



# Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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## CareerLink / WIOA Committee Meeting Minutes for August 15, 2023

### Members Present (P)

Andrew Pennington (P)  
Lynn Heitz (P)

### Not Present (NP)

Julia Barol (P)  
Kara Donatucci Pham (P)

Joan Goodman (P)  
Paul Fogle (P)

**Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present:** Cheryl Novak, Robert Hodapp, James Whitonis

**State Workforce Development Staff Present:** Daniel Kuba, Michael White

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

### CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Mr. Andrew Pennington called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM

### ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

***MOTION was made by Ms. Julia Barol to approve the agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Joan Goodman seconded the motion. All were in favor.***

### Recommendation for Committee Vice-Chair

- Ms. Barol volunteered to serve as Vice Chair of the Committee. Mr. Paul Fogle explained if there are no other volunteers, Ms. Barol will serve as Vice Chair and no further action is required. There were no additional volunteers for Committee Vice Chair.

### PA Workforce Development Updates

## **Mr. Dan Kuba, Deputy Secretary, Workforce Development**

- Mr. Dan Kuba reported that a Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion (DEIA) grant program was released about 6 months ago which is targeted toward the trade industry. The \$500,000 grant has been announced and will help businesses with the recruitment of minorities and people with disabilities. Only a few proposals were received, and plans are being made to determine why that is, what worked well, and what did not. This will be followed by a second round to better target that funding. The grant's success and further outreach efforts will be reported on at future meetings.
- One of the primary concerns of the new Governor's Administration is what is the Commonwealth's plan for the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding. This will provide a massive amount of funding and investments for Pennsylvania. Workforce Development was not going to receive any money through the IIJA or IRA funds but with the efforts of Mr. Brian Regli and other agencies the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Project has been developed to promote workplace equity and economic development by encouraging new On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs, supporting apprenticeships and other established programs, and bolstering the workforce in the IIJA and IRA industries by promoting hiring from underserved communities. This will allow certain employers that meet required criteria to receive up to \$40,000 for each new employee hired and trained in Pennsylvania with a maximum of \$400,000 per contract. Fact sheets regarding these grants will be provided to staff to be shared with the Committee.
- Mr. Pennington inquired who are the interested parties for the DEIA grants. The Client Assistance Program (CAP) sees a lot of individuals going through trade programs through OVR and inquired how they can be better informed about the opportunities provided by the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Project in order to gain access to employment.
- Mr. Kuba explained that there are 4 DEIA grants with approximately \$550,000 of funding and that notification has already been released. This information will be provided to staff to share with the Committee following the meeting. Workforce Development will be providing information sessions and outreach for the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Project opportunities to increase awareness. Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC) and Mr. Ryan Hyde have been amazing to collaborate with. Trainings and outreach will be provided for the referral process for employers.

## **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Updates**

### **Mr. Rob Hodapp, Western Business Services & Outreach Specialist, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**

- Mr. Rob Hodapp reported that all ADA Accessibility reviews have been completed including the affiliate sites. Additional consults and re-evaluations will be completed in the year going forward. Disability 101 trainings for CareerLink staff continue to be completed by OVR staff. OVR's first High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) was

completed this morning with over 100 participants from CareerLink and Workforce Investment Boards. Curriculum includes legal and practical considerations when approaching businesses concerning people with disabilities. Another HIIT training is scheduled for this week which will focus on working with job seekers with disabilities.

- Ms. Barol inquired if the trainings are done virtually and are available to people with disabilities.
- Training format is in person, virtual, and a hybrid of both. HIIT trainings are all virtual, completed on Microsoft Teams, and not currently available to the public but that is something that could be considered for future trainings.
- Mr. Michael White reported that Workforce Development has provided the funding for each of the local Workforce Development Boards to purchase an ADA Accessibility Assessment kit. The individual that created the kits will be providing a training in November to the local boards so that reviews may continue on a regular basis to maintain ADA accessibility and create an amazing experience for people visiting PA CareerLink facilities. Trainings will include staff from the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO), OVR Staff, and the Department of Human Services (DHS).
- Mr. Pennington inquired what is included in the ADA Accessibility Assessment kits. Inquired if there was a list of everything reviewed during the ADA Accessibility Assessments.
- Mr. Hodapp reported that ADA Accessibility kits include tape measure, level, custom tool to measure a ramp to ensure the slope meets ADA requirements, 5 foot stick with a wheel to simulate a wheelchair wheel to measure accessibility for parking lots and other surfaces, tool to measure heights and widths of other ADA requirements such as grab bars, light switches, signage, a door pressure gauge, tool to measure intensity of light, and a tool to measure signage. Will provide a list of what is reviewed to be shared with the Committee.
- Ms. Lynn Heitz reported that she visited her local CareerLink Site in West Chester recently and the Job Access With Speech (JAWS) program was not up to date. Explained that the CareerLink website was not accessible with JAWS and could not register for events. Was informed that other CareerLink sites had similar issues with screen reader technology not being up to date, unavailable, and staff unable to access the software.
- Mr. White reported that the [pacareerlink.com](http://pacareerlink.com) website is fully accessible. However, they have found other sites using the PA CareerLink branding and logo that are not sponsored by PA Department of Labor and Industry may not be accessible. Their legal team is looking into ways to ensure that all websites using Pa CareerLink branding are made accessible or taken offline. Each CareerLink site was provided funding to purchase assistive technology and updated screen reader technology. Will follow up to ensure that screen reader technology is properly installed and up to date at the locations mentioned today. Mr. Pennington requested that this issue be included in the next meeting agenda for follow up.
- Members requested being provided a list of all local Workforce Development Boards and their information including websites, Executive Directors, staff, contact information, and TTY numbers.

## **Accessibility Review of CareerLink Locations, Affiliate Sites and CareerLink**

## **Services**

### **ADA Comprehensive CareerLink Assessments Implementation of Assistive Technology (AT) CareerLink Staff Trainings**

- This topic was previously discussed.

### **Schedule next meetings**

- Members agreed to hold quarterly Committee meetings from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM on November 21, 2023, February 20, 2024, and May 21, 2024.

### **Adjourn**

***MOTION was made by Mr. Andrew Pennington to adjourn. Ms. Kara Donatucci Pham seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.***