

Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting
Monday, November 20, 2023
MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

Suzanne Erb, Shari Brightful, Andrew Pennington, James Whitonis, LaQuenta Montanez, Alexander Shay, Joseph Thomas, Lynn Heitz, Bethany Friedl, Mary Brucker, Lora Swatko Pat Petrone

Suzanne Erb welcomed everyone and asked for introductions. Everyone introduced themselves.

Ms. Erb asked for approval of the minutes. Lynn Heitz made a motion to approve the minutes, Andrew Pennington seconded. The minutes are approved.

Ms. Erb welcomed and introduced Bethany Friedl our speaker for this meeting. Bethany works for Networks for Training and Development and is the Employment and Development Coordinator.

Ms. Friedl spoke on their Stakeholder Event and Phila. On the Job.

ODP Update

- Selective Contracting
 - Residential Strategic Thinking Group drafted performance measures
 - Residential provider survey was published 10/11/23
 - Supports Coordination Strategic Thinking Group
 - Selective Contracting Public Comment

- Public Comment
 - Themes:
 - Finance
 - Workforce
 - Timing of Implementation
 - Quality
 - Impact on Participants
 - Access
 - Residential and SCO Criteria
 - Model

Updates to Selective Contracting Proposal

- Timeline Adjusted – residential implementation January 1, 2025

- Preferred Tier – two paths to obtain preferred status
Two of three services provided during the review period
Meet clinically enhanced standards
- Workforce
Credentialing will not apply to Lifesharing
Front-line supervisors added to turnover standards
- Details added to Standards, Measures and Tiers
- Name change for data analytics vendor to “Performance Analysis Services”
- Added performance standards
Community integration
Participant involvement in advisory and/or boards
Cultural competency
Wellness activities

Is working with OVR on the SWTCIE Grant

PA InVEST Project (Integrated Vocational Engagement Support Team)

- PA SWTCIE Grant
CIE Engagement – PA Family Network – peer to peer
CIE Supports – embedded within businesses
CIE Service/Resource Coordination – integrated resource team (IRT) model to be used within 14c facilities
- Charting the LifeCourse Framework – person driven planning model to be used throughout the project

PA Transition Partners: Pathway to Partnership

- Pathways to Partnership will develop work-based learning opportunities and robust transition planning for students with disabilities as well as opportunities for youth service professionals from OVR, ODP, Education and Centers for Independent Living to participate in professional development.
- Three Components:
Pathways to Partnerships – Professional Development, Capacity Building and Training
Professional development opportunities will be available to all partners on Charting the LifeCourse Framework and Transition Discoveries
Pathways to Partnership – transition discoveries
Pathways to Partnership – work-based learning experiences
- The primary goal of the grant is to build upon and expand the relationships among all youth service providers to support successful school to work transition outcomes for students with disabilities.

Employment First in Philadelphia

Bethany went over the statistics of people employed in Philadelphia and the type of jobs they are employed in. Would like to see more diversified positions in the future.

Then Ms. Friedl compared the 1st quarter of 2022 and 1st quarter of 2023 based on people receiving services, how many are employed, earnings/average earnings.

The next thing discussed was employment outcomes from 7/1/22 to 6/30/23, the number of people receiving services, how many are employed, earnings/average earnings.

Reviewed the Phila. On The Job Website and explained the various links.

There is a two-year strategic plan. The Theme is “Outreach, Connection, Inclusion. Four workgroups are involved: Marketing Talent, Organizational Change, Education and Engagement and Transition Coordinating Council.

Brainstorming and the various items to focus on were discussed. Transportation was an important item during this stakeholder meeting. Transportation is something to emphasize.

Ms. Friedl is co-leader of the Organizational Change work group which they are hoping to get off the ground within the next year.

Has created with the stakeholders a map for locations to outreach.

Bethany then asked if there are any questions.

Suzanne Erb asked if anyone discuss this summer, we had a job fair and was there any mention of actual work to actually get people hired to do the work? They had the opportunity to find out areas where they can do outreaches. Asked Ms. Friedl to elaborate.

Ms. Erb asked if the steering committee is always looking for more hands on deck. Bethany said yes, definitely. Had sign-up flyers on their tables for people to fill out to sign up to help. Suzanne asked if Bethany could very briefly go through the work groups and talk about each one.

Marketing Talent Group – marketing for out-field and bringing more talent in.

Organizational Change Work Group – reach out to provider agencies to figure out what they need most. Need staffing mostly. Wants to get an apprenticeship program started.

Education and Engagement Group – focuses on how we keep people informed and engaged.

This group needs more members also.

Transition Coordinating Council – giving people services as they are coming out of school, how we help them to transition.

Andrew Pennington asked Bethany what they consider stakeholders. She responded anyone who is involved with Employment First and went over a list of agencies they attempt to involve. Andrew said he would like to get CAP on the list of stakeholders. Suzanne said the steering committee meets once a month on the 3rd Thursday. Shari said it would be a great idea to include Andrew on the committee so they can reach out to people to explain who we are and what we do.

LaQuenta Montanez asked what the first step would be for students to return for an additional year, find something that is going to sustain them (up to their 22nd birthday). The first step is to connect them to her agency. The Transition Coordinating Council would be a place to start. Bethany will send her information.

Bethany Friedl asked if there are any other questions and thanked everyone for inviting her to the meeting. Suzanne also thanked her for presenting.

