

**Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT)
May 2-3, 2019
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center
Auditorium
4800 North Lamar Austin TX 78756**

Present:

Neva Fairchild, Chair Carrollton
Matt Berend, Abilene
Michael Ebbeler Jr., Austin
JoAnne Fluke, Abilene
Cheryl A Fuller, Austin
Lindsey Geeslin, Waco
Bobbie Hodges, Fort Worth
Paul Hunt, Vice Chair Austin
Lisa Maciejewski-West, San Angelo
Susie May, Austin
Troy Myree, Houston
Rodrick Robinson, McKinney
Karen Stanfill Houston
Crystal Stark, College Station

Absent:

Amanda Bowdoin, Forney
Crystal George, Argyle

TWC Reps:

Belinda Salazar, Adam Leonard, Jeff Kaufmann, David Norman, Michelle McCall, Ron Ayer, Carline Geiger, Janice Ehlert, Carrie Alexander, Brad Owens, Gary Benner, Susanna Holt, Melissa Collins

Guest:

Robin Orlowski (Disability Chamber Council), Kaki Leyens TWIC, Colton Read, SILC, Brian White SILC

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Neva Fairchild, Chair.

Committee Meetings

The following committees met with their members: Policy, Procedures and Personnel Development; Membership and Education; and Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment.

RCT Committee Reports

- Customer Satisfaction Committee, Lisa Maciejewski-West, Chair
 - Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) 2020 Town Hall Meetings, Geoffrey Miller reported
 - Held every three years by TWC VR Program and hosted by RCT.
 - Identifies areas for improvement in meeting customer's needs.
 - Discussed expanding geographic coverage. Proposed locations Amarillo, Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, El Paso, Houston, San Antonio. Possible valley locations are Laredo, Brownsville or Corpus Christi. Other suggests are San Angelo, Midland-Odessa or Abilene. Possible virtual town hall as well.
 - Goal to have the meeting dates and locations set early to have enough advance announcement for participation. Would like to see more participation by customers.
 - Eight town hall meetings in total.
 - **Goal is to have locations secured by August 2019.**
 - **Interview are tentatively scheduled for 18 interviews at a rate of three per month starting in October 2019.**
 - Gary Benner gave an overview of the 2nd Quarter Customer Satisfaction and Needs Survey Report. The full report is included in the meeting binder.

- The question on the survey that was revised from the February RCT meeting was used during the last month. It is too early to know the impact of the change currently.
- The phone number for the survey calls was changed to a Texas number on caller ID and the announcement script was edited. These changes were made to help with customers identify that this is TWC VR call.
- **Rodrick Robinson has requested that the committee continue to work on the low numbers received by African Americans. It was suggested that the committee meet outside of the quarterly meeting. Lisa Godwin will work with the committee to set up conference calls.**
- Education & Membership, Bobbie Hodges, Chair
 - RCT membership vacancy update
 - Vacant positions include representation from SILC, PRN, two positions from Business Industry and Labor, one positions of recipients of VR services. Colton Read SILC is pending appointment. Lisa Godwin has been in contact with PRN for representation.
 - Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair are due by email to Bobbie Hodges and Lisa Godwin by COB July 15. Elections will be held at August 2019 meeting.
- Policy, Procedure & Personnel Development, Karen Stanfill, Chair
 - TWC VR Counselor Vacancies
 - There are 55 vacancies, this number is down from last meeting.
 - The committee would like information on why TWC staff are leaving? Is it for more money?
 - Training
 - Carrie Alexander from TWC Training Department provided information about the core training for new counselors.

They have a purchasing training and ethics training for staff.

- **Two subject areas that RCT is suggesting more training on is vehicle modifications and self-employment.**
- IHO
 - No IHO to review

Public Comment

- No one for public comment.

Planning and Review Committee Report, RSA Monitoring Update, Carline Geiger, TWC VR Deputy Division Director of PP&S

- Combined State Plan (CSP)
 - Due to RSA in March 2020
 - TWC VR State office will make edits to the CSP
 - These will be presented to RCT in 3 separate packets
 - RCT and TWC VR will have a conference call to discuss each packet
 - RCT will prepare one set of comments to TWC VR per packet.
- RSA Monitoring Update
 - TWC VR will have Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) monitoring in September 2019.
 - Texas's last monitoring was in 2009.
 - They will speak with members from RCT. Carline will work with Neva Fairchild to schedule dates and times that work best for RCT's monitoring calls.
 - The monitoring review will include four primary focus areas, performance of the VR and supported employment programs, including Competitive Integrated Employment outcomes, implementation of Pre-Employment Transition Services for students with disabilities, financial management of the VR and supported employment

programs, and progress at VR agencies towards implementing joint requirements under Title I of WIOA governing, combined planning, performance accountability and the one-stop delivery system.

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

- Mrs. Fuller provided a PowerPoint presentation on TWC VR Fiscal Overview. This is a basic understanding of how the VR grant works and terms used.
 - In order to receive federal funds TWC VR must have an approved state plan.
 - RSA issues formula grant awards to states each year. To receive the federal grant allotment, a state must meet the match requirement with non-federal funds. The state match requirement is 21.7%.
 - 78 state grants were awarded in Federal fiscal 2018 totaling \$3.2B. California received the largest grant at \$303M and Texas was second at \$247M.
 - In Fiscal year 2017 Texas federal grant amount was about \$245.5M. TWC also requested and received an additional 33 million in reallocation funds in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. State match requirement for the reallocation funds was \$8.9M. The grand total would be about \$354 million in '17. This was during Hurricane Harvey. During the 86th Legislative Session, the Commission requested and is on track to receive supplemental appropriations of \$8.9 million from the Legislature to cover the additional state match required for the reallocation funds.
 - Texas did not request reallocation funds for FFY 2018 and does not foresee requesting them for FFY 2019.
 - In Fiscal Year 2018 TWC VR budget was \$253M in federal allotment and state match was about \$67M for a total of \$320M.

