**State of California**

**Health and Human Services Agency**

**Department of Rehabilitation**

**DHHAC meeting notes**

**Friday, 12/13/24**

**DOR Central Office, 721 Capitol Mall, Room 301, Sacramento, CA 95814, with virtual participation via Zoom.**

**In-attendance:**

DHHAC Members (in-person, San Diego): Callie Frye

DHHAC Members (virtual): Dr. Liann Osborne, Lisa Gonzales, Solomon Yigzaw, Jerry Cardoso

DOR staff (in-person, Sacramento): Kimberly Nguyen, Jennifer Wilbon

DOR staff (virtual): Craig Rubenstein

ASL captioner(s)/interpreter(s) (virtual): Tiffany, Candice, Amanda

ASL interpreters (in-person): Jesse Martinez, Kayla Daunt

Public Members (virtual): Angelica Martinez, Marnee Wafer-Hoecker, Edward Tagge, Brandon Birchell

**Item 1: Welcome and Introductions**

Callie Frye (DHHAC Chair) reviewed DHHAC rules. Callie welcomed attendees, conducted roll call, and established a quorum.

**Item 2: Introductions of DOR staff and members of the public**

New Committee members were introduced.

**Item 3: Public Comment**

Callie asked public members if there were any issues or concerns to address that were not on the agenda.

Committee members comments and questions

* Would like to know what RCD means
* Requested a list of acronyms
* Would like to know what services DOR provides to the deaf and hard of hearing community and would like to look at data

Public members comments and questions

* Would like to know if there were any updates on DHHAC membership applications

Department comments and questions

* Explained services DOR provides to the deaf and hard of hearing community
* Explained RCD role
* Application announcements will be made soon

## **Item 4: Update Regarding the 03/14/24 Meeting Minutes**

The chair established that there was not a quorum and no items needing actions could be discussed during the meeting.

## **Item 5: DOR DHHS section report**

## Craig Rubenstein, DOR, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Program Manager, provided program report

Department comments and questions

* Shared consumer success stories
* Shared DHHS history, focus, and training
* Discussed SB 105
* Resources are spread by “word-of-mouth”, referrals, and students receive information from their school
* The department is working with staff to try and avoid “burnout” that RCD’s may experience
* Working to put staff training in the departments LMS (Learning Management System)

Committee members comments and questions

* Would like to know what SB105 is
* How does the committee help with RCD burnout
* How can the outside community support RCD’s
* What is DHHS’s purpose under the department
* How do resources reach students and the community

Public members comments and questions

* Every 4-years there is a sensitivity training for staff. Would like to know if that is for new employees or current employees

**Item 6: Election for Vice Chair Role**

Callie, chair, outlined the responsibilities of the vice chair role. Must be a member of the committee for one year to be vice chair.

## **Item 7: Addressing Employment Challenges for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

Kimberly Singh, Employment Development Department, EDD, Equal Employment Opportunity Office Manager, and Carrie Sailors, EDD, Health Management Unit Manager, discussed employment challenges and effective strategies for recruitment. A presentation was shared, some of the highlights included the following: review of EDD EEO office responsibilities, job applicant accommodation requests, limited examination and appointed program, challenges and efforts, reasonable accommodation process, collaboration, outreach to organizations (through contracts), disability etiquette, barriers.

Committee members comments and questions

* Provided feedback from a consumer perspective
* Discussed challenges with purchasing equipment and offered suggestions. Shared information/resource: California Connect Program
* Asked for ideas of how to attract employers to hire deaf and hard of hearing individuals
* Difficult for deaf and hard of hearing individuals to find employment, suggestions offered to figure out how to solve some of these challenges

Department and questions

* DOR partners with EDD

Public members comments and questions

## Would like to see the word “liability” be replaced with sensitive wording

## **Item 8: Work Incentives Planning WIP Services and Program Report**

Brian Connors, DOR, Social Security Programs, Unit Manager and Morgane Simkowski, SSA. Presentation/program overview of WIP services. Program assists with SSI/SSDI consumers to bridge the gap between Social Security benefits and successful employment. Discussed common myths among SSI/SSDI beneficiaries and current challenges faced with WIP’s. The goal is to work with the deaf and hard of hearing section and identify which WIP in each district is designated to work with deaf and hard of hearing. Everything is “in-house”, there is no subcontracting.

Committee members comments and questions

* Shared idea of using native signing benefits counselors
* Would like to know what qualifications are needed for counselors
* Questions regarding subcontracting

**Item 9: Identification of future agenda items**

Committee members comments and questions

* Next DHHAC meeting 03/20/25
* Would like to review bylaws
* Discuss election for vice chair
* Discuss micro business and internship opportunities
* Discuss leadership/best practices
* Intersectionality for consumers
* Recruiting efforts for high school students/student services
* Services for high school students and college students

**Adjourn (12:02 p.m.)**