



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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CareerLink / WIOA Committee Meeting Minutes for August 20, 2024, from 1:00PM to 2:00 PM

Members Present (P)

Andrew Pennington (P)
Kara Donatucci Pham (P)
William Paz De Melo (NP)

Not Present (NP)

Joan Goodman (P)
Twana Jones (NP)

Lynn Heitz (P)
Passle Helminski (P)

Ex-Officio Member Present: Julia Barol, Pennsylvania Association for People Supporting Employment First (PA APSE)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present: Chris Harbert, Rob Hodapp

State Workforce Development Staff Present: James Martini, Christopher Manlove

PaRC Support Personnel Present: Chris Todd

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. Passle Helminski to approve the agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Joan Goodman seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Agenda Items

**Progress of the Workforce Coalition / Developmental Disabilities Council / Temple Institute on Disabilities Grant
Trainings, Conferences, Presenters, Mentor Networks, etc.**

- Currently the grant is completed, and the Workforce Coalition will be beginning the Mentor Network in the Fall 2024. They will be working with OVR to begin updating the CareerLink Business Portal that will contain useful information for businesses hiring people with disabilities, to provide technical assistance, and provide an opportunity for businesses to join the Mentor Network. The Mentor Network is a business to business forum designed for businesses to share their experiences and insights with other businesses. There are approximately 170 people signed up for the network with approximately 60% of businesses that do not yet actively hire people with disabilities or do not know if they have employees with disabilities. Mr. Andrew Pennington and members agreed that this is a great opportunity to continue to expand and improve employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and staffing for businesses. Members requested to continue to receive updates on this grant during future meetings.

PA Workforce Development Updates

PA CareerLink website accessibility

RA for contacting PA CareerLinks

- Mr. Christopher Manlove reported that the Digital Intake Form is used statewide at PA CareerLink locations to help them learn more about the people they serve and make better connections to provide services tailored to their specific needs. They are using the forms to study digital intake data to establish a lobby management system to help triage individuals using the CareerLink One Stop services and provide effective referrals. PA CareerLink Awareness Days are scheduled for August 26 to mid-September 2024. This will include job fairs and other events in collaboration with CareerLink partners. The authorization of the WIOA could include the establishment of business services as a measured outcome. They are looking into employing job quality programs regarding these potential business services. The Pennsylvania Career Guide has been released and provide valuable resources for student and job seekers. Members requested that this information be shared with the Committee and that they ensure the guide is accessible for screen readers and available in braille. Members requested the awareness days and guide be made available on the PaRC's social media to educate and inform the public.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Updates

Awareness of Office of Federal Contracts Compliance Program (OFCCP)

regarding Affirmative Action requirements

- Mr. Rob Hodapp reported that when the Office of Federal Contracts Compliance Program (OFCCP) Affirmative Action standards were updated in 2014 his team was tasked with providing education regarding the Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 503) and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA) regulations. Under the new Section 503 guidelines businesses must actively promote to hire people with disabilities at all job levels with a 7 percent aspirational goal. Additionally, an outreach report must be generated every year to send to OFCCP regarding the recruitment of hiring people with disabilities and why

the aspirational goal of 7 percent has not been met. Businesses must also meet the aspirational goal of hiring 8 percent of protected Veterans.

- Ms. Joan Goodman inquired if there was a way using data from the PA CareerLinks to identify if a job was part of an OFCCP contract and if there is a list of OFCCP contractors to inform them of applicants. Mr. Rob Hodapp explained that he believes that there is a way to filter their data to locate that information and will check with his colleagues at OVR. Generally, a lot of big corporations such as medical centers, educational institutes, banking institutes, and manufacturing have Federal contracts. Mr. Pennington requested follow up discussion and a list of these entities be included in the next Committee meeting agenda.

Updates on Accessibility of CareerLink Locations, Affiliate Sites and CareerLink Services

ADA Comprehensive CareerLink Assessments

Implementation of Assistive Technology (AT)

CareerLink Staff Trainings

- Mr. Pennington explained that on-site accessibility efforts have been previously discussed and inquired about previous Committee inquiries regarding Resource Accounts (RA) for contacting CareerLinks and PA CareerLink affiliate website accessibility. Mr. Rob Hodapp will follow up with Mr. Michael White regarding RA accounts. The main CareerLink website is fully accessible. Local CareerLink websites may require accessibility updates regarding screen reader technology and providing additional options to contact sites such as TTY numbers and email. Mr. Hodapp reported he will follow up with Mr. White for an update on affiliate website accessibility. Mr. Manlove reported that they are in the process of updating their Common Identifier Policy which includes tools, images, and language relating to the PA CareerLink Network as a branded property of the Commonwealth. Redeployment of the policy is expected to address locally created portals. They are able to directly address any accessibility issues with the main PA CareerLink portal and website if anyone has concerns, they may inform Mr. Manlove and he will work with Workforce Development staff to remediate any accessibility shortcomings.
- Ms. Heitz explained that there are accessibility concerns with PA Unemployment Compensation (UC) and inquired if they are separate or under the PA Workforce Development. UC is under PA Department of Labor & Industry but is separate from Workforce Development however they both are overseen Federally by the Employment and Training Administration that will be hosting their annual summit in Philadelphia this week with the intention to create stronger linkages between UC and Workforce Development to address some of these issues.

Re-Schedule next meeting, conflicts with November 19th Workforce Development Board meeting

- Members agreed to reschedule the meeting for November 20, 2024, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM.

Public Comment

- Mr. Pennington provided Public Comment as he attended the most recent Workforce Development Board meeting. The Barrier Remediation Recommendations Committee discussed adding a selection box for individuals with a disability for the digital intake form. This will help to better understand the recommendation that has been made. Mr. Pennington explained that the meeting was very interesting, has a lot of very smart people on their Committees, and encouraged Committee members to attend a Workforce Development Board meeting.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Ms. Heitz to adjourn. Ms. Kara Donatucci Pham seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.