

Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT)
February 4-5, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Present:

Michael A. Ebbeler Jr., Chair, Austin
Lisa Maciejewski-West, Vice Chair, Horseshoe Bay
Amanda Bowdoin, Forney
Matt Berend, Wichita Falls
Jennifer Clouse, Temple
Lisa Cowart, Beaumont
Cheryl A Fuller, Austin
Lindsey Geeslin, Lorena
Gennadiy Goldenshteyn, Dallas
Bobbie Hodges, Fort Worth
Elizabeth Kendell, San Antonio
Joe Powell, Irving
Emily Robinson, Austin
Rodrick Robinson, McKinney
Karen Stanfill, Houston
Crystal Stark, College Station
Abdi Warsame, Irving

Absent:

JoAnne Fluke, Abilene
Paul Hunt, Austin

TWC Reps:

Commissioner Julian Alvarez III, Kimberly Berry, Gary Benner, Kimberly Bradford-Brown, Shelly Caillouet, Chair Bryan Daniel, Kandace Decker, Commissioner Aaron Demerson, Rosanne DeMoss, Jason Everitt, Cindy Geisman, Lisa Givens, Lisa Godwin, Jeanie Hanzal, Tasheara Jennings, Dennis Kutach, Laura LaCour, Christy Lerche, Susan Lindsey, Adriana Martinez, Bonnie Martin-Hudson, Scott McCune, Amber McGee, Cassandra Medrano, Geoffrey Miller, Sylvia Miller, Chris Nelson, Brian Owens, Melinda Paninski, Claudia Peden, Elsa Y. Perez, Laura Rook, Belinda Salazar, Jonas Schwartz, Ed Serna, Chris Speckhard, Melissa Stirling, Laike Todd, Les Trobman, Jason Vaden, Laura York

Guest:

April Allen, Hilario Alvarado, Magen Anderson, Gabriela Arvizu, Kavis Bell, Gwen Bolden, Sandra Breitengross Bitter SILC, Christina Bryant, Terry Casey, Edwin Castillo Disability Rights TX, Nidia Escobar, T. Fadeley, Monique Flores-Navarrete, Dezeree Fraga, Roni Frazier Consulting, Gloria Freeney, Patricia Gill, Sherrell Gillispie, Valerie Gotcher, Betty Huffman, Jeanie Hanzal Disability Rights Texas, Tatineesha Harris, Frank Higginbotham, Natalie Hulsey Consulting, Jeanette Johnson, Sharon Jones, Cynthia Julun, Gil Kauffman, Robin Kuntz Education, Chevella Layne, Kaki Leyens, Dana MacDonald, Tanya Majied, Gloria Martinez, Elaine McFarland, Cynthia Middleton, Britni Miles, Troy Murrain, Chelsea Nguyen, Omar Ochoa, Robin Orlowski, Pranav Parikh, Christina Petrossi, Sandra Pierce, April Pollreis SILC, Chadwick Rogers, Danielle Rosenblath, Keisha Rowe, Luis Ruiz, Sheryl Russell, Karissa Sanchez HHSC, Peggy Schmidt, Kenneth Semien Sr., Connie Simon TJJD, Tiffany Walker, Sonia White Education, James Williams, Eyob Woldu, Mary Woods, Randall Yeakley,

Welcome and Introductions

- The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr., Chair.

Julian Alvarez III, TWC Commissioner Representing Labor

- Addressed the council and gave an update.

ED Serna, TWC Executive Director

- Addressed the council.

VR Division Director's Report Cheryl A. Fuller, TWC VR Division Director

- Jason Vaden, TWC Deputy Division Director of VR PPS
 - Explained Explore Apprenticeship 2.0
- General Updates
 - RSA Monitoring Report provided to RCT
 - Final response report was submitted January 19, 2021.

- The final finds were in program performance and financial performance.
 - Chris Nelson, TWC CFO provided a report on the financial performance findings.
- 87th Regular Session of Texas Legislature
 - As of January 19th, the House and Senate have filed 1643 bills
 - The agency as a whole is tracking 159 of these bills
 - VR has analyzed 4 and are tracking an additional 77.
 - The four that have been analyzed are House Bill 411, House Bill 440, House Bill 855, and Senate Bill 50
- Five Priority Projects for the Division
 - Customer's First Priority and Set of Targets
 - Summer Earn and Learn program
 - Serving Customers and making them aware of VR Services during the pandemic
 - Work with TWC providers
 - Implementing TWC remote work and service delivery plan for 2021
- Combined State Plan – Explanation of what is in the VR section of the plan and RCT's role.
- Request from RCT for additional details on expenditures and the and connection between the two.
- The full VR Division Director's Report was provided in the meeting binder.

Performance Update, Geoffrey Miller, Manager of VR Program Reporting & Analysis

- Geoffrey presented a PowerPoint presentation that was included in the meeting binder.

Public Comment

- Tabitha Fadeley provided public comment
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- James Williams provided public comment

- Robin Orlowski provided public comment

Aaron Demerson, TWC Commissioner Representing Employers

- Addressed the council and gave an update on HireAbility. Introduced the quarterly Employer Spotlight for hiring persons with disabilities.

