



# Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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## **OVR Policy & State Plan / Customer Satisfaction Committee Minutes for May 22, 2025, 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM**

### **Members Present (P)**

### **Not Present (NP)**

Lynn Heitz (P)

Julia Barol (NP)

Christie Cyktor (P)

Sylenthia Dent-Siebenlist (NP) Cindy Duch (P)

Twana Jones (NP)

Julianna Rodrigues (P)

Susan Tomasic (P)

William Paz De Melo (NP)

Andrew Pennington (P)

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

**Project Staff Present:** Chris Todd, Michelle Gerrick

### **CALL TO ORDER**

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Lynn Heitz called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. Quorum was established at 10:12 AM.

### **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

There were no additions.

### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES**

***MOTION was made by Ms. Cindy Duch to approve today's agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Julianna Rodrigues seconded the motion. All were in favor.***

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

#### **OVR Updates**

- Ms. Audrey O'Connor explained there were no additional OVR policy updates at this time. Ms. Lynn Heitz inquired if the \$5 million additional funds for OVR proposed by the Governor's Office would be part of the federal match. Mr. Chris Harbert reported that updates regarding the budget concerns will be provided during the upcoming State Board of VR meeting. The additional funds proposed would be another line item within the budget for allowable costs under the VR program.

## **Description (a) for the VR Services Portion of the 2024-2028 PA WIOA Combined State Plan 2 Year Modification (2026-2027)**

- Members inquired about the number of customers employed through Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVRs) and Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS). Ms. Lynn Heitz explained that agency costs may be higher for customers who are blind because of insurance coverage. Members inquired about ensuring customers that receive tuition reimbursement are employed within their field of study. Mr. James Whitonis explained that he will inquire with the BBVS and BVRs Directors regarding separate lists of employers.

## **Targeted goals for the next cycle of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)**

- Mr. James Whitonis shared the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) Goals and Scope. He inquired if the Targeted Goals for the next CSNA could be reviewed and discussed during the next Committee meeting. The next CSNA will begin January 1, 2026, and will overlap with the end of the current CSNA which ends March 2026.

## **Customer Satisfaction Surveys**

- Mr. Andrew Pennington explained that he would like to share information provided during the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) Spring Conference. Michigan's SRC began working through a 3<sup>rd</sup> part for the administration of their state's Customer Satisfaction Surveys, which are completed at no cost through their state universities. Questions that were included in other states' surveys include discussion at time of exit, tracking the customers' exit from VR for both successful and unsuccessful closures, appreciates the ability to comment on questions but understands that information may be challenging to tabulate and/or create trackable data points. Ms. Heitz suggested that it may be important to add to the status 28 surveys a question to determine the reason a case was closed. This could be a question with several drop-down options to choose from. The options included in the question may be after application, before eligibility determination, before Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Members stressed the importance of the surveys remaining anonymous, listing the status of the case prior to closure, and providing information that does not identify the individual. Mr. Chris Harbert explained that he will inquire with leadership if there is a way to notate Status 28 prior to closure, the reason for closing a case, and note the point in which a case was closed.
- Members inquired if surveys are sent to all customers or are just sent to randomly selected customers. Mr. Ralph Roach reported that all customers that exit the VR program for either Status 28 or Status 26 are surveyed within the CWDS system via the email information that customers provided.
- Members discussed the importance of the surveys allowing customers to provide comments to ensure the information is shared with District Administrators.

### **Schedule next meeting**

- Members agreed to meet again on June 26, 2025, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

### **Adjourn**

***MOTION was made by Ms. Christie Cyktor to adjourn. Ms. Susan Tomasic seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.***