

CAC MEETING MINUTES FROM MAY 5, 2023 MEETING

The CAC meeting of the Pittsburgh BBVS office occurred on 5/05/2023 using the Teams platform at 10:00 a.m. The office is at 531 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh PA. Attendance virtual and in office.

In attendance - Some virtually and some in person at the office:

Tom Burgunder, President of GTCB and co-chair of group (in person); Danielle Dawgiello, District Administrator, Jeffrey Durmis, Assistant District Administrator - Pittsburgh BBVS Office; Emily Gindlesperger, 2nd - VP NFBP (virtual); Carla Hayes, Washington County Council of the Blind President (virtual); Lynne Heitz, President NFB PA (virtual); Chip Hitt (virtual); Chris Hunsinger, PCB President (virtual); Greg Lazur, PATTAN Consultant (virtual); Teri Lukes, Beaver County PAB (virtual); Harold Longmore, BBVS Supervisor; Bob Nagy (virtual); Andrew Pennington, CAP program (virtual); Barb Peterson, BVRSP (virtual); Spero Pipakis, BSR – BBVS Pgh (virtual); Sherri Rodgers (virtual); Michael Zaken, Co-Chair (virtual).

Approval of Feb 2023 minutes; motion made to Accept minutes as corrected to include that we added Sherri Rodgers to the CAC by Carla, which was seconded but the name was not recorded. The motion carried.

Staff and hiring Updates:

A new VRC started and the VRC Intern became full time. Harold reported that Donna Lambie retired; Jeff and Danielle are doing the VR supervisor work.

Social Worker Supervisor and VR Supervisor can now both be the same person. No limit indicated for number of employees to be supervised. VRT, Social Worker, O&M, 4 VRC - hoping to hire more. Doing clerical (CA2) interviews; can hire 2 CA2s. Gale Bretti (VRC) is retiring end of June, so hoping to hire 2 more VRCs.

Statistics Update:

As of May 1, 2023, this is the number of cases in the office:
VRT 105; O&M 65, Social Work 304; VRC 462.

New Project:

5S project, which is supposed to correct records to reflect actual cases in the office being worked on. This project was requested by RSA.

Carla brought up the PDF issue where the reading and signing of documents doesn't work well, couldn't print her documents for a wet signature, couldn't do electronic signature. Jeff says that Central Office is working on this issue. Carla said that she was able to do it in the past.

This question came up because we had no yearly goal information. Where is the office in relationship to goals: VRT has met 86% of its yearly goal for cases.

O&M 48 of 72 cases so I don't know how that relates to the May 1 number of 65.

Social Work has more than met its goal for clearances.

The VRC staff has only 20 clearances and the goal for the year is 64. We were told that there would probably be a lot more clearances by the end of the fiscal year. Didn't take into account how many people there were for doing the jobs.

Pre-ETS Programming: -

3 students with paid work experience. Someone went from job shadow to paid work, a good progression.

My Work is developing - a My Work program in Cranberry Township. That program is being controlled by someone in the New Castle BVRs office. Gale has been working on this program for this year with the Pittsburgh BVRs office. My Work is usually municipal. We asked the question where does My Work money come from? it comes from the organization to the person, but BBVS or BVRs authorizes the funds.

My work is municipalities in collaboration with providers and BBVS. BVRSP, for example, is the coordinating provider for Fayette County. Then Paid Work is being found by BVRSP. Paid Work Experience is combined:

Job Shadow

My Work

CMU Event Update:

May 18, 2023 - Having Apple and something about accessibility; Tech-Owl; BVRSP; Tactile Astronomy; David Herd, who did astronomy camp. Lamp will be there and also the Carnegie Museum.

Requested email replies or hard copy replies. They were hoping for more positive responses in those final two weeks before the event.

Summer Programs:

Robotics Camp at BVRSP

Career and Community program at BVRSP

Envision Camp at Penn State Behrand

Summer Academy- wait list one student waitlisted.

Art and Tracy are excited. July 10 through 14, 2023 for CCAP, and robotics July 31 through August 11, 2023. There could be another CCAP group if the demand is there.

Activities of daily living, O&M job readiness and some Assistive Technology. Housing CCAP people at Cambria Suites near the arena. Pithon and Braille Displays brought to us by Gregg from the AER program.

Specialized Services Children:

Kids aged 8 to 14, one week - in the BBVS office. Fab Lab to do something. Also ADL, cooking O&M. July 17 through 21. Emails went out and also hard copy. Having 3 VRTs in the office

BVRSP Programming:

Pre-Promote (Basic Office Skills, or BOS) started in March 2023 and continuing between Promote classes. There are BOS and Promote classes. PABT, Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training, is happening again, running 4 to 16 weeks. Two-week evaluation. Grant dollars are available for Allegheny County And some unrestricted funds for the rest of Western Pennsylvania.

Social Workers at BBVS should send customers aged 55 and older to BVRSP as referral.

Terri from Beaver County PAB told us their employees are getting in touch with the Commonwealth about making White Cane Law more relevant and meaningful for drivers.

OT and Low Vision people:

UPMC Hospital VisionTower is attempting to serve OT and VRT needs for visually impaired people by working on community living skills, O&M. Dr. Sahel and BVRSP are working together. Keep the UPMC questions on the agenda. Vision and Rehab Tower Center- Dr. Smith

Outreach:

Going to AHN program – inclusion for individuals with HIV. There is a correlation with HIV and vision loss to some degree.

BSR – Spero Pipakis:

Cleveland Sight Center Insight, IRS, Inspirotec, Fresh Food Manufacturing. Inspirotec is trying to make things more accessible. Insight has training Highmark is seeking candidates for remote positions. IRS training locally. CareerLink not quite up to date. BBVS office has a public facing computer in its Pittsburgh office for Spero to help people.

Discovery programs at WPSBC, customized employment. Achieva and IU are doing the assessments.

School residence for respite care. Could there be work experience for people? Hunter McGowan is the VR contact and Social Worker is Michelle McCurdy. Specific additional certifications for the people doing the discovery for the customized employment. There is specific training through Rules of RSA. There could be additional organizations with certification. WPSBC Programs for Fall Outreach and presentations

Training Update:

Train the Trainer program, Part 2 - Getting to know BBVS, PowerPoint. Part 2 is something with a workstation showing everyone how to work with a White Cane and VRT stuff.

VR Update:

VR cases will be moving faster with more VRCs. All nine counties are covered. Now 4 VRCs (caseloads divided among 4).

CA MSG tracking grades for college students and report cards. Diplomas for high school students (RSA requirement). How Rapid Engagement will affect intake processes

New Business:

Adding New People to the Group (potential new member): Tim knight from PATTAN suggested by Greg for times when Greg cannot attend.

FNTs:

Financial Needs Test for OVR - Social Security benefits are exempt from FNT. Use the Form 1040 or pay stubs. Subtract \$4720 for dependent, some medical expenses, ILOB income limit in the past has been \$40,000. The contribution rate is 10% of over the needs test limit. We didn't know if the higher thresholds for financial need would be extended after June 30, 2023.

Bylaw review for next meeting.

Next 2023 Quarterly CAC Meeting: Friday, August 4, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by Chris Hunsinger.