

**California State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**

**March 23-24, 2022 Quarterly Meeting**

10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. each day

Virtual meeting through Zoom with conference call option

Quarterly Meeting Minutes

*Approved on June 8, 2022*

**Attendance**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SRC Members** | **DOR Staff** | **DOR Staff (cont.)** |
| Theresa Comstock, Chair | John Anderson | Nina Presmont |
| Nick Wavrin, Vice-Chair | Carol Asch | Diane Shinstock |
| Benjamin Aviles, Treasurer | Kate Bjerke | Nancy Wentling |
| Chanel Brisbane | Regina Cademarti | Barbara Wieskamp |
| Ivan Guillen | Sarah Candee | Theresa Woo |
| Jonathan Hasak | Brian Connors | Julie Xiong |
| Susan Henderson | Mark Erlichman |  |
| Joe Xavier | Shanti Ezrine | **Public Members** |
|  | Zak Ford | Andrew Burdick |
|  | Jessica Grove | Beth Crane |
|  | Kristin Hughes | Lesley Ann Gibbons |
|  | Brenna Lammerding | Lisa Hayes |
|  | Trung Le | Michael Luna |
|  | Robert Loeun | Danny Marquez |
|  | Justin McIntire | Ashneek Nanua |
|  | Jeff McKey | Linda O’Neal |
|  | Andi Mudryk | Andrea Rogozinski |

**Item 1. Welcome and Introductions**

SRC Chair Theresa Comstock called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed the SRC members. The SRC members introduced themselves and a quorum was established.

**Item 2. Public Comment**

There were no public comments on issues and concerns not included elsewhere on the agenda.

**Item 3: Approval of the January 12-13, 2022 SRC Quarterly Meeting Minutes**

Motion: It was moved/seconded (Guillen/Hasak) to approve the

January 12-13, 2022 meeting minutes as presented. A roll call vote was taken.

(Yes –Comstock, Guillen, Hasak, Henderson, Wavrin), (No - 0) (Abstain – 0) (Absent for vote – 0) The final vote was 5 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain.

Motion carried.

**Item 4. Directorate Report**

The SRC members were informed by Joe Xavier, Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) Director and Andi Mudryk, DOR Chief Deputy Director on national, State, and departmental policy topics.

National

* Reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The House of Representatives is drafting legislation reauthorizing WIOA. A draft bill is expected to be in place in 2022. The House of Representatives and Senate will not include Title IV of the Rehabilitation Act in the WIOA reauthorization. The concern with including Title IV is it would require addressing the definition of integration.
* The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) released the Real Pay for Real Work disability fund grant solicitation that focuses on shifting subminimum wage to competitive integrated employment (CIE). The application is due June 21, 2022. Awards totaling $167 million will be made.

State

* California Health and Human Services (CalHHS) Playbook for Hiring Individuals with Disabilities. This playbook advances initiatives to hire people with disabilities in State civil service. The playbook provides principles, strategies, and DOR resources to support hiring individuals with disabilities. DOR is rolling the playbook out to twelve other departments in CalHHS.
* COVID-19 – California SMARTER Plan. The SMARTER Plan will guide California’s approach to managing COVID-19 while moving the state’s recovery forward. It emphasizes continued readiness, awareness, and flexibility.
* Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Court. This is a proposed framework to deliver behavioral health services to Californians with untreated mental health and substance use disorders leading to homelessness or incarceration. If approved by the legislature, every California county would be required to establish a CARE Court as a part of its civil court system.

Department

* DOR is planning for State budget fiscal year 2023/24.
* State Plan Modification. The modification did not have significant changes. The objective changes mostly consisted of methods of measurement. Most objectives will be measured by percent change instead of by numbers.
* Pathways to Employment. Through the Paid Internship Program and State Internship Program (SIP), DOR has increased the number of pathways of employment for 70 individuals.
* Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. The executive order allowing State bodies to meet remotely expires April 1, 2022.
* California Statewide Assessment (CSA). The SRC was encouraged to obtain input for the CSA on how to outreach to unserved and underserved communities.

Public comment from Danny Marquez representing California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies (CASRA) was provided. Marquez asked if DOR would pursue a RSA Real Pay for Real Work grant. DOR stated they are assessing the viability and the opportunity of pursuing that grant.

