Arkansas State Rehabilitation Council
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
March 23, 2017

Attendees

Council Members: Christopher Paslay, Chair; Brian Itzkowitz, Co-Chair; Albert Glover; Keith Vire; Alex Scott; Martin McDonell; Craig Reinhardt; Robert Fagan; Lisa Haley; Addie Edwards; Alan McClain, Commissioner.

ARS Staff: Adrienne Robinson; Kathy Edgerton; Lynn Franquemont; Jonathan Bibb; Joe Baxter; Robert Trevino; Judy Smith; Rodney Chandler; Nathan Winter; James McCune; Jim Moreland; LaTisha McClendon; Freddie Harshaw; Bernice Gunter.

Guests: Debra Poulin, Disability Rights

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 to the meeting.

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 commitment to assist ARS. As part of his comments, the Commissioner provided the council an update regarding the current state legislative session. He indicated the session was starting to wind down and that as far as ARS was concerned, the only legislation the agency was involved in was its appropriation bill which had successful been passed. He provided the council information regarding a van accessible parking bill with the legislation including language that mentioned the Arkansas Governor’s Commission on People with Disabilities, a program housed within ARS. In addition to the Commissioner’s comments, Dr. Vire also updated the council on some of the different bills that were being monitoring at the Federal level including how state Medicaid programs could be affected if the Affordable Care Act is repealed. He also provided information regarding issues that could influence service provision to individuals with disabilities as the state moves to a managed care model.
Agency Updates

**Business Relations Update-Yvonne Rowland, Business Relations Representative:** Ms. Rowland’s presentation to the council started with an update on the JDVR-TAP Project. She indicated a primary focus of the project was to increase the relationship between Business Relations Representatives (BRRs) and VR Field Counselors. She provided the council information on the Business Engagement/District Manager’s meeting held on February 22nd. She informed the council of the WIOA Partner’s meeting which included a Business Engagement Panel consisting of Randy Lewis, founder of NogWog, and an ex Walgreens Executive; David Maples, Maples Insurance, State Rehabilitation Council Board Member; and Bentley Wallace, Vice Chancellor for Economic Development of UA-Pulaski Technical College. Ms. Rowland concluded her presentation by indicating that next steps include a proposed business roundtable, business incentives to offer summer internships to high school students, support to the ACE Office of Skills Development, identifying grant opportunities for businesses, continuous improvement and growth of the BLN, increasing business partnerships through MOUs, and growth of ARS’ Business Summit.

**Dr. Adrienne Robinson, Deputy Chief of Field Services:** Dr. Robinson provided the Council an update of field program activities in the absence of the Chief of Field Services, Carl Daughtery. She informed the council that at present there were 14,847 active VR cases, with 1,026 in status 22, 808 in status 20, and 775 in status 12. She stated that the field program was in the process of developing a transportation vendor agreement that was recently presented to District Managers for review and input. She indicated that hopefully it would be finalized and ready for review by the next SRC meeting. She also updated the council regarding the field program’s presence at the WIOA spring meeting held in Hot Springs on March 2nd. She provided the council information that correlated with the various field offices in their local areas and encouraged members to visit offices at their convenience. Dr. Robinson distributed information to the council regarding Inclusion Films, a project geared toward teaching film making to high school juniors & seniors with disabilities, to be held April 24-28, 2017 on the campus of Northwest Arkansas Community College. Dr. Robinson informed the council that ARS has a Right of Passage agreement with Goodwill Industries through the Division of Youth Services, targeting at risk youths. She updated the council on the field program’s efforts to update Order of Selection. She informed the council that the goal for completion was April 28th indicating that a draft would hopefully be provided for review at the next meeting. She also informed the council that other parts of the field program’s policy manual were under review. Dr. Robinson updated the council regarding the field program’s efforts regarding the agency’s new website. In closing, she informed the council of the North Little Rock field office’s move and renovations to the Fayetteville and West Memphis filed office locations.

**Jonathan Bibb, ACTI Administrator:** Mr. Bibb provided council members a brief ACTI update. He indicated that ongoing renovations on the ACTI campus (student rooms, painting, pipe insulation, fire suppression) would be completed by April 1st. He informed the council of the Be Pro Be Proud van that was on site at ACTI for career exploration into skilled trades. He reported that students from two public schools (Cutter Morning Star and Clinton) had toured the trailer. Mr. Bibb indicated that the Transition Employment Program has reached a fever pitch thanks to the recruitment efforts of Judy Smith, ACTI staff, and field program counselors. He indicated that to date 193 applications had been received compared to 75 this time last year. He reported that applications were in the process of being evaluated. Mr. Bibb informed the council that ACTI has partnered with CSAVR’s National Employment Team regarding a potential grant opportunity to help create a training program for people with disabilities for Walmart. He indicated this effort could serve as a pilot to be implemented in all other comprehensive vocational rehabilitation centers. Mr. Bibb indicated that ACTI evaluators would be working with RIDAC evaluators to upgrade and enhance evaluation services offered through ACTI. He stated that ACTI will continue to enhance the Professional Career Performance Program (PCPP) including the integration of a PBIS Rewards App. He indicated that will track all ACTI students and award positive behavior supports points. Mr. Bibb informed the council that ACTI will be having only one graduation this year to be held
in October. He stated that ACTI was looking at new ways to partner with registered apprenticeships. He reported that ACTI had met with UA Currents last week to explore evaluating and studying the integration of Pre-Apprenticeship at ACTI and outcomes for VR clients as a possible best practice. He indicated that ACTI continues to look for registered apprenticeship options for students at ACTI. He related that ACTI is currently working with the National Apprenticeship Training Foundation to launch a hotel associate registered apprenticeship. In closing, Mr. Bibb stated that ACTI would be hosting the Workforce Developmental Board in April with this providing the opportunity to showcase the programing at ACTI.

AR PROMISE Grant, Project SEARCH and Transition Employment Program (TEP) – Judy Smith: Ms. Smith provided the council updates regarding the PROMISE grant, Project SEARCH, and the ACTI TEP program. She stated that PROMISE was a model demonstration Project designed to increase the number of youth on SSI ages 14 to 16 that transition from high school to post-secondary education or training ultimately resulting in more competitive integrated employment outcomes. She provided information regarding PROMISE staffing and the number of clients currently being served. Ms. Smith reported that Arkansas currently has 4 Project SEARCH sites: Washington Regional Medical Center – Fayetteville (youth model); UAMS & Arkansas Children’s Hospital – Little Rock (adult models), and CHI St. Vincent – Hot Springs (youth model). She reported planning underway to develop three additional sites scheduled to begin the fall 2017: St. Bernard’s Regional Medical Center – Jonesboro, Ouachita County Regional Medical Center – Camden, and Saint Mary’s Regional Medical Center – Russellville. She indicated Fort Smith and Pine Bluff as being possible sites for 2018 and communicated a hope to have two additional sites for 2019. Ms. Smith informed the council that the Transition Employment Program (TEP) was a five-week, comprehensive pre-employment training service developed in partnership with ACTI. She provided information regarding the growth of the program and anticipated number for this year.

Approval of ARS Mediators and Impartial Hearing Officers-LaTisha McClendon- Ms. McClendon presented the council a list of the mediators and impartial hearing officers for review and approval. After discussion, there was a motion made and seconded to approve the list of mediators and impartial hearing officers. The council voted to approve.

Announcements

Chairman Christopher Paslay informed the next SRC meeting would tentatively be June 15, 2017.

Adjournment

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