Suzanne stated we didn't get much time to talk about Phila. On the job. This is a website which is undergoing updates and if anyone is interested, please let her know.

Shari Brightful:

Ms. Brightful said good morning and thanked Bethany for the presentation. Both she and LaQuenta are also on the Transition Workgroup.

There was a hiring event on 11/7/23 and 11/8/23 for Philadelphia BVRS and BBVs and Norristown BVRS which went very well. Interviewed for the VRC and VRC Intern positions. This was in person interviews. We will finish interviewing and then make recommendations. Next year we are hoping to have another one and we are very appreciative of the support from leadership as this was their idea.

Since our last meeting, BVRS has brought on four VRC's, have 16 VRC's total at this time.

Goals – 37 MSD. We are still pulling together the numbers for Pre-ETS and are focusing on improving compliance 02 and 10.

Fiscal – some providers have improved in responding to our inquiries regarding reporting and invoicing. Others still need reminders and training. We hope to continue our efforts in the new year.

Philly GOAT Project – Sharon Silverman is working on this collaboration for students who attend the PA School for the Deaf.

Management and the Transition Team are working with several schools on developing unique Pre-ETS opportunities.

HGAC Virtual Presentations – Philadelphia OVR and LaQuenta Montanez from the District worked together to schedule these virtual presentations.

Management and the Transition Team are trying to get more transportation providers.

The Pre-ETS discussion with OVR internal staff and providers went well. Shari's hope is that current providers will expand services, we want to bring on some new providers and develop a

more streamlined process. The results will be less work on staff and providers regarding documentation and hopefully increased compensation for providers.

SPIL (State Plan for Independent Living) Meeting – virtual sessions. We have scheduled a room for the Day Session and Evening Session, December 4, 2023, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in CR 6081 and 6083; 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Betsey Ross Room.

Alex Shay:

Mr. Shay reported BBVS recently made a supervisory change. Arwa Mubaslat was supervising the Social Workers in the Independent Living Programs and Giovanna Ochabillo was supervising the VR counselors. They have switched roles. Joe Thomas supervises the Vocational Rehabilitation Therapists and Orientation and Mobility Specialists.

We are doing good with Pre-ETS. The goal is 82 and we are currently at 51 services. Alex went over how many unique services were completed. Vocational Rehabilitation is slow, 15 closures out of 49. The Social Workers have 37 closures out of 90.

BBVS is working on getting things moved along quickly, the Rapid Engagement Program. Currently we are at 88% compliance, the goal is 90% compliance. Improvement has been from 73%. We are working our best to improve this metric, application to eligibility and progress better at going from eligible to a plan, in high 90's, at 97% in July, now at 100%.

Summer Academy – applications for the program will start in mid-December.

Have found a great amount of recommended devices in assistive technology, mostly wearable, hands-free devices. We will consider these devices if they are helpful.

We've had a bi-optic policy, restricted driving with a bi-optic device the customer can wear. Recently we have had one customer working to attain driving capability. Alex went over the qualifying components people have to complete before getting their license. Andrew Pennington asked how this is funded and about guidance. Alex said it is funded through VR. Andrew asked if this is a guidance document? Alex said yes. Andrew asked if he could provide the document. Suzanne asked Alex to email the document to everyone, Alex will. Andrew said there are a lot of questions regarding this and would like to understand how the process works.

LaQuenta Montanez is receiving a lot of students that require our services and asked Alex if he has been able to connect with Lankenau high school. Alex said no. LaQuenta said she will send him the information.

Alex told Andrew he will reach out to Dawn Sokol regarding distribution of this information (bi-optic policy) since Dawn told Andrew she would provide the information to him.

Suzanne Erb asked if there is much dialogue with Temple in making sure people have a chance to see some of these wearables and other things before they are actually bought? Alex responded

that this service has been mentioned. Suzanne stated some of these devices can be used for other than low vision individuals, Alex agreed. Suzanne asked if the service is not fully funded through BBVS do we offer information on loans they can receive from other agencies. Alex said yes, we inform customers.

Ms. Erb stated if someone is working already and they are losing their vision, they can get a loan through PATF if we cannot push this through in a timely manner.

Mr. Pennington asked if there is no longer a limit on the independent living program. Alex said for this year there is no limit for services. This is decided on a yearly basis.

Mary Brucker asked if someone is working and if the text to speech program is incompatible with their data base system is there any way this can be overcome. She has a client who is in that situation right now. Alex said they work with our AT providers who go on site to see if there is a workable solution but often the systems are not compatible. Andrew Pennington asked if this is an accommodation requested from the employer. Ms. Brucker said she does not know but the employer is agreeable to working to keep this person employed. Lynn Heitz said the employer can hire one of BBVs access technology instructors to do an evaluation of their system to figure out what can work at the employer's expense.

Alex asked if there are any other questions for him.

Suzanne Erb:

Suzanne asked if anyone had anything they would like to share, for example, is there anything coming up in their community with programs they want to share.

LaQuenta Montanez said there is the 5th Annual Transition Services fair on 4/9/2024. She will send out that flyer.

Suzanne asked if there is anything else going on with any other agencies. No one responded.

Suzanne asked if there are any thoughts on when we can hold the next meeting. It was decided that the next meeting will be held on February 12, 2024.

Have happy and safe holidays and thanks.

Motion to adjourn – Andrew Pennington motioned, Lynn Heitz seconded.