

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) TO THE READING OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (OVR)

Serving Berks & Schuylkill Counties, 3602 Kutztown Road, Suite 200, Reading, PA 19605

Phone: 610-621-5800 / Fax: 610-621-5807 / Email: ra-liovr-app-reading@pa.gov

MEETING MINUTES

NOTE: Document is posted on [Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council \(PaRC\) website](#).

TYPE: Full Committee Meeting (Open To The Public)
LOCATION: Virtual via Microsoft Teams & Call-In
DATE: June 11th, 2024
TIME: 1:00pm - 3:00pm (Approx. 2hrs.)
RECORDED BY: Kim Baskett, RDG OVR District Administrator (Interim Secretary)

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Meeting Start Time

- 1:06pm

2. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

A. Welcome

- Brian - reads heading details of meeting minutes.

B. Mission

- Generally, to identify challenges & make recommendations to the RDG OVR, and help advocate & serve people with disabilities in our community.
- Officially, Call Reading OVR Office for a "CAC To The RDG OVR Brochure."

C. Roll Call

- Brian D'Amico; Chair
- Angel Torres; Vice-Chair
- Judy Yeasted
- Sally Kneipp
- Helen Konnick
- Kim Baskett; RDG OVR District Administrator

D. Guest Introductions

- Jim Whitonis, PA OVR VR Specialist (Representative Guest)
 - Hayley Penn - Youth Engagement Specialist (YES) - Central Region
 - Hunter Stindetz - Youth Engagement Specialist (YES) - Eastern Region

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: AGENDA ITEMS (3 Minute Limit)

- No one from public in attendance.

4. AGENDA (Motion Needed)

A. Motion needed to "Approve" Agenda for today's meeting of 06/11/2024.

- Motion made 1st Angel, 2nd Sally
 - Discussion - Additions, Deletions or Corrections (must be minor in nature)

- None
- ii. All In Favor "Yes", All Opposed "No", Any "Abstentions"
 - In Favor - Unanimous, Opposed - None, Abstentions - None
 - Motion Approved

5. MINUTES (*Motion Needed*)

A. Motion needed to "Approve" Minutes for prior meeting of 03/12/2024.

- Motion made 1st Angel, 2nd Helen
 - i. Discussion - Additions, Deletions, or Corrections (can approve w/corrections)
 - Sally - Page 1 date at top change from 2023 to 2024.
 - Sally - Section were it says Sally motioned to nominate Angel as Co-Chair should say vice-chair.
 - Sally - Questions Kim on several items in minutes.
 - Kim - Provided clarification to Sally on several items in the minutes and no corrections were required.
 - ii. All In Favor "Yes", All Opposed "No", Any "Abstentions"
 - In Favor - Unanimous, Opposed - None, Abstentions - None
 - Motion Approved

6. CAC CHAIRPERSON - REPORT (*Updates & Goals*)

A. Meeting Agenda Format

- i. Review & Revise
 - Brian - Agenda format was reviewed and revised. New agenda format is now being used at today's meetings. Goal is to make agenda look more professional and help with flow meetings. Hold questions & comments until the end of each report to help with flow of meetings.

B. Meeting Minutes Format

- i. Review & Revise
 - Brian - Minutes format was reviewed and revised. New minutes format is now being used at today's meetings. Goal is to make minutes easier to read and follow for future meetings. Kim is live typing meeting minutes on agenda to ease readability.

C. By-Laws

- i. Review & Revise
 - Brian - Not yet completed. Brian & Angel to meet to revise by-laws to correct and bring to full committee for review and approval.

D. Membership Application Form

- i. Review & Revise
 - Brian - Not yet completed. Brian & Angel will review to update.

E. Membership List

- i. Review & Update

- Brian - Priority. List is outdated and needs significant updating. Members are listed who have not participated in years. Brian to reach out to all members to confirm their interest in continued participation.
- ii. Reappointments
 - Brian - Stated that everyone should be reappointed to update membership and roles.

F. Outreach

- i. Flyer Review & Revise
 - Brian - Has been updated but has not been submitted to committee for approval. Brian & Angel to review.
- ii. Brochure Review & Revise
 - Brian - Has not been reviewed and needs to be updated. Brian & Angel to review.

G. Members Comments & Questions (*Challenges / Recommendations*)

- Helen - Would it be helpful to assign general amounts of time to each topic to determine if more time is needed for discussion later?
 - Brian - agreed and thanked Helen for her input. Intention is to keep the meetings flowing and if needed we can assign time limits in the future. Topics too big may be addressed by a sub-committee. Brian, Angel & Kim can discuss.
- Helen - Who would we like to see on our committee? Helen is making more contacts in the Schuylkill/Luzerne area.
 - Brian - People in Berks or Schuylkill counties, current or former customers, educational staff. List is in the by-laws. Anyone who can be advocate for people with disabilities.
 - Helen - Broad definition in by-laws and stated that we may be engaging with people but we may not know it. Helen is interested in leading with marketing to target audience, raise brand awareness.
- Angel - Asked Kim if the membership application used by CACs statewide or just the Reading OVR office?
 - Kim - Stated that she did not know the origin of the document and whether it is used statewide; however, Jim Whitonis might have some insight due to his attendance at other CACs statewide.
 - Jim - Suggested bringing this up at the statewide meeting in July, however he does not recall any discussion about it in other CACs.
 - Brian - stated that the handbook stated it can be adjusted by local CACs.

