

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

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

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

TYPE:	Full Committee Meeting (Open To The Public)
LOCATION:	Abilities in Motion, 755 Hiesters Ln, Reading, PA 19605 (In-Person, Virtual, or Dial-In)
DATE:	March 18 th , 2025
TIME:	1:00pm - 3:00pm (Approx. 2hrs.)
RECORDED BY:	McKenzie Hollenbach, RDG OVR CAC Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Meeting Start Time

- 1:14 p.m.

2. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

A. Welcome

- Chairperson Brian; welcomes all to CAC RDG OVR Meeting, 1st meeting of year, hope all is going well.
- Thank you to AIM for their Partnership for allowing us to use their facility for today's meeting. Hope to continue and develop that partnership.
- Thank you to committee member Angel for helping setup with AIM of today's meeting.
- Thank you to members taking 2025 meetings Poll for meetings and Andrew for setting up poll. Hope we can utilize web resource (Doodle) for future polls. He received positive feedback for using poll.
- Glad to announce that he was in communication with PA OVR on using Glean transcription service provided by Kutztown University. PA OVR had no issues with us using the Glean service.
- Thank you to KU for their partnership for allowing us to use Glean. Hope to continue and develop that partnership. We will be using Glean service going for our minutes. He feels this would be helpful for all CAC's to use.
- A discussion was held regarding the use of a transcription service for CAC meetings.
 - Conflicting guidance from OVR's central office raised concerns about whether transcription services could be used.
 - Kim questioned; who was the contact person at PA OVR because her supervisor said OVR employees were not allowed to be recorded?

- Brian answered; Chris Harbert was contact person and he in this current meeting.
- Chris answered; he was in contact with his management team.
- Kim; stated her supervisor told her OVR employees are not allowed to be recorded.
- Kim & Chris; instructed McKenzie to stop the recording and she stop the Glean Service.
- Brian; his opinion the CAC does fall under Sunshine Act. We also have by-laws which were voted on and passed that states we do.
- Andrew; was just at another CAC were they recorded the meeting and it should be constant across all CACs.
- Jim; stated information he got from OVR central office is CACs do not fall under the Sunshine Act.
- Helen; stated she has paralegal background and since CAC has no authority to make discussions she feels CAC does not fall under Sunshine Act.
- Brian; stated the CAC does evaluate and recommends polices and producers and feels the CAC does fall under the Sunshine Act. He also noted agencies and individuals can be held responsible and even sued for violating the Sunshine Act. He requested a letter from the PA OVR legal department weather CAC's fall under the Sunshine Act and if meetings can be recorded.
- Chris Harbert; will follow-up with his supervisors and the OVR's legal department for official clarification and get back to our CAC with more information.

B. Mission

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

C. Roll Call

- i. CAC Members Present: 5 (quorum confirmed)
 - Brian D'Amico, CAC Chairperson
 - Helen Konnick, CAC Co-Chairperson
 - McKenzie Hollenbach, CAC Secretary
 - Angel Torres, CAC Member
 - Andrew Pennington, CAC Member
 - Judy Yeasted, CAC Member
 - Kim Baskett, RDG OVR Representative
- ii. CAC Members Absent: 1
 - Natalia Piszczek, CAC Member

- Brian questioned; does not know if Natalia is a member, was she sent a membership status form.
 - Kim answered; she was approved but not sent a status form yet.
 - iii. Guest Introductions: 4
 - Jim Whitonis, PA OVR VR Specialist (Representative Guest)
 - Chris Harbert, OVR State Board Administrator
 - Stephanie Quigley, Executive Director Abilities in Motion
 - Jennifer Hayes, Executive Assistant Abilities in Motion
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: AGENDA ITEMS (3 Minute Limit)
 - Stephanie Quigley & Jennifer Hayes welcomed the CAC and expressed their support for continued collaboration.
- 4. AGENDA (Motion Needed)
 - A. Motion needed to "Approve" Agenda for today's meeting of 03/18/2025.
 - Motion made by Andrew, seconded by Helen.
 - i. Discussion - Additions, Deletions or Corrections (must be minor in nature)
 - None
 - ii. All In Favor "Yes", All Opposed "No", Any "Abstentions"
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- 5. MINUTES (Motion Needed)
 - A. Motion needed to "Approve" Minutes for prior meeting of 09/10/2024.
 - Motion made by Andrew, seconded by Angel.
 - i. Discussion - Additions, Deletions, or Corrections (can approve w/corrections)
 - None
 - ii. All In Favor "Yes", All Opposed "No", Any "Abstentions"
 - Motion approved unanimously.
 - B. Motion needed to "Approve" Minutes for prior meeting of 12/10/2024.
 - The minutes were not yet available.
 - Motion to table made by Brian, seconded by Angel.
 - i. Discussion - Additions, Deletions, or Corrections (can approve w/corrections)
 - None
 - ii. All In Favor "Yes", All Opposed "No", Any "Abstentions"
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- 6. PA OVR - EMPLOYEE INTRODUCTION (Chris Harbert, Admin. To State Board of VR)
 - Brian asked Chris to attend today's meeting and give short introduction on himself and what his job description is for PA OVR and how he works with the CAC's.
 - A. Overview of Job Duties & Responsibilities
 - Chris Harbert, OVR State Board Administrator, introduced himself and provided an overview of his role, which includes facilitating State Board

operations, acting as liaison for various OVR-related organizations, and assisting in policy and program development.

B. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- CAC members thanked Chris for his work he does for CAC's.