**Item 5.** **Mental Health Cooperative Programs Evidence-Based Practices**

Sarah Candee, Chief of Cooperative Programs; Diane Shinstock, Manager, DOR Cooperative Programs; and Theresa Woo, Regional Director, DOR San Francisco District presented on evidence-based practices with mental health cooperative programs. Highlights included:

* Currently, DOR has mental health cooperative contracts with half of the behavioral health departments in California.
* Consumers with psychiatric disabilities is the largest population DOR serves.
* Individual Placement Support (IPS) is an evidence-based practice. DOR has allowed cooperative programs if interested incorporate IPS in their program model.
* IPS provides competitive employment and rapid job search. There has been improvement of behavioral health symptoms when the individual is working.
* An IPS pilot began six years ago with Occupational Therapy Training Program (OTTP) in the San Francisco DOR District. The pilot was successful. Through fundraising OTTP has been able to sustain the IPS model at their agency.
* DOR has a Statewide work group of three DOR Regional Directors to discuss best practices such as motivational interviewing training. A motivational interview training workshop was provided by DOR to partners and counselors.
* DOR has a regional partnership in San Francisco with IPS providers to discuss funding opportunities and best practices.
* Challenges with IPS implementation include funding challenges such as the costs of fidelity reviews and long-term supports are not funded by vocational rehabilitation (VR) dollars. There is a work culture shift for DOR to move to rapid engagement of consumers and rapid employment. Another challenge is aligning what successes look like for all partners. DOR defines success different than local county mental health departments
* The topic of cost-of-living adjustments for providers was discussed. DOR does not have the authority to provide this increase in pay. The cost-of-living adjustment would be helpful since staffing is a challenge. Staff continue to leave for other entities for higher wages.

Public comment was provided by Danny Marquez representing CASRA. The DOR staff works with 14 CASRA members that have a cooperative contract. CASRA believes in the positive results that come from an IPS model. They are concerned with the funding aspect. Members in the Los Angeles area decided not to do IPS because of lack of funding. Funding is needed to help keep those consumers employed and retain employment. Staff retention is an issue and keeping employees is a challenge when county staff are paid more.

Public comment was provided by Lisa Hayes from Rolling Start Inc. Lisa asked for clarification on what long-term supports meant. The presenters clarified long-term supports are specific to the employment situation and DOR will close a case successfully if the person employed in the same position after 90 days, but the same individual may need supports for six months to a year. Lifetime supports are available to an individual if they want or need them pertaining to their place of employment. It is up to the agency providing the services and not DOR to provide those supports. Typically, that funding would come from county which can be a barrier to the implementation.

**Item 6. Timely Communication with DOR Consumers**

Carol Asch and Trung Le, Assistant Deputy Directors, DOR VR Employment Division presented on timely communication with DOR consumers. Highlights include:

* The DOR field leadership made up of all Regional Directors and District Administrators confirmed and affirmed their commitment to continue improvement with customer service.
* The annual district reminders address expectations of response times to consumers. The language will be revised to show that all calls and emails will be returned as soon as possible, but not more than 48 hours after receipt. Out-of-Office notifications will be required on email and voicemail and will have contact information of a staff member that is available in their absence.
* Consumers will be introduced to all members on the VR team.
* Innovative customer service efforts include: VR Connections portal allows consumers to electronically sign their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), consumers wills get notifications when authorizations and checks are processed, consumers will be able to apply for services online and expedited enrollment will make the DOR process easier and timelier.
* The statewide team manager training will also cover customer service.

Public comment was provided by Lesley Ann Gibbons of Sterling Adaptives. Ms. Gibbons stated the vendor/provider of goods and services does not have the knowledge or contact information of the DOR team members for consumers. When an authorization is received it has a VR counselor’s name and contact information, but not the Service Coordinator’s name and contact information. It would be helpful to have the contact information of the VR team. DOR responded that the District Administrator can provide the team information to the vendor/provider.

Public comment was provided by Danny Marquez representing CASRA. Mr. Marquez stated consumers communicate by texting and may respond faster to texts than email.

**Item 7. Adopt-a-Region Reports**

Treasurer Aviles connected with Robert Loeun, Regional Director from the Inland Empire (IE) District/Region. Discussion highlights include:

* Treasurer Aviles attends the IE team meetings to be involved actively with this district/region.
* Successful Closures. IE’s successful closures was the highest of all DOR Regions.
* IE is working on job placements in their rural areas of their region.

Treasurer Aviles connected with Susan Senior, Regional Director from the

Los Angeles South Bay District/Region. Discussion highlights include:

* This region is working on an entrepreneurship initiative to help consumers seeking self-employment and starting a business.

Member Brisbane connected with Theresa Woo, Regional Director from San Francisco District/Region. Discussion highlights include:

* There is a focus in the district on a homelessness project.
* Career Pathways Grant. This district/region is participating in this grant that creates sector-based caseloads. The VR counselor in charge of technology caseloads is housed in the DOR San Francisco district/region.
* The SIP was extended into 2022. Best Buddies is the vendor supporting this program.