- In Fiscal Year 2019 we had about \$261M in federal allotment and state match was about \$70M for a total of \$330M.
- State match has remained consistent at \$67M - \$69M but the federal allotment has been increasing at a faster rate than projected. The agency's request for general revenue is based on the projected grant growth, which was historically around 1 percent. The actual growth has been 2-3 percent, which is why the agency did not have enough state general revenue to pull down all of the federal grant funds in FFY 2018; However, since program expenditures have been declining and the amount of funds carried forward from one year to the next have increased, the program does not have a strong reason to request additional general revenue funds at this time. If that changes, the agency will pursue a request for additional general revenue in a future Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR)
- Maintenance of effort is a two year look back, which means a state must maintain the amount of state match at a steady state or receive a corresponding reduction in the federal award in subsequent grant years. The Secretary of Education may waive the maintenance of effort requirement for a state if it is determined that the state needed to respond to an exceptional or an uncontrollable circumstance, for example, Hurricane Harvey.
- Pre-Employment Transition Services is the requirement to reserve and expend 15% of the federal VR grant for specific services for students with disabilities. This is about \$37-\$38M for Texas. In FFY 2017 \$26.5M of \$37 million spent. The rest was carried over. In FFY 2018 expenditures for Pre-ETS were almost \$37.6M and in FFY 2019 as of April 22, expenditures are at \$27.2M.
- VR Division budget and expenditures reflect 72% of the federal and state VR funding to the agency. The remainder is cost allocated to agency administrative expenses processed outside

of the VR Division and to provide funding to cover the costs incurred by other agency divisions to support the operation of the VR program, for example, Business Operations, Information Technology, Finance, Office of General Counsel, Division of Operational Insight, and so on..

- TWC VR computer program Work In Texas is being replaced. To be released this summer.
- Summer Earn and Learn goal of 2,500 students with disabilities to participate. Explore STEM is nonresidential camps happening at 10 colleges and universities around the state. A new camp this year is Explore Apprenticeship.
- Legislative update
 - Senate Bill 753 is moving forward. Addresses subminimum wage to be raised to minimum wage.
- The full VR Division Director's Report was provided in the meeting binder.

Guest Speaker, IHO Update, Susanna Holt, Deputy General Counsel and Melissa Collins VR Hearings Coordinator

- A PowerPoint presentation was presented and included in the meeting binder. Included an update on the current workload of IHO and a brief overview of the open enrollment solicitation, and newly adopted chapter 850 administrator rules that address the VR appeals process.

NCSRC/CSAVR/NCSAB Report, Paul Hunt and Karen Stanfill

- One of the SRC has their public comment for rule making and at their SRC meeting. Something to consider.
- Conference Calls/webinars are being held every other month by VR agency with a specific topic. Providers and SRC are invited to the meetings. To provide feedback on the topic.
- SRC staff liaison attends other disability group meetings and brings information back to the council.

- Focus groups to travel to different cities and invite customers and providers to give feedback on a particular topic of concern.
- Training resources are being developed for SRCs including SRC 101. The IRI book is being updated.
- RSA Monitoring
- Vision 2020
- Concerns about women not being represented enough in Randall Shepherd programs.
- RSA 113 is no longer required. The data has been rolled into the RSA911 and this is now a quarterly report.

SILC Transportation Works Summit Report, Neva Fairchild

- Neva attended the 3rd Annual SILC Transportation Works Summit
- Nearly 1.9 million Texans with disabilities reported not leaving their home due to inadequate transportation services, according to TCDD.
- Robert Ferguson, Regional Disability Integration Advisor, Federal Emergency Management Agency stressed how important it is for people with disabilities to be a part of the emergency planning process in their home community.
- Todd Hanson, Assistant Research Scientist, Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) reported on several partnerships between paratransit and ride sharing services like Uber that are improving transportation options for riders and reducing cost for all.
- Increasing Travel for All: Interactive Discussion on Accessibility in New Transportation Systems was a lively presentation and discussion about the Texas Bullet Train, The project of Texas Central Partners.
- Neva participated in an advocacy panel discussion as a presenter. They spoke about advocacy of what you need in terms of transportation and speaking up when your transportation options are not adequate. While advocating for the needs of others as you develop advocacy skills and connections, will change the landscape of transportation for people with disabilities in Texas.

Unfinished Council Business

- Review the To Do List
- Provider Research Update, we will hold a conference call to discuss this report.

Council Business New

- Approve February minutes, Paul Hunt made a motion to approve the February Minutes, Troy Myree seconded. All approved, February Minutes approved.
- Budget Report Lisa Godwin, travel balance \$18,874 and operating expenses \$11,941.

Performance Update, Adam Leonard, TWC, Director of Division of Operational Insight

Adam presented a PowerPoint presentation that was handed out at the meeting.

Liaison Reports

Reports were provided to the council members prior to the meeting and are included in the meeting binder.

- TWIC, Lindsey Geeslin
- CAP, Karen Stanfill
- PRN, Lisa Cowart
- TEA, Susan May Verbal Report on Thursday
- SILC, Colton Read

Adjourn