7. CAC VICE-CHAIRPERSON - REPORT (*Updates & Goals*)

A. PA OVR Statewide CAC Officers Meeting

- Angel - Reported that this meeting is scheduled for 7/9/24 from 9AM - 2PM with a lunch break. Kim submitted agenda ideas to Chris Harbert works at PA OVR

office and is coordinator of the PA OVR Statewide CAC Officers Meeting. Other CACs have submitted input. Important to understand how other CACs handle recruitment, social media, etc. to improve CACs statewide.

B. Members Comments & Questions (*Challenges / Recommendations*)

- Brian - Informed committee that Angel spearheaded the statewide CAC meeting and expressed appreciation for his efforts to make this happen.
- Brian, Angel & Kim plan to attend.

8. CAC SECRETARY - REPORT (*Updates & Goals*)

A. Vacant - Member Needed

- Brian - Expressed that the committee needs an official secretary. Kim is acting as interim secretary and thanked her.

B. Members Comments & Questions (*Challenges / Recommendations*)

- Helen - Has an idea for a possible candidate.
 - Brian - stated Helen can reach out to her contact and describe the goal of the committee, invite her to a meeting, provide the brochure to gauge her interest. Complete member application form if interested in joining.
- Angel - Reported that Renee Deesing expressed interest in Secretary Position but due to her work schedule is difficult to attend. She works until 2:00 PM and will try to join in today.
- Brian - Asked if it would be helpful to move meeting back to later start to allow Renee to participate, and then bring it to the committee for input & vote?
 - Angel - Will follow up with Renee to get more feedback from her.

9. RDG OVR - REPORT (*Updates & Goals*)

- Kim Baskett gives following report.

A. Staffing Data

- Total compliment: 31
- Total vacancies: 8
- Assistant District Administrator (ADA) = 1
- Vocational Rehab Counselors (VRC) = 4
- Business Services Representative (BSR) = 1
- Local Office Fiscal Assistant (LOFA) = 1
- Clerical Assistant 2 (CA2) = 1
- 8 (1 ADA, 4 VRC, 1 BSR, 1 LOFA, 1 CA2)

B. Customer Data

- Data from 07/01/2023 - 05/31/2024
- Referrals: 1,359
- Initial Interviews/Intakes: 861
- Eligibilities: 863
- IPE's (Initial & Amendments): 1,157

- Status 26 (successful) case closures: 165 (goal = 174)

C. Current Programs & Announcements

- Rapid Engagement: is for status 02's & 10's cases.
 - Status 02 are customers that moved from referral to initial interview.
 - Status 10 are customers that moved from status 02 to status 10 and they become eligible and the IPE are written.
 - Timelines are set by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)
 - Timelines are 60 days to move to status 02.
 - Timelines are 90 days to move to status 02 to status 10.
 - Timeline may seem long but takes a while for interviews and collecting records.
 - RSA says should be at 100% compliance but 90% is acceptable.
 - RDG OVR was at 100% for month of May, and at 90-100% since November 2023.

D. New Programs & Announcements

- Newsiest program is expansion of Project Search in Berks County.
 - Located at Penn State Saint Joe's Hospital in Bern Township.
 - Started at Downtown Hospital then moved to Rt. 183 hospital.
 - Going for 6-7 years.
 - A lot of students interested ever year.
 - Receiving increased numbers of students interested each year.
 - Enrollments are 8-10 students but can go to 12.
 - Reading School District is very involved with referrals to project & OVR.
 - Added 2nd Project Search site at Double Tree Hotel in downtown Reading.
 - Double tree site is starting this school year in Aug. 2024
 - Name of site is Replication Site.
- Cooperation with BCIU & Goodwill.
- Reading DO working to bring on board a new Youth Ambassador for Berks County

E. Members Comments & Questions (*Challenges / Recommendations*)

- Sally - What happen to BCTCC program?
 - Kim - believes this is in reference to the Work Partners program which OVR & BCTCC had a previous inter-agency agreement for Service Occupations students. This program is no longer in effect.
- Judy - Good job with the hard work with short staff and great numbers!
 - Kim - Thank you very much.
- Angel - Observed that Hayley & Hunter dropped off the call around 2:00 pm!
 - Brian - Asked what areas they cover?
 - No one knew at this time what areas they are working in.
- Brian - What is the current telework schedule for staff?

