

**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](#).*

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TYPE: Full Committee Meeting (Open To The Public)  
LOCATION: PA CareerLink-Schuylkill County, 203 E Arch St, Pottsville, PA 17901  
(In-Person, Virtual, or Dial-In)  
DATE: June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
TIME: 1:00pm - 3:00pm (Approx. 2hrs.)  
RECORDED BY: McKenzie Hollenbach, RDG OVR CAC Secretary

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1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Meeting Start Time

- 1:17 p.m.

2. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

A. Welcome

- Chairperson Brian; Welcomes all to CAC RDG OVR Meeting, hope all is going well.
- Thank you to PA CareerLink-Schuylkill County for their partnership and allowing us to use their facility for today's meeting. Hope to continue that partnership.
- A discussion was held regarding the use of a transcription service (*Glean*) for CAC meetings.
- OVR Representative Kim, noted that OVR legal department representative Deb Schwartz expressed only one concern: *Glean* is not an OVR-owned application. McKenzie clarified that *Glean* is a cloud-based application, and she is the only individual with access to the audio recordings stored there. Recordings are used for the purpose of transcribing meeting minutes. Deb Schwartz feedback was relayed by Kim to the group to ensure transparency and compliance.
- Chairperson Brian emphasized that OVR Central had already reviewed and approved the use of *Glean* and that there were no issues with its use.
- Governor's Office Management Directive 205.34 and the Commonwealth IT Acceptable Use Policy was referenced during the discussion. Chairperson Brian specifically highlighted Page 3, Policy Subsection D, which states that authorized users shall have no expectation of privacy when using IT resources, and Page 13 Item 12, Recording Consent Subsection B, which states that participants are considered to have consented to recording by remaining in the meeting once recording is announced.

- There was a lengthy discussion today and at previous meetings on our CAC using a transcription service for recording our meeting minutes. The RDG DA relayed all PA OVR employees have signed the Management Directive 205.34 but the PA OVR legal department had a question regarding ownership of Glean System. Kutztown University has a contract for using Glean and for CAC purposes it is used for recording minutes. There was a consensus to move forward using the Glean system to record the CAC minutes.
- The group agreed to proceed with the transcription using Glean.

#### 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

- CAC Members Present: 5 (quorum confirmed)
  - Brian D'Amico, CAC Chairperson
  - Helen Konnick, CAC Vice-Chairperson
  - McKenzie Hollenbach, CAC Secretary
  - Angel Torres, CAC Member
  - Andrew Pennington, CAC Member
  - Kim Baskett, RDG OVR Representative
- CAC Members Absent: 2
  - Judy Yeasted, CAC Member
  - Natalia Piszczek, CAC Member
- Guest Introductions: 3
  - Jim Whitonis, PA OVR VR Specialist (Representative Guest)
  - Rene Desing, CAC Guest / PA Schuylkill County
  - Alex Sanko, CAC Guest / PA Schuylkill County

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

- None

#### 4. AGENDA (Motion Needed)

A. Motion needed to "Approve" Agenda for today's meeting of 06/17/2025.

- Motion made by Helen, seconded by Brian.
  - Discussion - Additions, Deletions or Corrections (must be minor in nature)
    - None
  - 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 12/10/2024.

- Motion made by Angel, seconded by Brian.

- 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 03/18/2025.
    - Motion made by Andrew, seconded by Brian.
      - i. Discussion - Additions, Deletions, or Corrections (can approve w/corrections)
        - Angel noted two minor corrections: Helen's title should be updated from "Co-Chairperson" to "Vice Chairperson," and Andrew's last name is misspelled in one instance.
      - ii. All In Favor "Yes", All Opposed "No", Any "Abstentions"
        - Motion approved unanimously with the understanding that the CAC Secretary will make the noted corrections and then forward the updated version to Brian.
- 6. CAC CHAIRPERSON - REPORT (Updates & Goals) (Brian D'Amico)
  - A. Meeting Minutes
    - i. Importance & Accuracy
      - Brian shared that Meeting Minutes from 2019 through 2022 have been cleaned up and properly uploaded to the PaRC website (link below). However, there are significant issues with the 2023 and 2024 Minutes, which remain inconsistent or missing entirely.
      - Link: <https://parehabilitationcouncil.org/resources/citizen-advisory-committee/reading-district-office/>
      - The 09/12/2023 Minutes are missing; the 12/12/2023 Agenda links to incorrect Minutes; and both the 12/12/2023 & 03/12/2024 Minutes appear to be duplicates. The 12/12/2023 Minutes have been lost.
      - The need for a reliable system was highlighted, noting that inaccurate or missing Minutes hinder transparency and the CAC's ability to review past discussions and decisions.
      - This concern mirrors similar issues raised at the PARC meeting regarding the lack of updated state board minutes, which reportedly have not been posted since 2021.
      - Brian is continuing efforts to correct the errors and ensure accurate records are made publicly available.
    - B. Create: "Recommendation Notice" To PA OVR AD-Hoc Workgroup
      - i. 1 Chair & 2 Volunteers
        - A recommendation for future discussion on a future agenda.
    - C. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
      - None

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

- Helen shared an update on recent outreach efforts in collaboration with OVR and Schuylkill County; Helen had distributed a list of facilities where the Opioid Grant and Reentry Grant would be presented.
- Elizabeth Mitchell, OVR's Business Services Representative, joined Helen at two events: the State Correctional Institute in Frackville and the Veterans Cross Talks event held recently in Schuylkill County. Helen highlighted the positive networking outcomes and early success of the outreach program. OVR has been invited back to both events.

