

**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.](#)*

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TYPE: Full Committee Meeting (Open To The Public)  
LOCATION: PA CareerLink-Berks County, 1920 Kutztown Rd Suite F, Reading, PA 19604  
(In-Person, Virtual, or Dial-In)  
DATE: Tuesday, September 16, 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**

- 1:06pm
- Chairperson Brian read the Commonwealth Management Directive (recording/consent language) and noted that by participating, attendees consent to recording, retention, and use.
- Chairperson Brian requested that speakers state their name before comments to assist with accurate minutes.

**2. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

**A. Welcome**

- Chairperson Brian: Welcomes all to CAC RDG OVR Meeting, hope all is going well as we move from summer to fall.

**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: 6**

- Brian D'Amico, CAC Chairperson
- Helen Konnick, CAC Vice-Chairperson
- McKenzie Hollenbach, CAC Secretary
- Angel Torres, CAC Member
- Judy Yeasted, CAC Member
- Kim Baskett, RDG OVR Representative (ex officio, non-voting)

**ii. CAC Members Absent: 2**

- Andrew Pennington, CAC Member (notified CAC in advance; recent birth in family)
  - Natalia Piszcek, CAC Member (OVR Rep to follow-up on membership status)
  - iii. Guest Introductions: 1
    - Jim Whitonis, PA OVR VR Specialist (Representative Guest)
3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: AGENDA ITEMS (3 Minute Limit)
- None
4. AGENDA (Motion Needed)
- A. Motion needed to "Approve" Agenda for today's meeting of 09/16/2025.
- Motion made by Judy, seconded by Angel
    - i. Discussion - Additions, Deletions or Corrections (must be minor in nature)
      - Brian noted minor agenda typo ("06/17/2028" should read "06/17/2025").
    - ii. All In Favor "Yes", All Opposed "No", Any "Abstentions"
      - Motion approved unanimously with the understanding the typo will be corrected
5. MINUTES (Motion Needed)
- A. Motion needed to "Approve" Minutes for prior meeting of 06/17/2025.
- Brian clarified: OVR Representative serves as ex officio (non-voting); cannot make motions.
  - Motion made by Angel to table the 06/17/2025 minutes to allow time for review and to apply the two corrections, seconded by Brian.
    - i. Discussion - Additions, Deletions, or Corrections (can approve w/corrections)
      - Kim noted: In Item 9B - Customer Data: change "IEPs" to "IPEs" (Individual Plans for Employment).
      - Helen noted: In Item 10B - CAC Brochure Update: change "CareerLinks" to "CareerLink" (state branding).
    - ii. All In Favor "Yes", All Opposed "No", Any "Abstentions"
      - Motion to table approved unanimously.
6. CAC CHAIRPERSON - REPORT (Updates & Goals) (Brian D'Amico)
- A. CAC Webpage on PARC Website
- i. 2023 Minutes Corrected, Updated & Posted.
    - The 2023 minutes have been corrected/updated and posted to PARC.
  - ii. 2024 Minutes Correcting & Updating In Progress.
    - The 2024 minutes corrections/updates are in progress.
- B. PA OVR Case Process 2026
- i. Referral Submitted (Status -1) Process Details Presentation.

- Plan to begin a deeper-dive series on the OVR case process starting with the first 2026 meeting (referral/status 1 through subsequent steps) to identify where CAC can support and streamline.
- C. "Recommendation Notice" To PA OVR & PA RC
- i. Ad-Hoc Workgroup Needed.
  - ii. Objective: Create Form To Submit Recommendations To PA OVR & PA RC.
    - Proposal to create a simple form/tool for CAC recommendations to PA OVR & PaRC (see New Business for ad hoc workgroup below).
- D. "2026 Meetings"
- i. Ad-Hoc Workgroup Needed.
  - ii. Objective: Recommend Places, Dates, & Times of 2026 CAC Meetings.
    - Advance planning to ensure dates and locations can be approved at December meeting (see New Business discussion below).
- E. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
- None
7. CAC VICE-CHAIRPERSON - REPORT (Updates & Goals) (Helen Konnick)
- Vice-Chair reserved substantive comments for the Workgroup item later in the agenda.
- A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
- None
8. CAC SECRETARY - REPORT (Updates & Goals) (McKenzie Hollenbach)
- Secretary will make the two corrections to the June minutes and will re-send to Chairperson Brian.
- A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
- None
9. RDG OVR - REPORT (Updates & Goals) (Kim Baskett)
- A. Staffing Data
- Vacancies: Clerical Assistant 2 (Spanish-speaking), two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs).
  - A bilingual VRC candidate was recommended; HR process initiated (first office statewide to post a bilingual VRC position).
  - There is one VR Supervisor on long-term leave and one VRC on long-term leave who is expected back next week.
  - VRC annuitant position vacated 8/22 (annuitant resigned); position only fillable by another annuitant, it is uncertain if additional annuitants will be approved this year.
- B. Customer Data
- Referrals received: 158
  - Intakes completed: 77