Chair Comstock connected with David Wayte, Regional Director from the Redwood Empire District (RED) /Region. Discussion highlights include:

* RED has a district goal to increase numbers by 10 %. So far, they are meeting these goals in all three categories: (1) VR applications; (2) potentially eligible; and (3) VR successful closures.
* RED Challenges
* Expedited Enrollment - They are trying to increase the rate of expedited enrollment. Team managers are giving individual attention to VR counselors to increase the rate of expedited enrollment.
* Serving Individuals Experiencing Homelessness:

Wrap-Around Services - Exploring ways to increase wrap-around services (Independent Living Training, Peer Counseling Training & Navigating Resources) to help individuals be work-ready. There has been a limited term position called a "Community Resource Navigator" that has helped with locating resources, but there is often such a time lag that people drop out.

Housing Bridge Funding – RED is considering providing funding for housing assistance to provide a bridge toward stability in living situation.

* Addressing Workplace Bullying issues through trainings, especially related to email etiquette/courtesy.

Member Guillen connected with Peter Blanco, Regional Director and Jeff Noyes, District Administrator from the San Diego District/Region:

* DOR staff are now present at all America’s Job Centers in the San Diego District
* The district is practicing the rapid engagement model which can lead to quicker employment successes.
* Challenges include the number of applications is lower than expected. Possible contributors to the lower numbers are consumers and staff are worried about being potentially exposed to COVID-19 and more consumers are seeking remote work opportunities for consumers.
* This district held an employment fair to get individuals signed up with Schedule A. Schedule A gives the federal government permission to hire people with significant disabilities for jobs within the federal government without requiring them to compete against non-disabled jobseekers for those positions.
* The district has placed consumers in on-the-job trainings and internships with Sandag and CalTrans.

Member Hasak connected with the San Jose District/Region.:

* This region has vacant positions for Regional Director, District Administrator, Team Managers, and Office Technicians that are advertised, and they are looking to fill.
* This region hosted a virtual and in-person job fair.
* They are partnering with Handshake. Handshake is an online recruiting platform for higher education students and alumni. They partner with universities and employers to streamline and simplify the recruiting process.
* The district has increased number of referrals and are working to increase successful closures.

Member Henderson connected with Della Randolph, Acting Regional Director from the Greater East Bay (GEB) District/Region. Discussion highlights include:

* On March 14, 2022 the DOR GEB district participated with Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund in a transition fair for youth with disabilities.
* GEB hosted hiring events with the United States Postal Service, CalTrans, and Department of General Services.
* GEB has a new collaboration with the Oakland Private Industry Council. They provide accessible, high-quality training and employment services to residents and employers.
* GEB promotes non-traditional trades and apprenticeship programs as pathways for consumers.
* Goal to increase the number of individuals with ID/DD into CIE.
* GEB participated in a Statewide Black History month event and in the Virtual Asian American Lunar New Year Event.

**Recess**

The SRC meeting recessed until 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 24, 2022

**Thursday, March 24, 2022**

**Item 8. Reconvene, Welcome, and Introductions**

Meeting attendees were welcomed back for day two of the quarterly meeting and a quorum was established.

**Item 9. Public Comment**

There were no public comments on issues and concerns not included elsewhere on the agenda.

**Item 10: Competitive Integrated Employment**

Michael Luna, California Department of Developmental Services (DDS); Nick Wavrin, SRC Vice-Chair, California Department of Education (CDE); Andrew Burdick and Beth Crane, Employment Specialists, Inland Regional Center (IRC) presented on the CIE Blueprint, the business engagement efforts, and local partnership agreements (LPA). Highlights include:

* CDE, DOR, and DDS developed the CIE Blueprint to jointly identify ways to increase opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) to prepare for and engage in CIE.
* The Blueprint guides implementation activities to support the achievement of CIE for individuals with ID/DD over a five-year period.
* LPAs document the ways local partners work together to streamline service delivery, engage their communities, and increase CIE opportunities for individuals with ID/DD. There are 59 LPAs throughout the State.
* LPA core partners are local education agencies, DOR districts, and regional centers. The LPA community partners include public community services, parental organizations, business partners and private non-profit organizations
* Locally, IRC spoke of their best practices in forming LPAs which included starting the partnership at the top agencies of DOR, local education agencies (LEA), and the regional center; starting the partnership early, and strategizing how to develop partnerships, and bringing in the Workforce Development participation. Currently there are 12 LPAs between Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.
* The IRC with the LPAs developed for consumers a transition services timeline; a roadmap for students exiting high school; a universal referral form, and a resource directory.
* Businesses engage through the LPAs and will speak directly to the teachers or counselors about employment opportunities their businesses offer. The LPA partners will participate in the transition fairs, employment and hiring fairs.
* IRC will posts employment opportunities for consumers on their website (<https://www.inlandrc.org/>).