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

- None

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

- No updates at this time.

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

- None

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

### A. Staffing Data

- There are currently two vacancies for Berks Adult Counselor positions. A third Counselor, who currently handles ODP referrals and supervises several post-secondary institution partnerships, is scheduled to leave on 07/11/2025, having accepted a promotion with another OVR Office.
- A long-term leave is in effect for a Spanish-speaking Counselor in Berks County who serves both students and adults. The Counselor is expected to return in November 2025.
- A Clerical Assistant 2 position has also been vacant since March 2025 due to a retirement. This was the RDG OVR Office's only Spanish-speaking clerical staff member. Kim shared that this has created challenges in serving the Spanish-speaking population.

### B. Customer Data

- Reporting Period: 07/1/2024 - 05/30/2025
- Referrals Received: 1,079
- Intake Appointments Held: 737
- Eligibility Determinations: 672 eligible, 32 additional individuals found eligible but currently on the Waitlist
- Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs): 1,128 (initial and amendments)
- Successful Closures: 236 (Goal was 141)
- Because of the current change in OOS there currently is a wait list.
- Due to Order of Selection changes effective 04/01/2025, only individuals in the Most Significantly Disabled (MSD) category are currently being served.

- Significantly Disabled (SD) and Not Significantly Disabled (NSD) categories are on a Waitlist; RDG OVR currently has 34 individuals on their Waitlist.
- A statewide release of individuals from the Waitlist is expected on or around 07/01/2025. Release decisions will be based on referral date and available resources.

#### C. Current Programs & Announcements

- Effective 02/01/2025, the income exemption was reduced from \$100,000 to approximately \$46,000. All customers must complete the FNT form, but SSI/SSDI recipients (based on their own disability) are automatically exempt from contribution.
- Effective 07/01/2025, the "Not Significantly Disabled" (NSD) category will be renamed to "Disability" (D). Criteria for the Most Significantly Disabled (MSD) category will increase from three to four functional limitations.

#### D. New Programs & Announcements

- Approximately 30 students in Berks & Schuylkill Counties will participate in "My Work", a summer paid work experience program for high school students. Partnerships include municipalities and nonprofit organizations. Five programs are operating in Berks County and two in Schuylkill County.

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

- Brian requested that data on unsuccessful case closures be presented at the next scheduled meeting, including information on when during the case process the closures occurred. Kim clarified that while the available categories indicate the stage at which the case was closed, they do not capture the specific reasons for the closure.

### 10. CAC OUTREACH WORKGROUP - REPORT (Updates & Goals) (Helen Konnick)

#### A. CAC Invite Letter Update

- The Outreach Workgroup has drafted a revised CAC Invite Letter; edits were reviewed during the meeting. Brian provided feedback:
- Use CAC letterhead for consistency and then rename the letter to avoid redundancy with OVR CAC already in the header.
- Provide clarification that the letter is from the CAC, not the RDG OVR Office, and refine references to the counties served.
- Update language to reduce any repetition and to better align with the CAC bylaws and mission statement. Update section to invite recipients to attend a CAC meeting as a guest first, rather than applying.
- Include RDG OVR Office contact information for follow-up.

#### B. CAC Brochure Update

- New draft of the CAC Brochure was shared. Helen noted that the goal is to create a version that can be printed in color and black and white to increase accessibility and usability across settings. Brian provided feedback:
- Incorporate more photos to improve visual appeal; avoid large blank or solid-colored areas to reduce printing costs.
- Add logos or contact information for partner organizations, such as CareerLink, Abilities in Motion, CAP Program.
- Align language with CAC bylaws, specifically update to use terms: "Mission" and "Functions and Responsibilities".

#### C. CAC Flyer Update

- Not reviewed in detail during the meeting, as updates as final designs are still in progress. Will be addressed in the next Workgroup meeting.

#### D. CAC Facebook Page Update

##### i. Example of Wilkes-Barre, PA CAC

- Discussed launching CAC Facebook page to expand outreach.
- Concerns regarding moderation and monitoring were raised. Options such as requiring admin approval for posts were discussed.
- Wilkes-Barre, PA CAC Facebook page (link below) was cited as a successful example. Link: <https://www.facebook.com/nepaCAC>

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

- Feedback received will be discussed during the next scheduled Workgroup meeting, and any decisions made will be shared during the next CAC meeting.
- Discussion on whether to list a general CAC email on outreach materials. Final decision was tabled for further discussion by the Workgroup during next scheduled meeting.
- General support was expressed for the new layout and direction of the CAC Brochure.
- General support was expressed for the Facebook initiative, noting that it aligns with OVR best practices and has been a longstanding CAC goal.
- Rene (CAC Guest) raised concerns about outreach challenges in Schuylkill County, specifically noting community resistance to seeking services outside the county.