- Kim - Staff can telework up to 3 days per week but must go to any requested meetings.
- Brian - How does a customer setup a meeting or apply for services?
 - Kim - VRC Initial intake meeting should be in person. This helps build relationship, plus important documents need to be signed. All other appointments can be virtual or by teams or in person. Typically don't meet in home, can meet in Reading office or different facilities.
- Brian - Does RDG OVR have any part time staff?
 - Kim - OVR doesn't have part time staff.
- Brian - Does RDG OVR have any VRC working overtime?
 - Kim - Yes
- Brian - Does RDG OVR have any interns?
 - Kim - None at this time. In certain situations an internship may be available if its need for schooling and then they become a VRC.
- Brian - Does RDG OVR have any customer on a waiting list?
 - Kim - there is no waiting list.
 - Brian - What is happening to 110 customers in Schuylkill County waiting for services?
 - Kim - OVR does not have a waiting list, we have an open order of selection. Only wait customers have is vacant cases covered by overtime VRC. That number again is a moving target because of staffing issues. Customers are assigned every 2 weeks or they are in the cue to be assigned.
 - Brian - At previous meeting we had 110 customers in Schuylkill County waiting for services. What is happening to those customers in Schuylkill County waiting for services?
 - Kim - RDG OVR has hired 2 fulltime staff in Schuylkill County and those customers are in the cue to be assigned to VRC.
 - Brian - How many customers are in the cue to be assigned and what is time frame for them to get a VRC?
 - Kim - Don't have the cue number right now, but we try to assign them every 2 weeks. Number is moving target. Supervisors are helping cover the unassigned customers in Schuylkill County.
 - Brian - What is an average time for customer to be assigned a VRC?
 - Kim - Once receive referral we have 5 days to be assigned VRC, than 5 days from that to get application started.
- Brian - Our minutes and agenda are not current on our CAC webpage on the PaRC website. Who is our contact at OVR or PARC to post our minutes and agenda?
 - Kim - She forwards all documents to Jim.

- Jim - He is waiting for current agenda and minutes to send off to PaRC and get them updated.
- Sally - Commented that handbook sent around was from 2013.
 - Brian - agreed with Sally and commented handbook on PaRC website says last updated on 2017. Also 2017 handbook says Cheryl Novak or Lee Ann Stewart is the contacts to post on PaRC website.
 - Jim -The CAC Handbook was updated in 2023 and he shared link in the chat to the posted handbook on the PaRC website. The handbook information is incorrect and needs to be updated. He is the current contact for RDG-OVR to get information posted on the PARC website for the CAC.
 - Brian - Asked to clarify, that we send documents or information to RDG-OVR and or Jim directly and Jim will send to PARC staff to post?
 - Jim - that is correct.
- Brian - Kim included a copy of the OVR Annual Report with the meeting invitation. Thank you for sending out report.

10. NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (*Mission Related*)

A. Members Comments & Questions (*Challenges / Recommendations*)

- None

11. OTHER BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (*Disability Related*)

A. Blue Mash Trail System Plan Review

i. <https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Blue-Marsh-Lake/>

- Brian - Blue Marsh wants to rehab their trails, and has a Trail System Plan. They are asking for public input on their plan. I made comment asking them to make trails more accessible. If you would like to make comment you can follow link for more information.

B. Members Comments & Questions (*Challenges / Recommendations*)

- Angel - Are there any dates that OVR staffs are going to Schuylkill County or local for outreach?
 - Kim - They just finished some local outreach, but none coming up.
- Brian - suggested that we invite potential providers to do presentations for the CAC on their services they may provide to help the CAC reach its mission.
 - Kim - suggested the CAC begin compiling a list of potential businesses. All businesses have to be vetted by OVR before becoming a provider.

12. PARTNERS & RESOURCES

A. (Rdg OVR) Reading Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation Contact Info.

i. See Above Letter Head

B. (Pa OVR) Pennsylvania Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation Contact Info

i. Phone: 800-442-6351 / TTY: 866-830-7327 / www.dli.pa.gov

C. (Pa RC) Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council Contact Info

i. Phone: 888.250.5175 / TTY: 888.559.2658 / parehabilitationcouncil.org

D. (Pa CAP) Pennsylvania Client Assistance Program Contact Info

i. Phone: 888-745-2357 (voice/711Relay) / www.equalemployment.org

13. NEXT MEETING

A. Date - September 10th, 2024 (1:00pm - 3:00pm Approx. 2hrs.)

B. Members Comments & Questions (*Challenges / Recommendations*)

- None

14. PUBLIC COMMENTS: NON-AGENDA ITEMS (3 Minute Limit)

- No one from public in attendance.

15. CLOSING REMARKS

A. Members-at-large

B. Officers

C. Chair

- None

16. ADJOURNMENT (*Motion Needed*)

A. Motion needed to "Approve" Adjournment for today's meeting of 06/11/2024.

- Motion made 1st Sally, 2nd Angel

i. Discussion - Additions, Deletions, or Corrections

- None

ii. All In Favor "Yes", All Opposed "No", Any "Abstentions"

- In Favor - Unanimous, Opposed - None, Abstentions - None
- Motion Approved

B. Meeting Ending Time

- 3:02pm