Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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OVR Policy & State Plan / Customer Satisfaction Committee
Minutes for August 10, 2026, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Members Present (P)		Not Present (NP)
Andrew Pennington (P)	Cindy Duch (P)	Julia Barol (P)
Christie Cyktor (P)	Julianna Rodrigues (P)	Michelle Mitchell (NP)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present: James Whitonis, Cheryl Novak, Chris Harbert

Project Staff Present: Chris Todd, Michelle Gerrick

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Mr. Andrew Pennington called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM after a quorum was established.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

MOTION was made by Ms. Julia Barol to approve today's agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Christie Cyktor seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

OVR Updates: Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), State Plan, OVR Policies, Texting-based Customer Satisfaction Surveys

- Mr. James Whitonis, OVR, reported that the release of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) report has been delayed following OVR's review due to a required correction of the subset of sensory disability data. There is not a timeline available for when the corrections and final report will be made available. Regarding the State Plan, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) requested changes to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) language and those changes were accepted. Another round of changes to State Plan language

associated with the Hiram G Andrews Center's efficacy and data regarding the graduating cohort was requested by RSA.

- Ms. Cheryl Novak reported that a workgroup regarding the expanding of the Apprenticeship and Pre Apprenticeship policy will begin in 2027. OVR will request that members from the PaRC and the State Board join that work group.

- Ms. Christie Cyktor reviewed the new texting-based survey and reported that the initial text may appear to be SPAM or PHISHING. Mr. Chris Harbert, OVR, confirmed that this feedback will be forwarded to leadership. Work to ensure licensing and confidentiality terms and conditions with CWDS and customers receiving texts continues to progress. The texting-based surveys have not yet been rolled out.

Continued Discussion of Small Business Ownership as a Vocational Goal for OVR Customers Policy

- Members held discussions about concerns, barriers, and training needs regarding the Small Business Ownership as a Vocational Goal for OVR Customers policy. Members provided suggestions to strengthen policy language, utilize small business incubators for the development of business plans, improve or amend structured timelines to assist customers with the process, and other considerations to ensure that barriers do not limit access to these services.

Customers Remaining on the Trial Work Experience Beyond Fiscal Year 2025-2026

- Mr. Chris Harbert, OVR, reported that there are 15 customers remaining in Status 11. All cases have either been made eligible for services or were closed for appropriate reasons such as they did not wish to proceed, or the counselor was unable to contact them. All customers will now be evaluated under the Presumed Competence policy.

Schedule next meeting

- Members agreed to meet again on September 16, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Ms. Cindy Duch to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.