

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: Reading OVR, 3602 Kutztown Road, Suite 200, Reading, PA 19605
(In-Person, Virtual, or Dial-In)
DATE: Tuesday, December 16th, 2025
TIME: 1:00pm - 3:00pm (Approx. 2hrs.)
RECORDED BY: McKenzie Hollenbach, RDG OVR CAC Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Meeting Start Time

- 1:04 p.m.

2. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

A. Welcome

- Chairperson Brian; Welcomes all to CAC RDG OVR Meeting, hope all is going well.
Notice of audio recording provided to all participants.

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

i. CAC Members Present: 8 (quorum confirmed)

- Brian D'Amico, CAC Chairperson
- Helen Konnick, CAC Vice-Chairperson
- McKenzie Hollenbach, CAC Secretary
- Angel Torres, CAC Member
- Andrew Pennington, CAC Member
- Natalia Piszczek, CAC Member
- Judy Yeasted, CAC Member

ii. CAC Members Absent: 0

- None

iii. OVR Representatives Present:

- Kim Baskett, RDG OVR Representative

iv. Guest Introductions:

- Jim Whitonis, PA OVR VR Specialist (Representative Guest)

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

- No public comments.

4. AGENDA (Motion Needed)

A. Motion needed to "Approve" Agenda for today's meeting of 12/16/2025.

- Motion made by Andrew, seconded by Brian.
 - 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 06/17/2025.

- Motion 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.

B. Motion needed to "Approve" Minutes for prior meeting of 09/16/2025.

- Motion made by Brian, seconded by Andrew.
 - 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. 2026 Notice Of Meetings (Action Needed)

A. Attachment: CAC to RDG OVR - 2026 Notice Of Meetings (Unapproved).pdf

- i. Open Discussion
 - Members discussed scheduling accessibility, including the possibility of future evening meetings. No changes were recommended at this time.
- ii. Motion needed to "Approve / Deny / Table"
 - Motion to "Approve" the proposed 2026 CAC Meeting Schedule. Meetings are scheduled for the third Tuesday of the month, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
 - Motion made by Helen, seconded Angel.
- iii. All In Favor "Yes", All Opposed "No", Any "Abstentions"
 - Motion approved unanimously.

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

A. CAC Webpage on PARC Website

- i. 2024 Agendas & Minutes are Corrected, Updated & Posted.
 - Brian shared that the CAC webpage on the PaRC website has been updated with 2024 agendas and minutes.

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

B. PA OVR Case Process Review

- 2026 Agenda: Referral Submitted (Status -1) Process Detailed Review.
 - Brian requested discussion and presentation from RDG OVR on Status -1 process on March 2026 agenda.

C. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

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

- Helen indicated she would provide updates during the CAC Outreach Workgroup Report.

A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

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

- None at this time.

A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

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

A. Staffing Data

- One Berks County Spanish-speaking VRC recently hired. One counselor vacancy remains. One clerical vacancy also remains. Transition Supervisor retired and duties have been temporarily reassigned.

B. Customer Data

- Data is as of 10/31/2025
- Referrals Received: 514
- Intake Appointments Held: 305
- Eligibility Determinations: 250 eligible, 30 additional individuals found eligible but currently on the Waitlist
- Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs): 611 (initial and amendments)
- Successful Closures: 64
- Timeliness Compliance: 100%

C. Current Programs & Announcements

- Project SEARCH: 100% placement at multiple sites
- Pre-ETS services continue despite Order of Selection
- Increase in referrals related to SNAP work requirements

D. New Programs & Announcements

- None at this time.

E. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- Kim provided clarification regarding case closures, reporting and tracking.

- Brian requested a detailed review of the PA OVR case process, beginning with the Referral Submitted (Status -1) stage, to be presented by Kim at the March 17, 2026 meeting. After discussion to clarify the request, Kim confirmed that she would be happy to present this information (specifically Status -1) at the March 17, 2026 meeting.

11. CAC OUTREACH WORKGROUP - REPORT (Helen Konnick)

A. Members: McKenzie, Angel, Andrew, Kim

B. Objective: Promote RDG OVR CAC & RDG OVR Services

i. CAC Brochure Update

1. Attachment: CAC to RDG OVR = Brochure Color_Updated 12-09-2025.pdf
2. Attachment: CAC to RDG OVR = Brochure B&W_Updated 12-09-2025.pdf

ii. CAC Invite Letter Update

1. Attachment: CAC to RDG OVR = Customer Invite_Updated 12-08-2025.pdf
 - The Outreach Workgroup has drafted a revised CAC Brochure & Invite Letter; edits were reviewed during the meeting with emphasis placed on readability, font size, accessibility, and alternative formats such as Spanish translation and reading-level considerations.

iii. CAC Flyer Update

- Not reviewed in detail during the meeting, as final designs are still in progress. Waiting for approval of Invite Letter and Brochure. Will be addressed in the next Workgroup meeting.

iv. CAC Facebook Page Update

- Not reviewed in detail during the meeting, as final designs are still in progress. Waiting for approval of Invite Letter and Brochure. Will be addressed in the next Workgroup meeting.

v. 2026 Venue Coordinator - Angel?

- Brian inquired if Angel was still interested in continuing to be the CAC's venue coordinator for the upcoming year?
- Angel accepted to be point of contact for setup and organizing with venues to host CAC meetings.

vi. 2026 Social Media Coordinator - Possibly Needed?