- Eligibility determinations: 82 eligible (12 of these added to waiting list)
- Successful closures (Status 26): 17
- Waiting list (current) 41 (12 added since 07/01)
- IPEs written: 251 since 07/01 (initial + amendments)
- Status 06 (trial work experience): 14
- Unsuccessful Closures: Status 08 (pre-IPE categories): 15 total (6 never attended intake or made no-contact, 7 attended intake but closed prior to eligibility determination, 2 closed from Status 06 (TWE))
- Status 28 (unsuccessful after IPE): 101
- Status 30 (closed before IPE developed): 13

#### C. Current Programs & Announcements

- Timeliness Compliance: 99-100% for Status 02 (60 days to eligibility) and Status 10 (90 days to initial IPE) maintained since November 2023.
- Pre-ETS (PY 10/01/2025 - 09/30/2026): Increased funding; covers school year and summer programming.
- CRS (College Resources for Success) Programs: Funding sources shifted from Pre-ETS to VR funds; Financial Needs Test (FNT) now applies to CRS support. Impact to customers has been limited; counselors using allowable costs (e.g. tuition) toward FNT to minimize burden.

#### D. New Programs & Announcements

- None

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

- Chairperson Brian requested continued reporting of unsuccessful closure counts by status to track where cases are falling off and where CAC might assist.

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

- Budget changes impacted the Luzerne/Schuylkill region; role adjustments noted.
- Marketing subgroup met 08/25/2025 to implement outreach suggestions from June.
- Decision made to use the resource email account as the primary contact on outreach materials.
- Ensure ADA-accessible fonts/sizes across materials.
- Plan is to finish the Invite Letter, Brochure, and Flyer before expanding social media presence.
- Ongoing outreach with OVR partners at community events (PA CareerLink Days, upcoming SCI Frackville resource fair). Materials are in process; will convene a review meeting upon complete and bring drafts to next full CAC.
- Workgroup will continue to meet and follow-up with recommendations to CAC.

#### A. CAC Invite Letter Update

#### B. CAC Brochure Update

#### C. CAC Flyer Update

D. CAC Facebook Page Update

E. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- Chairperson Brian confirmed the three materials (Invite Letter, Brochure, Flyer)
- Angel recommended posting advance flyers with all 2026 dates across sites early in the year (and pairing with the intake/closure letters OVR provides).
- General agreement to keep locations consistent year-to-year to build public awareness; demographics suggest more Berks than Schuylkill meetings is appropriate.

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

- PaRC Policy State Plan Committee (meeting 09/25/2025) will take up CAC Training Manual/Handbook/Bylaws updates; feedback is encouraged.
- State Plan Two-Year Modification public comment planned for 09/24/2025 and 10/24/2025; public meetings on 10/09/2025 and 10/16/2025; draft planned for publication by 09/24/2025.

A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- Is PARC meeting open to public: Yes - open to the public, with contact at least 3 days prior to confirm attendance.

12. PA CAP - REPORT (Andrew Pennington, Co-Director PA CAP)

- No Report (absent)

A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

13. NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (Mission Related)

A. Create: "Recommendation Notice Ad-hoc Workgroup"

i. Objective: Create Form To Submit Recommendations To PA OVR & PA RC

- Objective is to design a simple form/process for CAC recommendations to PA OVR & PaRC.
- Members of the "Recommendation Notice" Ad-Hoc Workgroup are as follows: Chairperson - Brian D'Amico, Member - Angel Torres.
- Next steps include drafting form and sharing with CAC for review/approval at upcoming meeting.

ii. Appoint 1 Chair & 1-2 Members

- Chairman Brian created "Recommendation Notice Ad-hoc Workgroup.
- Chair: Brian, Members: Angel.

iii. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

B. Create: "2026 Meetings Ad-hoc Work Group "

i. Objective: Recommend Places, Dates, & Times of 2026 CAC Meetings.

ii. Appoint 1 Chair & 1-2 Members

- Ad-Hoc workgroup not needed.
- iii. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)
  - Dates: Continue third Tuesdays (quarterly)
  - Locations: Keep current pattern emphasizing Berks (demographics), with one in Schuylkill.
  - Proposed Change: Move the Abilities in Motion meeting to Kutztown University (March), pending December approval.
  - Consistency prioritized; Outreach Workgroup to incorporate 2026 dates into flyers and to distribute broadly (including with intake/closure letters).
  - December agenda will include the 2026 schedule.

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

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

- Abilities in Motion (AIM) Independence Fund: Potential assistance for ramps, van/home modifications not covered by insurance.
- AIM DME Lending/Donation: wheelchairs, walkers, shower chairs, etc. accepted and provided to community.
- AIM Transportation: van/bus service expanding for PWDs; commission approval noted.
- AIM Tech/Sensory: tech room improvements; sensory café booths supportive of neurodivergent needs.

#### 15. 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

#### 16. NEXT MEETING

- A. Location: Reading OVR, 3602 Kutztown Road, Suite 200, Reading, PA 19605

i. Date: Tuesday, December 16th, 2025 (1:00pm - 3:00pm Approx. 2hrs.)

B. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

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

- None

18. CLOSING REMARKS (Members Only)

- Chairperson Brian thanked members, noted momentum on record-keeping, outreach, and data-informed monitoring of closures/waitlist to improve access and timeliness.

19. ADJOURNMENT (Motion Needed)

A. Motion needed to "Approve" Adjournment for today's meeting of 09/16/2025.

- 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

- 2:32 p.m.