

## **CAC MEETING November 3, 2023 Minutes**

The CAC meeting for the Pittsburgh BBVS office was held on Friday, November 3, 2023 beginning at 10:00 AM with some attendees virtual and some in person at the BBVS office at 531 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA.

### **In Attendance:**

Tom Burgunder (president of GTCB) and co-chair of CAC; Danielle Dawgiello (District Administrator, Pittsburgh BBVS Office); Jeffrey Durmis (Assistant District Administrator, Pittsburgh BBVS); Emily Gindlesperger (2<sup>nd</sup> – VP, NFBP); Carla Hayes (WCCB President); Chris Hunsinger (President PCB); Greg Lazzur (PaTTAN rep); Harold Longmore (VR Supervisor, Pittsburgh BBVS office); Andrew Pennington (CAP Representative); Erika Petach (BVRSP Director, with new staff member Dora attending in place of Barb Peterson); Sherry Rogers.

A motion was made by Emily and seconded by Sherry to approve the August 2023 CAC meeting Minutes. The motion passed.

### **Staff Updates:**

BBVS Pgh is almost fully staffed. The office has a new VR Supervisor, Aaron Hill, who started in September 2023.

Lori Jenkins Finley, Fiscal staff, returned October 2023. Miss Kennedy Thomas is a second CA2 and started in July 2023. The office now has two-full time CA2 employees.

The new Supervisor received vision awareness trainings such as White Cane use, Assistive Technology awareness and Disability Etiquette.

Andrew requested the opportunity to bring awareness of CAP functions in the BBVS process to the office staff since there are so many new hires in the Pgh office.

### **Hiring Updates:**

Interviewed for a Social worker who would be the fourth one hired.

Interviewing for the third CA2.

## **Statistics Update:**

The notes didn't note a time period these figures covered. There was a number of 106 successful somethings in the notes that didn't have a category listed.

## **Pending Cases:**

366 cases under VR category; 241 cases under ILOB; 55 cases for children; 12 adults not ILOB or VR; O&M 91 cases.

## **Clearances:**

Vision Rehab - 81; VR - 6; ILOB- 89; O&M - 15

## **Pre-ETS Program:**

There are four students receiving paid work experience: a provider working with a student, job shadowing for one student in theater arts area with Playhouse. They are looking at a job shadowing experience with the Humane Society through ARC.

My Work is a summer job experience working with providers such as the YMCA, or municipal organizations. This is a program for 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Chris Hunsinger suggested Lamp Library for Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians as one place for this project.

Andrew asked about My Work at either BBVS or BVRS.

There is also a program called Professional Connections Experience which has classroom and mock interview experiences. If students complete 30 hours of this program, they earn \$625.00.

Game Masters review:

The owner told his story to the students who were brought to the venue to see the owner as a sort of role model. He has no vision. yet he operates this business.

## **Customer Survey Status:**

Less than 25 questions, 300 participants, 28 responses. The agency is sending to all customers. The reason for most people wanting Assistive Technology training was for personal use. Mentoring was in the top five things people would like to see more of as well as employment

information. Survey didn't address barriers directly. Giving the survey to the CAC for comment, but the survey is already collecting information.

### **BVRSP Staffing and Programs:**

State money line item in the budget, waiting for fiscal code, got private foundation grants, from May to September served 255 people.

Is there a geographical limitation? Barb and Dora will be dividing the service area and the responsibilities that they have jointly.

Dora will work with programs that BVRSP runs in Somerset. In Uniontown the agency has a MyWorks contract. Barb will do VR. But Dora will do rehab.

Dennis Pfeffer is taking over Tracy Morsek's work.

Hired Bruce Story-Mann in March to teach Assistive Technology for phones and tablets. Have been funding that position through grant money.

Starting summer program advertising. Summer program on robotics, looking for grant funding.

In response to Tom's question about old or outdated equipment, Erika said that they had a WiFi issue that was resolved by getting more band width. Erika says she gives people computers that they ask for so didn't know about any old, out-of-date equipment.

Foundation funds Western Pennsylvania activities. The money in the State Code Bill Allocation will serve Pennsylvanians statewide.

They received \$100,000 from the Hillman Foundation and \$102,000 from the McCauley Foundation.

They need more than two students and possibly summer students. Would not work if only four students. Have to solve the supervision issue with people who come for live-in services.

Greg gave the link to a special education section program exposing students both visually impaired and not together.

Unfortunately, that link was in the Teams chat which I couldn't retrieve.

## **Outreach:**

White Cane Day at the new UPMC Vision facility in October 2023 - they talked to doctors, nursing staff etc., some high school students.

Possibly this should have been two different events - one as White Cane event, one for other kinds of devices that people with vision loss can use. BBVS alleged a safety issue using Downtown street or plaza space for this event. Asked for suggestions. Greg mentioned that students and teachers felt that this year's event was worthwhile. Perhaps make an agenda item for the next meeting. Could have a subcommittee to develop next year's White Cane event.

## **Provider Event:**

This was for job coaches and other providers to get more info from BBVS about how to serve the customers with vision loss. The office gave them a primer on how to work with people with vision loss.

## **Western Pa School for Blind Children:**

Nothing new to report on programs with WPSBC and BBVS. Possible referrals to BVRSP.

## **Train the Trainer:**

Additional training and Outreach programs, Disability Etiquette and training new staff. Brought in a third party for teaching accessibility - part 2 (continue for new staff and for event in October with providers)

## **BSR Update from Spero Pipakis:**

Spero has been dealing with CareerLink - working on accessibility for services and programs.

Pharmacy discussion of prescription labeling; did a tour of CVS training and equipment. Can it be accessible? Job coach at Bender for "Cookie Cookie" in Kennedy Township.

## **New Training Placements for BBVS customers:**

APEX, INSIGHT, CLUSIVE

They have 3 customers going into Apex. There are students working with Insight, Cisco Academy, and Clusive. One client with Clusive.

## **VR Update:**

How Rapid Engagement is affecting intake processes.

Now that there are 5 VRCs, caseloads are being divided among 5, but the newer employees are not yet working with a full caseload.

Harold is supervising social workers.

Went through the referrals and cleaned out the ones that were not actual referrals. Outcomes will be reported better to RSA because of new computer systems.

Had a third-party company come to train staff on how to use the enhancements.

This was training using Assistive Technology for the employees with vision loss.

The Workforce Department controls the public facing side of CWDS so BBVS is only able to work within that system. That can mean that staff must assist people using Assistive Technology when they want to set up a referral.

## **CA-MSG tracking grades for college students and report cards:**

We didn't discuss any updates on this issue.

Diplomas for high school students (this is an RSA requirement)

## **ILOB Program:**

CAC members have not received any written information to pass on to people with vision loss about higher spending thresholds at BBVS for older blind individuals, but we were advised to tell people to check with the BBVS office about particular individual needs such as CCTVs or OrCams. No hearing aids yet. Harold 'thinks that SSA money backfills the ILOB program.

## **Adding New People to the Group:**

Greg had mentioned Tim Knight, [tknight@pattan.net](mailto:tknight@pattan.net)

**Low Vision Providers:**

Looking for better ways to get contacts.

They will be meeting with low vision providers on a monthly basis. Harold is the contact.

Next Meeting – 2024 quarterly meetings need to be scheduled. Next meeting should be Friday, February 2, 2024.

**New Business:**

Nothing additional brought up.

Chris motioned to adjourn. Carla seconded.

Respectfully submitted by Chris Hunsinger.