- Tabled for discussion at later meetings.

C. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- Brian provided feedback on the brochure, recommending the addition of language that more specifically references employment advocacy in alignment

with OVR's mission and goals. Brian also suggested changing the brochure background from grey to white to reduce printing ink usage and noted that the letterhead on the invitation letter may be enlarged further by reducing the margins.

- Consensus to pause public distribution pending accessibility feedback. Kim will submit materials for accessibility review. General support was expressed for the layout of the CAC Brochure.

12. CAC RECOMMENDATION NOTICE AD-HOC WORKGROUP - REPORT (Brian D'Amico)

A. Members: Angel

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

- Workgroup remains in development and updates will be provided at a future meeting.

C. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

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

A. Budget

- Jim reported that budget uncertainty continues due to the federal government operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR), which currently funds programs only through January 2026. At the federal level, the President's proposed budget would return Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) funding to FY 2024 levels, resulting in a reduction to overall program funding when accounting for inflation and prior increases. A competing Congressional budget proposal would maintain current funding levels; final impacts will depend on which budget is ultimately adopted.
- Due to this uncertainty, OVR leadership has taken a conservative fiscal approach, including limiting travel and delaying waitlist releases in November and December, with the possibility of a limited release in January 2026, pending available resources.
- Jim shared that one federal proposal would eliminate CAP's separate funding stream, which would require OVR to absorb CAP funding directly. CAP is a federally mandated program, so services would continue; however, the funding structure may shift depending on federal budget outcomes. OVR has developed a contingency plan should CAP funding be reallocated under OVR.
- OVR is currently in the Two-Year State Plan Modification cycle. Draft modifications have been reviewed and approved by PaRC and the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, and are now incorporated into the broader WIOA State Plan, which is open for public comment. Jim noted that public comments are not common during this phase but will be reviewed if received.

- Jim reported that Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) staff were temporarily furloughed, contributing to delays. OVR has submitted required performance data; however, RSA has not yet returned statistical adjustment models, leaving some performance indicators in an estimated status.
- Additional federal guidance is expected, particularly related to alignment with recent U.S. Department of Labor guidance.

B. Current Programs & Announcements

C. New Programs & Announcements

D. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- Angel commented through the state board and the park meetings there was mentioned the reimagining or the revolution advising of the CAC. Do you have anything on that? And what's going on with that?
- Jim replied Yeah, that's a good question, Angel. So Ryan Hyde and the leadership team have been looking at ways to kind of revitalize the cats that aren't active. So the first step they took was to approach PARC just to see what kind of ideas they have if there's anything they want to do with us. Ryan threw out a couple of ideas, one of which was kind of like having park kind of take over the administrative parts of the CACs. And Ryan even put on the table like maybe increasing the funding to PARC to do that. And they didn't seem to bite on that. So I think it's going to take a couple of month's discussion, some back and forth with PARC to see what kind of direction we're going to go in. So as that develops I can keep you guys updated. As of right now, there's no development. The, the last scheduled policy committee for park actually got canceled so they didn't have a chance to talk about that. I think the next one may be coming up in January so I think there'll be some discussion then.

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

A. Customer Data

- Report deferred, as the meeting had extended beyond the scheduled adjournment time (3:00 p.m.) and Andrew Pennington had a prior commitment.

B. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

15. NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (Mission Related)

A. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

16. OTHER BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (Disability Related)

A. Members Comments, Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- None

17. 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
- D. (Pa RC) Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council Contact Info
 - i. Phone: 888.250.5175 / TTY: 888.559.2658 / parehabilitationcouncil.org
- E. (Pa CAP) Pennsylvania Client Assistance Program Contact Info
 - i. Phone: 888-745-2357 (voice/711Relay) / 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

18. NEXT MEETING

- A. Type: Full Committee Meeting (Open To The Public)
 - i. Kutztown University - McFarland Student Union (In-person/Virtual/Dial-In)
 - ii. 274 Student Union Building, Kutztown, PA 19530 (Conference Room 312)
 - Parking for the meeting will be available in the A1 Parking Lot, located adjacent to the McFarland Student Union Building.
 - Both entrances facing the A1 Parking Lot are accessible. Attendees are encouraged to use the left-side entrance closest to the campus bookstore. Upon entering the building, proceed straight toward the rear of the building to locate the elevator. If assistance is needed, bookstore staffs are available and happy to help direct visitors to the elevator.
 - Take the elevator to the third floor and follow posted signage to Room 312. An accessible restroom is located on the third floor.
 - For those arriving early, a Starbucks is located on the second floor of the McFarland Student Union.
 - Link to KU Campus Map: <https://www.kutztown.edu/Departments-Offices/A-F/Facilities/Documents/ADAmap.pdf>
 - iii. Tuesday, March 17th, 2026 (1:00pm - 3:00pm Approx. 2hrs.)

B. Members Comments & Questions (Challenges / Recommendations)

- McKenzie confirmed that she will email all CAC members with parking instructions prior to the March 17, 2026 meeting.

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

- None

20. CLOSING REMARKS (Members Only)

- Brian thanked members for their participation and contributions throughout the year.

21. ADJOURNMENT (Motion Needed)

A. Motion needed to "Approve" Adjournment for today's meeting of 12/16/2025.

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

B. Meeting Ending Time

- 3:06 p.m.