Chair Bryan Daniel, TWC Commissioner Representing Public

- Addressed the council and gave an update on unemployment. He spoke about working on awareness of TWC VR.

RCT Member Training – SRS Roles and Responsibilities in Legislative History, Karen Stanfill

RCT Committee Reports

- Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment, Lisa Cowart, Chair
 - Reviewed the Customer Satisfaction report.
 - Continued low score for informed choice was discussed.
 - Reviewed 2020 CSNA
- Education and Membership, Bobbie Hodges, Chair
 - Membership Update for November 2020
 - Reappointments upcoming Oct 2021, Joe Powell, Lisa Cowart
 - Member that will term out Oct on 2021 JoAnn Fluke, Paul Hunt, Matt Berend and Crystal Stark.
 - Reached out to Mrs. Fuller to identify replacements for VR Counselors
 - Have identified replacements for the other two positions. We are waiting to verify they have applied.

- Current vacancies SILC Rep April Poillreisz is waiting appointment
- Training for future RCT meetings
 - Karen Stanfill will be leading quarterly RCT education and training.
 - Britni Miles, President of TX APSE will present in May.
 - RCT Member Mentorship program
 - Outline pending review from RCT Chair.
- Policy, Procedure & Personnel Development, Karen Stanfill, Chair
 - Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
 - There were more counselors hired than terminated. The committee would like to track how many of these are retirement.
 - Question as to what the average length of time is a caseload was vacant before a new counselor was hired. The answer was an average of three months.
 - 204 counselors that have not taken steps in getting their masters.
 - Policies
 - Vehicle Modifications policy were discussed
 - Looking for major changes to the substance abuse policy with updates how a person who has substance abuse will receive services.
 - Training
 - Training questions are being held until the trainer position at TWC VR is filled.
 - IHO there were no IHOs to review.
 - Committee focuses for the year
 - Approvals process
 - Training for both counselors and rehab assistance, retention and mentorship of these positions.

Liaison Reports The full reports are included in the binders

- CAP, Karen Stanfill
 - CAP served 255 clients
 - Clients served with physical disabilities are down this year.
 - Legal clinics are being held for persons with disabilities that want to speak to an attorney regarding questions on college accommodations, social security, or guardianship.
- CRP, Bobbie Hodges
 - TWC VR held the 3rd Zoom quarterly meeting with over 200 providers attending
 - We identified regional Reps as facilitator that will help accomplish our goals to provider concerns within their region.
 - During the Zoom meetings the top 3-4 concerns provided will be discussed.
 - Mrs. Hodges provided some of the previous concerns that have been discussed during these meetings.
 - Concerns from providers not getting responses from emails and phone calls. This includes VR Standards email and counselors.
 - Jason Vaden is looking into these concerns.
- PRN, Lisa Cowart
 - PRN has four centers in the state of Texas with Partners Resource Network as the umbrella for 34 years. The grants are five-year grants have been awarded.
 - New multistate grant. Texas is one of the 6 states involved.
- SILC, April Poillreisz
 - Fifth transportation summit was held in January 2020
 - One of the many policy recommendations is to allow Texas Centers for Independent Living and other non-residential facilities to obtain accessible parking placards.
- TEA, Emily Robinson

- Supplemental Special Education Services is offering up to \$1,500 to eligible caregivers of students with significant and complex disabilities.
 - Project Restore: Trauma-informed training.
- TWIC, Lindsey Geeslin
 - Announced new TWIC members.
 - A summary of the December TWIC meeting was given

Council Business

- Lisa Maciejewski-West asked about going back to in person RCT meetings, locations, and dates.
 - Chairman Ebbeler talked about the possibility of holding the in-person meetings at a different location than CCRC.
 - Mrs. Fuller talked about the process of students returning to CCRC. She also noted that the Auditorium will open back up once CCRC opens up residential services.
 - Lisa Maciejewski-West suggested to hold meetings at Horseshoe Bay. She has access to the lodge that will hold around 100 people.
 - Discuss in more detail at the next meeting to start planning.
 - Karen Stanfill offered Disability Rights Texas also has a meeting space in Austin that the public can use, and it is accessible.
- Approve November minutes, Elizabeth Kendell made a motion to approve the November Minutes, Lisa Maciejewski-West seconded. All approved, November Minutes approved.
- Budget Report
 - FY21 Budget \$58,350.00 with a current balance \$55,865.00. There is an open PO for CART Services \$10,000. Tab two is the TWC report for RCT budget.
 - ASL Services for the RCT meetings are being paid by TWC VR budget.
- Unfinished Council Business:

- Letter of support asking Congressional leaders of Texas delegation for an extension of the FFY VR grant through the end of FFY2021 and a waiver of the 15% set aside requirement for the FFY2020 grant.
 - Due to the number of council members that had to abstain from voting a majority was not established and the letter was not sent. Mrs. Maciejewski-West asked for guidance on this matter. Mrs. Fuller will check on this and report back to Mrs. Maciejewski-West
- No Update was given on Ad Hoc Committee for virtual public comment update.
- Motion to adjourn was given by Karen Stanfill and seconded by Joe Powell. All approved.
- Adjourn