Chair Comstock asked the presenters to share the challenges or key factors that needed to be in place for the LPAs to ensure success. The presenters stated the key factors was identifying any problems early in the LPA process and keeping energy with the involved partners.

Member Henderson commented the CIE Blueprint should be shared with all LEAs and SELPAs. The presenters stated that WorkAbility I programs are required to enter into an LPA. Local LPAs can be found on the CIE webpage link: <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/cie/>

Presenter Michael Luna commented that regional centers can provide support for consumers that are interested in micro enterprises.

For CIE resources the webpage link: <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/cie/>

**Item 11: Self-Employment**

Presenters, Nina Presmont, Chief, Program Policy Section; Brenna Lammerding, AGPA, Program Policy Section; Theresa Woo, Regional Director, DOR San Francisco District; and Justin McIntire, SSMI, DOR Santa Barbara District presented on the services available for DOR consumers interested in starting and operating their own small business. Highlights include:

* As suggested in 2018 by the SRC, the DOR increased its self-employment internal marketing and capacity. DOR internal self-employment resources are available on the intranet on the new self-employment and entrepreneurship area called “The Hub”. The resources include small business and mentors, authorization codes, small business tips, webinars, trainings, and articles related to working with consumers in a self-employment setting.
* Self-employment setting means an employment setting in which an eligible individual works in a chosen occupation, for profit or fee, in their own small business, with control and responsibility for decisions affecting the conduct of the business.
* Generally, DOR can provide eligible individuals with assessment, technical assistance, and training to assist them in preparing for work in a self-employment setting, and certain initial one-time costs to establish the proposed small business.
* DOR Statewide totals included approximately 498 self-employment plans for State Fiscal Year 2020-2021.
  + 66 plans were successfully closed with an employment outcome.
  + 44 plans had individuals ages 19 through 21. (There were no plans below the age 19.)
* Each District nominated one or more Self-Employment Subject Matter Experts (SME) to provide training and technical assistance to VR teams and support more opportunities for consumers.
* The SMEs must be familiar and remain up to date on State and Federal regulations, disseminate information on tools and resources, train the VR teams on topics relevant to self-employment.

Chair Comstock asked if there are any barriers or challenges to increase the self-employment successes. Presenters stated areas they are working to increase referrals by marketing the service and possibly developing a video for the DOR website.

Vice-Chair Wavrin asked if DOR self-employment resources are available outside on the external DOR website. Presenters stated this is under development. The DOR wanted to get internal feedback on the intranet resources on “The Hub” before providing the information on the public internet.

Member Guillen asked the presenters role in the decision whether a consumer is approved for self-employment or not. The presenters stated that decision is between the consumer’s counselor and the district management.

Public comment was provided by Danny Marquez of CASRA. Mr. Marquez asked if any of the Work Incentive Planners (WIPs) develop a Plan to Achieve Self Support plan to help the consumer with the development of self-employment or entrepreneurship. Presenters stated the WIPs do this now.

**Item 12. SRC Bylaw Amendments**

Executive Officer Cademarti reviewed the suggested SRC bylaw revisions originally introduced to the full SRC at the January 12-13, 2022 SRC quarterly meeting. Revisions included:

Under Article IV Membership

* Pages 3-5: Updated the membership to match the Federal regulations

34 CFR § 361.17 - Requirements for a SRC.

* Page 5: Updated “with the exception” to “except for”. Updated he/she pronouns to they/them/theirs gender neutral pronouns

Under Article VI Procedures, B. Voting

* Page 8: Update “anytime” to “any time”

Motion: It was moved/seconded (Henderson/Guillen) to approve the SRC bylaw amendments as presented. A roll call vote was taken.

(Yes – Aviles, Brisbane, Comstock, Guillen, Henderson, Wavrin), (No - 0) (Abstain – 0) (Absent for vote – 0) The final vote was 6 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain. Motion carried.

