

**Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT)  
November 7-8, 2019  
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center  
Auditorium  
4800 North Lamar Austin TX 78756**

**Present:**

Michael A. Ebbeler Jr., Chair, Austin,  
Lisa Maciejewski-West, Vice Chair, San Angelo  
Lisa Cowart, Beaumont  
JoAnne Fluke, Abilene  
Cheryl A Fuller, Austin  
Lindsey Geeslin, Waco  
Crystal George, Argyle  
Bobbie Hodges, Fort Worth  
Paul Hunt, Vice Chair Austin  
Susie May, Austin  
Joe Powell, Irving  
Rodrick Robinson, McKinney  
Karen Stanfill Houston  
Crystal Stark, College Station

**Absent:**

Matt Berend, Abilene  
Amanda Bowdoin, Forney  
Colton Read, New Braunfels

**TWC Reps:**

Belinda Salazar, Adam Leonard, Jeff Kaufmann, David Norman, Michelle McCall, Ron Ayer, Carline Geiger, Brian Owens, Tammy Martin, Geoffrey Miller, Carrie Alexander, Cindy Geisman, Kim Berry, Chris Speckhard, Randy Townsend

**Guest:**

Kaki Leyens TWIC, Christina Bryant, Workquest, Kyle Piccola, Arc of Texas, Jennifer Martinez, Arc of Texas, Chase Branden, CTP

**Welcome and Introductions**

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

## Committee Meetings

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

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

- Combined State Plan (CSP)
  - In briefing stage with TWC Commissioners through November 20.
  - Once approved it will be sent out to post for public comment for 30 days ending on December 26th.
  - One week to address public comments. This will be a Gov Delivery notice.
  - Then back to editing and commission briefing processing February.
  - Final document to RSA around March 1, 2020.
  - The plan is a four year plan with a two year amendment.

## RCT Committee Reports

- Membership & Education, Bobbie Hodges, Chair
  - Membership
    - Several members term will expire on October 29<sup>th</sup>. They will need to submit a new application to the Governor's office for reappointment.
    - First term expiring terms for RCT members are considered succeeding term holdovers and may continue to conduct council business as usual until they are reappointed by the governor's office.
    - Current vacant positions two for Business, Industry and Labor and one for VR Recipient.
  - Education
    - New Member Orientation took place November 6, 2020.

- New Member Orientation binders were updated.
- February speaker Emily Robinson, MS, Texas Education Agency, Division of Special Education will give a presentation on the Deaf Population.
- May speaker TWC will give a demonstration on Work In Texas
- The committee encourages the RCT Members visit their local VR office and ask questions regarding VR counselors. The committee will prepare questions to ask for the visits. This is to identify if additional training to identify VR counselors in the Workforce Solutions Offices.
- How can RCT network with TWC VR in their local communities.
  - Questions council should ask with networking
  - How is SILC a part of this process
- RCT Member's Role and Responsibility
  - Committee to review and present in May.
- Customer Satisfaction Committee, Lisa Coward, Chair
  - David Norman gave an overview of the 4th Quarter Customer Satisfaction and Needs Survey Report. The full report is included in the meeting binder.
    - TWC VR is working with the vendor on the recommendations by the RCT to add follow up to the question regarding if customer is dissatisfied with services provided and if case is closed and they are not currently working, to ask if they would like TWC VR to contact them to follow up. David Norman will follow up with Gary Benner.
    - Rodrick asked for an update on his previous request for further research into why the numbers are so low for African Americans and female responses.
  - TWC VR is working on a tool to assist the counselors in addressing the issue of low score on the Customer Satisfaction

Survey with the question, “Your individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) may have included some of the following services: Job Placement, Supported Employment, Training, Orientation & Mobility, Diabetes Education, or other services. Were you involved in choosing the provider for these services?”

- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) 2020 Town Hall Meetings
  - Dates, time and city locations are set.
  - Working on securing building locations at TWS offices as first choice if available.
  - Facilitators were identified.
- Christopher Speckhard spoke about the CSNA components and advertisement.
  - Town Halls and Surveys with VR counselors, VR customers, and VR providers. Persons being surveyed will receive a phone call letting them know to look for the survey both by email and physical letters by USPS. The email and letters will provide a link to the online survey. Both the email and letter will provide a phone number they can call to get help completing the survey.
- Policy, Procedure & Personnel Development, Karen Stanfill, Chair
  - TWC VR counselor and staff turnover
    - 62 TWC VR counselor vacancies
    - To date there are 170 out of 624 TWC VR counselors that have not received a master’s degree.
      - Request that TWC VR give a report as to how many counselors are leaving for retirement, voluntary, involuntary or a requirement.
      - Request for TWC VR stakeholder list. This is to help identify other agencies that the vacancies announcements could be sent to.
      - 12 new positions have been created to help with the vacant position caseloads.

- IHO Review
  - One IHO decision was reviewed by the committee with no concerns noted on the decision.

## Public Comment

- No one for public comment.