### 11. PA OVR CASE PROCESS - PRESENTATION REQUEST TO RDG OVR

#### A. Referral Submitted (Status -1) Process Presentation

##### i. Prior Recommendation On Understanding OVR Job Duties.

- Brian submitted a request for RDF OVR to provide a presentation on the initial intake process, specifically focused on the "Referral Submitted (Status 1)" stage of the case process. Brian clarified that the request was not as a performance review.

- The goal is to better understand the client experience when entering OVR services, including:
- How referrals are received (phone, email, fax, etc.)
- What steps clerical staff take upon receipt
- How information is gathered and distributed internally
- What communication and documents are sent to potential clients
- Kim sent email to committee denying request.

ii. Continuing Understanding PA OVR Case Process

1. Discussion On Denial Of Request By RDG OVR

- Helen noted that the request includes two components: A value stream map or process flowchart to visualize the client journey through OVR services, and a staff overview or meet-and-greet to understand job functions and build rapport.
- Kim noted that she supports CAC involvement and transparency, but she is unable to require all staff to be present in person due to telework and union agreements and offered two solutions:
- CAC members to join a future staff meeting to meet available staff virtually and in-person.
- Kim also explained that she can provide a verbal overview at the next CAC meeting of what roles exist within the RDG OVR Office and what each generally entails.
- Tentative RDF OVR Office Staff Meeting dates were provided: 08/18/2025 (9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.), 09/18/2025 (9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.), 10/16/2025 (9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)

B. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- Decision was made to revisit this topic at the next CAC meeting, where Kim will provide an overview of the Referral Submitted process and district office roles.

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

- Jim shared that OVR hopes to fully reopen the Significantly Disabled (SD) category by the end of 2025, pending caseload trends. The NSD category will remain closed.
- The proposed FY2026 federal budget would return OVR funding to 2024 level, resulting in \$16.6 million reduction. It also eliminates funding for CAP (requiring OVR to absorb \$450,000), VR Tech, and Federal Supported Employment grants.

A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

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

- Andrew noted that CAP is seeing an increase in appeals, as mentioned during the recent state board meeting.

- CAP continues to support clients through the appeals process and is closely monitoring the trend.
- A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
  - None

#### 14. NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (Mission Related)

- A. Create: "Recommendation Notice" To PA OVR AD-Hoc Workgroup
  - Tabled for future agenda.
    - i. 1 Chair & 2 Volunteers
    - ii. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
- B. PA OVR Case Process - Presentation (Staff - RDG OVR VR Supervisor)
  - Tabled for future agenda.
    - i. Referral Received (Status 00) Process
      - 1. Overview of Job Duties & Responsibilities
      - ii. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
- C. PA State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Meeting - 06/10/2025
  - i. Link: [Dates & Agenda & Minutes](#)
  - ii. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
    - None

#### 15. OTHER BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (Disability Related)

- A. New York Abilities Expo. - <https://www.abilities.com/new-york>
  - Brian shared that he attended the New York Abilities Expo in March and noted it was a valuable resource event, and recommended sharing information about it with customers in future years.
- B. Members Comments, Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
  - None

#### 16. PARTNERS & RESOURCES

- A. CAC to the RDG OVR Webpage on PARC Website
  - i. Webpage Link: [Meeting Documents & Schedule](#)
- B. (Rdg OVR) Reading Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation Contact Info.
  - i. See Above Letter Head
- C. (Pa OVR) Pennsylvania Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation Contact Info
  - i. Phone: 800-442-6351 / TTY: 866-830-7327 / [www.dli.pa.gov](http://www.dli.pa.gov)
- D. (Pa RC) Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council Contact Info
  - i. Phone: 888.250.5175 / TTY: 888.559.2658 / [parehabilitationcouncil.org](http://parehabilitationcouncil.org)
- E. (Pa CAP) Pennsylvania Client Assistance Program Contact Info
  - i. Phone: 888-745-2357 (voice/711Relay) / [www.equalemployment.org](http://www.equalemployment.org)
- F. Meeting Partners
  - i. Abilities in Motion, 755 Hiesters Ln, Reading, PA 19605
  - ii. PA CareerLink-Schuylkill County, 203 E Arch St, Pottsville, PA 17901

iii. PA CareerLink-Berks County, 1920 Kutztown Rd Suite F, Reading, PA 19604

iv. Reading OVR, 3602 Kutztown Road, Suite 200, Reading, PA 19605

#### 17. NEXT MEETING

A. Date: September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (1:00pm - 3:00pm Approx. 2hrs.)

B. Location: PA CareerLink-Berks County, 1920 Kutztown Rd Suite F, Reading, PA 19604

C. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

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

- None

#### 19. CLOSING REMARKS (Members Only)

- None

#### 20. ADJOURNMENT (Motion Needed)

A. Motion needed to "Approve" Adjournment for today's meeting of 06/17/2025.

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

B. Meeting Ending Time

- 3:01 p.m.