Arkansas State Rehabilitation Council
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2017

Attendees
Council Members: Christopher Paslay, Chair; Keith Vire; Addie Edwards; Craig Reinhardt; David Maples, Co-Chair; Robert Fagan; Wesley Eddington; Alan McClain, Commissioner

ARS Staff: Deputy Commissioner Joe Baxter; Carl Daughtery; Ashley Cross; Chip McAfee; Jonathan Bibb; Robert Trevino; Rodney Chandler; Nathan Winter; Chip McAfee; Jim Moreland; Lynn Franquemont; Yvonne Murphy; Dale Turrentine; Freddie Harshaw; Bernice Gunter

Guest(s): Morgan Aldridge, Governor’s Office; Debbie Eddington, Rhonda Saunders for Lisa Haley; Mr. Thomas Nichols for Tom Masseau

Call to Order:
State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Chair, Christopher Paslay, declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Paslay welcomed all present.

Approval of Minutes
At the request of Mr. Paslay, council members reviewed the minutes of the most recent meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made and seconded. The motion passed.

Comments from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) Commissioner – Alan McClain:
Commissioner McClain welcomed all council members and thanked them for their support of ARS. He informed the Council that members of ARS senior management and other agency managers had recently spent two days in Hot Springs at ACTI reviewing agency goals and objectives to ensure they are consistent with federal requirements. The Commissioner stated that as part of the meeting Steve Wooderson, President of CSAVR spent time with staff providing a national perspective related to the development of ARS’s Strategic Plan. He reported that the second day of the meeting consisted of training provided by University of Arkansas CURRENTS. Commissioner McClain updated the Council on the ARS’s Strategic Plan and the agency website. He informed the Council that the website was a work in progress. Commissioner stated that website was fluent and fairly easy to work through. The Commissioner next indicated that the 2017 SRC Annual Report had been sent to the Council members for review and now needed to be approved. Chairman Paslay stated that the annual report was a federally required document that has to be published each year on behalf of the SRC. As part of the discussion, Deputy Commissioner Baxter informed the Council that a new section had been
added to the report that outlines the roles and responsibility of the Council regarding its support to Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. Following additional discussion a motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the 2017 SRC Annual Report. The Commissioner also informed Council member of the department’s Job Ready magazine. He indicated that within the most recent publication several success stories of ARS clients, articles highlighting different ARS sections, and an article from Hugh McDonald, Chairman of the Career Education and Workforce Development, referencing a U.S. News & World Report that recognized Arkansas’s employment of persons with disabilities had been included. Chip McAfee, Communications Director indicated that he would add Council members to the email list and send copies of the publication to them.

Agency Updates:

**Carl Daughtery, Chief of Field Services:** Mr. Daughtery thanked the Council for their support. He informed the Council that a new federal fiscal year started October 1st and ended September 30, 2018. He reported that the Case Management System had been updated at the end of September with new elements that measure and track data within the system. He stated that with the new data elements 80,000 errors had to be corrected within a small window of time in order to submit the federally required 911 report. He indicated that will a lot of hard work there were only three errors left to correct. He indicated that the Field staff and support staff were working diligently to meet expectations. Mr. Daughtery stated that this year ARS had assisted 2,628 in obtaining or maintaining employment up from approximately 2,400 last year. He discussed the collaborative partnerships with Disability Rights Arkansas, Adult Education and Developmental Disability Services. He continued with an update on Transition/Pre-Employment Transition Services. He reminded the Council of ARS’s requirement to spend 15% of funds on Pre-ETS. He indicated that to date 17 vendors had been approved for Pre-ETS services. He stated that a contract with the School for the Deaf was completed to provide Pre-ETS services on campus in March of 2017. The contract also includes off-campus work-based learning experiences and focuses on self-advocacy and independence in the workplace setting. Mr. Daughtery also stated that in July ARS launched the very first partnership on the campus of a juvenile detention center. The project combines Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, of the Arkansas Department of Career Education, Goodwill Industries of Arkansas, Rite of Passage, and DHS’ Division of Youth Services. He indicated the first class started out with 15 students and ended with five. A new class will begin in January with 22 students. Mr. Daughtery stated that there is also a partnership with Inclusion Films in which 48 high school juniors and seniors from across the state applied and were selected to participate in the week long film camp where they received hands on work experience in the film industry. Mr. Daughtery concluded his report by stating that there will be some changes in the Field with the relocation of the Harrison Field Office to the Workforce Office in Harrison and the moving of the Benton Field Office to a new location.

**Jonathan Bibb—ACTI:** Mr. Bibb utilized the most recent SRC 2017 Annual Report to update and discuss recent changes in regards to ACTI. He highlighted ACTI’s Transitional Employment Program (TEP) indicating how it supported Pre-Employment Transition Services. He indicated TEP is not only addressing the Pre-ETS requirement, but is also creating a pipeline for potential new ACTI students. He stated that 115 students had completed the most recent TEP program. Mr. Bibb stated ACTI was investigating providing job exploration and OSHA 10 training on high school campuses with there being sufficient staff to go into high schools and train students.
to become safe on the job site. He spoke about ACTI’s partnership with CVS to include on-campus training and a six week internship. He reported the Memorandum of Understanding with CVS had been approved. Mr. Bibb stated that ACTI’s Registered Apprenticeship has had very good success with 28 students graduating from the program in October. Mr. Bibb concluded his report by discussing success stories of two of ACTI students.