7. PA OVR CASE PROCESS - PRESENTATION (Kim Baskett - RDG OVR DA)

A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- Kim provided an overview of the OVR Case Process, using a Power Point Presentation covering the steps from referral to eligibility determination and individualized plan for employment (IPE).
- Referral to Assignment: 5 days
- Application Processing: 5 days
- Eligibility Determination: 60 days
- IPE Development: 90 days
- Key timeframes discussed and what is consider Rapid Engagement.
- Brian; questioned is item #5 considered status 10?
- Kim; answered yes.
- Brian; questioned is total time from status -1 to status 10, 70 days? And is that the 100 compliance period we hear about?
- Kim; answered yes but there is another compliance period after the 70 days.
- There was a discussion about ensuring consistency and transparency in how eligibility and category placement decisions are made, especially considering Order of Selection changes.
- Kim will send McKenzie Hollenbach a copy of the power point presentation to be sent out with meeting minutes.

8. CAC CHAIRPERSON - REPORT (Updates & Goals) (Brian D'Amico)

A. CAC Webpage on PARC Website

- i. Updated with Documents and text.

Link: <https://parehabilitationcouncil.org/resources/citizen-advisory-committee/reading-district-office/>

- CAC's webpage on the PA Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) website has been consistently updated. CAC members are encouraged to review and utilize.

B. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

9. CAC VICE-CHAIRPERSON - REPORT (Updates & Goals) (Helen Konnick)

- Updates on PA CareerLink OVR 101 training sessions (March 24th, 25th and 27th)
- Opioid Crisis Gant: Available in Schuylkill County for employment services / collaboration for workforce development initiatives.

A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

10. CAC SECRETARY - REPORT (Updates & Goals) (McKenzie Hollenbach)

- Nothing to report at this time.
 - A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
 - None

11. RDG OVR - REPORT (Updates & Goals) (Kim Baskett)

- OVR Rep not available during this portion of the meeting; updates will be provided at a later time.
 - A. Staffing Data
 - B. Customer Data
 - C. Current Programs & Announcements
 - D. New Programs & Announcements
 - E. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
 - None

12. PA OVR - REPORT (Jim Whitonis, PA OVR VR Specialist)

- Effective April 1, 2025, PA OVR will implement Order of Selection:
- MSD (Most Significantly Disabled) category remains open.
- SD (Significantly Disabled) and NSD (Not Significantly Disabled) categories will be placed on a waitlist.
- If budget cuts occur, MSD may also be subject to closure.
- Discussion about how district offices will manage waitlisted cases and the impact on new applications.
- Federal Budget Updates: A continuing resolution is in place until September 30, 2025. Currently, there is uncertainty regarding long-term VR funding.
 - A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
 - None

13. PA CAP - REPORT (Andrew Pennington, Co-Director PA Client Assistance Program)

- Increase in waiver requests due to funding limitations in post-secondary education support.
- Concern over trial work experience delays leading to extended case closures.
- Discussed potential of using OVR to create a uniform waiver system to reduced disparities between district offices.
 - A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
 - None

14. NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (Mission Related)

- A. PA OVR Case Process - Presentation (Status-1)
 - i. Clerical Staff - Overview of Job Duties & Responsibilities
 - ii. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
 - CAC members are interested in extending an invitation to OVR clerical staff to present at the next CAC meeting to discuss intake and case

management procedures, to provide CAC members with a better understanding of the OVR Case Process starting from the beginning of process.

- Brian; will email Kim an invitation request to continue OVR Case Process presentation.

B. Outreach

- i. CAC Brochure
- ii. CAC Facebook: Example of Wilkes-Barre, PA CAC
Link: <https://www.facebook.com/nepaCAC>
- iii. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
 - Vice Chair Helen proposed creating an Outreach Subcommittee to the following: CAC Brochure (informational and accessibility updates), Facebook & Digital / Social Media presence, as well as community engagement strategies.
 - Chairperson Brian; agreed and created the RDG CAC Outreach Workgroup. He appointed Helen as Chair of Outreach Workgroup and asked for volunteers to serve.
 - Members volunteered are McKenzie Hollenbach, Angel Torres, and Andrew Paddington with Kim Baskett's assistance.
 - Helen will send an email to McKenzie, Angel and Andrew, so they can determine the best time to schedule an initial meeting. Further updates on the Outreach Workgroup will be provided at the next CAC meeting.

C. PA State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Meeting - 03/11/2025

- The State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Minutes is available online.
 - i. Link: [Agenda & Minutes](#)
 - ii. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
 - None

15. OTHER BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (Disability Related)

A. Members Comments, Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- There was some discussion regarding PA CareerLinks.
- CAC members are encouraged to review updates on PA CareerLink for collaborations.

16. 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

17. NEXT MEETING

A. Date: June 17th, 2025 (1:00pm - 3:00pm Approx. 2hrs.)

B. Location: PA CareerLink-Schuylkill County, 203 E Arch St, Pottsville, PA 17901

C. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- Angel will be going to Schuylkill County CareerLink to verify setup of meeting room.

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

- None

19. CLOSING REMARKS (Members Only)

- Chairperson Brian emphasized the importance of both positive feedback as well as constructive feedback to improve services for individuals with disabilities in the state of PA and encouraged members to submit agenda items for upcoming meetings.

20. ADJOURNMENT (Motion Needed)

A. Motion needed to "Approve" Adjournment for today's meeting of 03/18/2025.

- Motion made by Angel, seconded by Helen
 - i. Discussion - Additions, Deletions, or Corrections
 - None
 - ii. All In Favor "Yes", All Opposed "No", Any "Abstentions"
 - Motion approved unanimously

B. Meeting Ending Time

- 3:26 p.m.