## 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 only
- SILC, Colton Read, no verbal report given

## NCSRC/CSAVR/NCSAB Report, Lisa Maciejewski-West

- The conferences were held October 25- November 1, 2019 in Jacksonville, FL. Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr. and Lisa Maciejewski-West attended the conferences.
- NCSRC
  - Take away from Steve Wooderson, CEO CSAVR speech
    - Is Texas VR making full use of all of the available partnerships to help customers obtain competitive integrative employment. How do we really do that? If we're not, what are the barriers? Why are we not having that integration with our community partners in a more meaningful way?
    - And then what is the status of our federal dollars. Are we turning money back to the

feds, if so, what is the rationale and is it the right thing to do?

- State Rehabilitation Council-Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership Under WIOA book was purchased by Lisa M-W for all RCT Members.
- A google drive has been set up for the RCT Members to use it will mirror the SharePoint drive. All materials from the NCSRC/CSAVR/NCSAB are loaded on both drives.
- Some states do a strategic planning retreat. This is something that the RCT may want to consider.
- CSAVR
  - The vision for this conference was “Vision 2020 and ReThink VR”
  - The announcement was made that prior approval for VR customers and SRC members for travel or VR customer equipment over \$5,000 are no longer required.
  - Some take a ways were: Reduction in the data elements required for the 911 VR paperwork. Balancing accountability with performance. Expedited enrollment for VR customers. Developing more VR counselor specialists. How are states reaching out to businesses to make them aware of the opportunities to hire people with disabilities?
- NCSAB
  - They had a discussion panel for state monitoring program and schedule. TWC VR Tammy Martin was on this panel. RSA Commissioner Schultz talked about the monitoring reports being late in the past and he is aware of this issue.
  - Presentations included National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision, Older Individuals Who Are Blind Technical Assistance, Randolph Sheppard and other state VR agencies.

## **Arc of Texas, Jennifer Martinez, Chief Executive Officer and Kyle Piccola Director of Public Policy and Advocacy**

- Arc of Texas is an organization that advocates of individuals with disabilities.
- Their primary focus is advocating for and with people with disabilities. They believe that people with disabilities and their families are by far the best voices for change. Personal stories are what truly make a difference. Their Governmental Affairs team teaches everyone how to be an effective advocate and supports advocates taking action at the Capitol, in their own community, or online.
- The Arc of Texas provides information to individuals and families of people with disabilities about accessing services, navigating the system and addressing crisis needs.
- During the last legislative session, The Arc of Texas testified more than 70 times on 30 different bills and eight of 13 priority bills passed.

## **Randy Townsend, TWC Deputy Executive Director**

- Mr. Townsend introduced himself to the council.

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

- Ms. Fuller gave a brief update about the Texas HireAbility Campaign that included the Employer Forum that was held in October. She announced an Employer Recognition program that is coming in the Spring of 2020.
- Rehabilitation Services Administration Monitoring Visit
  - Once the report is submitted to TWC VR we will have 20 days to provide additional information.
  - When that is finalized, we will have 45 days to develop a corrective action plan.
- ReThink project
  - This is a group formed by RSA to research why VR is getting fewer applicants. This group includes Texas, Oregon, Tennessee,

Arkansas, Iowa, Michigan and Maryland. Ms. Fuller and Adam Leonard from Texas are a part of this group.

- Four strategies are
  - Awareness, making sure customers know how to reach VR.
  - Increase delivery services to areas of greatest need.
  - Improve customer engagement and retention throughout the process.
  - Track, engage and retain.
- The full VR Division Director's Report was provided in the meeting binder.

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

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

- Rodrick Robinson requested statistics on brain injury, stroke and TBI customers served.

## **Unfinished Council Business**

- Review the To Do List

## **Council Business New**

- Paul Hunt suggested to amend the RCT Bylaws to indicate that all RCT members are a part of the Planning & Review Committee. Chair Michael Ebbeler, Jr. has tabled this until the next quarterly meeting.
- Rodrick Robinson suggested to research alternative opportunities for public comment. Chair Michael Ebbeler, Jr. has tabled this until the next quarterly meeting.
- Bobbie Hodges made a motion that TWC VR provide a list of VR Providers to the council. Rodrick Robinson seconded the motion. A discussion was held to clarify what the list would contain as a full list of CRP is a rather large list. It was clarified that the list would be VR

employment providers with contact email if available. It was put to vote and passes.

- Paul Hunt made a motion that it be mandatory to all VR Counselors receive the informed choice training. Karen Stanfill seconded the motion It was put to vote and passes. Paul Hunt made a motion to amend the previous motion to provide clarity. I move that the Rehabilitation Council of Texas recommend the agency have both their rehab assistants and counselors watch the webinar that Michelle McCall did on informed choice as mandatory training requirements. The motion was voted on and approved.
- Approve August minutes, Paul Hunt made a motion to approve the August Minutes, JoAnne Fluke seconded. All approved, August Minutes approved.
- Budget Report Lisa Godwin, travel balance \$10958.02 and operating expenses \$8,308.40.

### **Adjourn**

Karen Stanfill made a motion to adjourn. JoAnne Fluke seconded. All approved.