policy be provided by the June Policy Committee meeting.
- Ms. Novak reported that the reason the timeline for the Employments Supports policy is delayed is because of the amount of public comment that has been received. The availability of the policy draft being provided to the committee will depend upon the timing of the next meeting. Reported that positive changes are being made to the policy draft and she will need to inquire when those revisions will be available for review.
- Mr. Fogle suggested waiting on holding a meeting until after July 4<sup>th</sup> to allow enough time for a draft to be completed. Inquired about discussion of Committee Chair and Vice Chair for the next Fiscal Year.

- Members discussed lack of availability in July and agreed to hold discussion on Chair and Vice Chair during the next meeting.

***MOTION was made by Ms. Susan Tomasic to move OVR's Driving and Vehicle Services policy forward to Executive Committee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jessica Keogh. All were in favor.***

### **Review and Discussion of Draft for Description (a) of the 2024-2028 State Plan**

- Ms. Heitz reported that the first three recommendation for the Draft for Description (a) were reviewed during the previous meeting.
- Regarding recommendation #4 members provided review and there were no changes.
- Regarding recommendation #5 members provided review and requested that further discussion and review be completed during the next committee meeting when additional members are present to assist with clarity and language.
- Members shared concerns regarding a business with the goal of hiring 75% of employees with disabilities including it becoming a congregated setting or workshop, misuse of On-the-Job Training funds, and other issues.
- Regarding recommendation #6 members provided review and suggested including a measurable data point for part 1. Requested including a 10% increase in response rates for the life of the plan.
- Regarding recommendation #7 Ms. Novak requested clarification if members are referring to a list of employers where customers have obtained jobs.
- Members confirmed that would be for a successful closure.
- Mr. Fogle inquired after recommendation #5 is completed what the next step would be and if a vote is required.
- Mr. Whitonis explained once all recommendations and the draft is complete members would most likely need to provide a vote.
- Ms. Heitz explained that a commendation also needs to be included along with providing clarity for recommendation #5 at the next committee meeting followed by a vote to forward to Executive Committee. Description L still needs to be worked on and a collaborative meeting is scheduled with the committee and OVR leadership for May 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Ms. Heitz requested that staff poll for a meeting for June 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Adjourn**

***MOTION was made by Ms. Susan Tomasic to adjourn. Ms. Jeanette Alexander seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.***