



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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OVR Policy & State Plan / Customer Satisfaction Committee Minutes for June 26, from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

Lynn Heitz (P)
Susan Tomasic (P)
Twana Jones (P)

Julia Barol (P)
Jessica Keogh (P)
Sylenthia Dent (P)

Michelle Paonessa (NP)
Paul Fogle (NP)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present: James Whitonis, Chris Harbert, Audrey O'Connor, Cheryl Novak

Project Staff Present: Chris Todd

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Lynn Heitz called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

MOTION was made by Ms. Julia Barol to approve today's agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Sylenthia Dent seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

OVR Updates

- Mr. Chris Harbert reported the next State Board meeting will be in the Philadelphia area in September. He had previously held discussion with PaRC members regarding the OVR Leadership Team holding a listening session and tour in conjunction with the State Board meeting. Employment First data reporting is completed, and they are reviewing the Section 511 information before submitting to the Governor's

Office. The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting is scheduled for July 9, 2024, and the agenda is forthcoming.

- Ms. Audrey O'Connor will be reviewing the initial draft of the Financial Needs Test (FNT) policy internally next week. This will be followed by scheduling meetings for those workgroups. A PaRC representative for the FNT workgroup will be included in that process.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) Interim Year 1 Report

- Ms. Lynn Heitz reported that she reviewed the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) Interim report and explained that it states there are Business Services Supervisors and Counselors in all its District Offices which is not true as not all Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) currently have those positions. Mr. Whitonis will request that correction be made for page 16 of the report.
- Mr. Whitonis reported that they requested adding the even years to the page 15 table showing successful closures to provide a bigger picture of trends on that data. They also requested using the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) definition of the term minority to match the report. Members agreed with this assessment.
- Mr. Whitonis reported that the guidelines for what information needs to be included within the CSNA are included in the Statement of Work and guidelines provided by RSA for all states. Agreed to share the Statement of Work with the Committee.
- Members inquired about the use of Act 26 data within the CSNA and why there is information included from the 2011 Autism Needs Assessment as there should be more recent data available. Ms. Barol explained that there should be more recent data available from studies conducted by Mr. John Butterworth of UMass Boston. Ms. Novak reported that Temple does have access to the Act 26 reporting, they include within the report that the process is broken down into different stages of research and data collection including conducting their own surveys.
- Members explained that the recommendations from the Employment First Oversight Commission (EFOC) have not been included in the report. There is information about the Employment First Act report on page 39 but there have been 2 reports by the EFOC since that time. Members explained that the EFOC recommendations and more recent data from the EFOC 2023 Annual Report should be included within the CSNA interim report. The Committee will share any additional recommendations for the CSNA Interim Report to staff to be forwarded to Ms. Cheryl Novak and Mr. James Whitonis, OVR. OVR will address member concerns with Temple University staff that are working on the CSNA project.
- In reference to the selection process for Temple University conducting the CSNA report, Ms. Novak reported that there is a Statement of Work and then the project goes out to bid through the Commonwealth's Procurement and bidding process which is used for every cycle of the CSNA. The CSNA contract has been awarded to Temple for a number of cycles. The CSNA began in 2011 when it first became a requirement for OVR. RSA provides guidelines on what needs to be included within the CSNA and OVR includes within the Statement of Work areas they would like to

focus on. They receive feedback from the Council on this with the goal to focus on underserved populations to identify needs for services and providers and helps to inform the State Plan. The CSNA does include data and information about each of Pennsylvania's counties.

- Members explained that the data included within the maps on the report is not accessible. Ms. Novak will inform Temple to make this correction and asked the Committee to provide any other accessibility issues they identify to ensure the report is fully accessible.
- Mr. Whitonis explained that the term Underserved mentioned within the report is defined as, In Activities for Underserved Populations, Assistance Listing Number (ALN) 84.315C, the U.S. Department of Education proposed to define "underserved populations" as "Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color." There is also information regarding underserved populations in rural communities, deaf and hard of hearing, people with autism, and others.

Schedule next meeting

- Members requested that the next meeting be scheduled for July 15, 2024, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Ms. Keogh to adjourn. Ms. Barol seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.