**Item 13. Debrief and Recommendations Discussion**

SRC members debriefed from this meeting’s discussions to potentially adopt recommendations. Discussion included:

* DOR to consider a cost-of-living adjustment for mental health service cooperative program providers. There is a high employee turnover in these programs due to staff leaving for better paying jobs. The DOR does not have the authority to provide an increase in pay.
  + Instead of increasing the budget, it was emphasized to enhance the relationship with the local level mental health agencies and with DOR and CDE, like the CIE Blueprint.
  + Can the LPAs include mental health? The LPA must focus on ID/DD but they can include more.
  + It would be helpful for DOR to sustain the LPAs past the CIE Blueprint time period and expand their focus to include other disabilities including mental health.
* Provide vendors/contractors the names of staff on the VR team. When vendors receive an authorization, it has only the counselor’s name, but not the DOR Service Coordinator’s name. The Service Coordinator’s name would be useful on the authorization for contacting when they have questions.
  + It would be helpful to improve communications between vendors/contractors and local DOR agency staff.
  + An area of improvement is if DOR could confirm they received the authorization. In one district it can be processed in 24 hours, another district it could take two weeks. The CRP cannot provide services until they receive the authorization.
* Another challenge is how to reach everyone and inform them of DOR services. Vice-Chair Wavrin stated most students with disabilities go through LEAs. DOR should leverage existing resources to provide training to LEAs regarding the services available for DOR. This training would be for all teachers. Special education only serves consumers with and Individualized Education Plan. DOR will serve consumers with and IEP, but also serves consumers that are potentially eligible and those with a 504 plan.

**Item 14. SRC Officers, Members, and Executive Officer Reports**

SRC Officers and the SRC Executive Officer provided brief reports.

Chair Comstock shared:

* Appreciation to all members for attending and wished the SRC could be meeting in person soon.

Treasurer Aviles shared:

* SRC budget personnel costs had a small increase due to the wage cut for state workers ending on June 30, 2021.
* There continued to be operating expense savings due to no member and staff travel.

Unified State Plan Committee Chair Guillen shared:

* State Plan Modification
  + The public comment period closed on Monday, February 14, 2022
  + DOR submitted the State Plan Modification.
    - The US Departments of Labor and Education will review and provide a decision within 90 days if approved or not
      * The modification would be valid from July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024
  + Next Unified State Plan Subcommittee Meetings is Tuesday, May 17 at 1:00 p.m. by Zoom
    - Agenda items include:
      * Modification: Review of public comment process and submission
      * State Plan: Update on goals and objectives
      * CSA: Brainstorming session on qualitative data gathering

Monitoring and Evaluation Committee Chair Henderson shared:

* The committee met on March 8, 2022. The meeting topics included:
  + Final 2021 Consumer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) Report
    - Overall the consumers were satisfied with DOR services. Satisfaction rate was 78.6%.
    - The recent modifications to the survey, which includes the expanded satisfaction rating scale, improved DOR’s understanding of consumer satisfaction.
  + CSS Dashboard Demonstration
    - For the first time a dashboard of the CSS data was created. This provides a visual display of the data that can be configured so the user can choose what CSS data they want to see
    - Access is limited to DOR staff. SRC can request data from the dashboard.
  + Distribution of the 2022 CSS
    - This year the DOR increased the number of consumers that will receive the survey from 5,731 to 7,357. This increase will help obtain more survey responses. The goal is to receive survey responses from 1% of DOR’s population (current DOR population approximately 101,000)
    - In April 2022, DOR will send the survey by email and by surface mail
    - During May through August 2022 the Planning Unit will analyze the data
    - During August through December 2022 the Planning Unit will update the dashboard and write the CSS report.

Executive Officer Cademarti shared:

* Provided a membership update.
  + Members Brisbane, Hasak, Henderson, and Xavier terms expire September 2022. All are eligible for reappointment.
  + Chair Comstock’s second and last term ends in September 2022.
  + Reached out to individuals interested in the Tribal VR SRC position and in the Business, Industry, and Labor position.
  + SRC is waiting for the Governor’s Office to appoint new members.
* Bagley Keene update
  + The Governor issued Executive Order N-1-22 on January 5, 2022 to immediately extend the sunset of Assembly Bill 361, which extended the flexibilities enabling public agencies to meet remotely during the COVID-19-19 emergency. The pandemic related changes to the Bagley-Keene Act will remain in effect through March 31, 2022.
  + DOR has one room (Conference Room 301) available to meet. This room is not large enough for the State Rehabilitation Council. The microphones and speakers in the larger conference rooms (Rooms 242 and 169) are being enabled for teleconferencing.

**Item 15. Identification of Future Agenda Items**

No new future agenda items were discussed or added to the future agenda item list.

**Item 16. Adjourn**

The SRC quarterly meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.