**Business Engagement-Rodney Chandler:** Mr. Chandler introduced Ms. Ashley Cross, Corporate Accounts Representative of Business Engagement who would be updating the Council. She reported that Business Engagement represents four categories: Commitment, Collaboration, Consistency and Communication. She stated that the Business Engagement partnership totaled 775 with 550 no-cost services provided. She indicated that the most popular services were outreach and recruitment. She stated that Business Engagement Representatives had assisted 470 Arkansans in obtaining competitive integrated employment this most recent fiscal year. Ms. Cross informed the Council that 37 business customers had signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the agency resulting in 75 ARS consumers being hired. Ms. Cross reported that Business Engagement section had hosted its 3rd Annual Arkansas Business Employment Summit which included 70 businesses from across the state attending a half day education and information seminar on emerging practices and also recognizing model employers. Ms. Cross indicated that in addition to their collaborative efforts the section had also implemented the JDVRTA project, a collaborative effort between Field Services and Business Engagement. Ms. Cross informed the Council that after five years of hard work they have officially obtained an affiliation as a Business Leadership Network (BLN) for the State of Arkansas. Ms. Cross concluded her report by sharing with the Council different comments from Business Engagement partners regarding their partnership with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services.

**Access & Accommodations-Nathan Winter:** Mr. Winter provided the Council an update on the Assistive Technology at Work (AT@Work) and the Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work (SAW/RTW) programs. He informed the Council that Access & Accommodation (A&A) had been divided to create a new Community Services Program to include ICAN, TAP, AGCPD, AKDC and the AFP program. He indicated that the Access & Accommodations program assists the VR counselor with clients who are in need of assistive technology as they prepare for employment and who are currently enrolled in an education or training program. He stated that there are presently six open cases, with a year to date 75 case closures in that area. He reported that there were 296 AT@Work closures last year, up 60 from the year before. Mr. Winter stated that they have seen a significant growth in the Stay-at-Work-Return-to-Work program. He indicated that currently there are 7 to 8 closures per month compared to the previous two years where there were 30-40 case closures per year. Mr. Winter provided information as to staff members working closely with the Public Employee Claims Division (PECD) in the development and implementation of a SAW/RTW curriculum for front-line supervisors within state government. He indicated that two trainings had been held recently with 26 supervisors and HR staff from various agencies participating. He reported the trainings would resume in January.

**Lynn Franquemont- Update Community Services Program:** Ms. Franquemont informed the Council that there are five programs that make up the Community Services Program section of Access & Accommodation. They include: (1) Increasing Capabilities Access Network (ICAN), and the state Tech Act program, which provides assistive technology demonstration allowing
users a “try it before you use it” alternative. The program also offers an equipment re-
utilization/redistribution program providing a no-cost solution for acquisition of some
equipment, often durable medical equipment. (2) The Telecommunications Access Program
(TAP) provides support to clients having a telecommunications need at home. While the service
is targeted to home use, it can be translate/transport to school or work activities in some
instances. (3) The Alternative Finance Program (AFP) provides low interest loans to Arkansans
in need of assistive technology. (4) The Governor appointed Arkansas Governor’s Commission
on People with Disabilities (AGCPD) can provide guidance and direction to the Governor’s,
Office, state agencies, and outside providers regarding services and support to Arkansans with
disabilities. The program also has a scholarship program available to individuals with
disabilities who are enrolled in postsecondary education and vocational training. (5) The
Arkansas Kidney Disease Commission (AKDC) provides prescription drug, nutritional
supplement, and pre-transplant dental services to Arkansans diagnosed with end stage renal
disease. Commissioner McClain indicated that programs within the Community Services
Program section were not VR funded programs with each having their own separate funding
streams.

Dale Turrentine-Section 511 Update: Dale Turrentine provided the SRC an update related to
career counseling for individuals receiving services in a 14(c) sheltered workshop. She reported
that the Program Planning, Development and Evaluation Section had created a curriculum to be
utilized for career counseling requirement. She indicated that ARS field staffs along with
Developmental Disabilities Services staff were trained in November 2016 on how to provide
career counseling and complete the Career Exploration Workbook. She stated that ARS staff
provided training to approximately 4000 subminimum wage employees in December 2016 with
ARS completing another round of career counseling for those who needed it twice and youth
under the age of 25 in the summer or 2017. She indicated ARS is completing the annual career
counseling requirement during December 2017. She reported that ARS has completed a contract
with the University of Arkansas, Rehabilitation Education and Research Program in partnership
with Arkansas Tech University to provide this service going forward. It was indicated that the
contract requires review by the Legislative Committee for approval. If approved, ARS will begin
the transition to U of A starting February 1, 2018.

Comments: Dr. Keith Vire: Dr. Vire informed Council that he will be retiring at the end of
December but will still be a member of the council over the next year. He spoke of the different
successes of the agency and thanked them for their hard work. Commissioner McClain and staff
thanked Dr. Vire for his work as a council member and as an advocate for Arkansas
Rehabilitation Services.

Announcements
Chairman Christopher Paslay informed the Council that the next scheduled meeting will be
March 15, 2018.

Adjournment
With no additional business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.