**California State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**

**June 8 – 9, 2022 Quarterly Meeting**

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. each day

Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)

Physical meeting location: 721 Capitol Mall, Room 301, Sacramento, CA 95814

Virtual and telephone participation options offered via Zoom

**Meeting Minutes**

*Approved on August 31, 2022*

## Attendance

SRC members: Benjamin Aviles, Chanel Brisbane, Elizabeth Lewis, Ivan Guillen, Joe Xavier, Kecia Weller, Lisa Hayes, Nick Wavrin, Sara Abdrabou, Susan Henderson, Theresa Comstock. Absent – Jonathan Hasak.

DOR staff: Mark Erlichman, Carol Asch, Conan Petrie, Russell Schutte, Diane Shinstock, Jessica Grove, Spencer Hoke, Trung Le, Alicia Lucas, Avantika Sharma, Kate Bjerke, Ana Acton, Megan Sampson, Ahmed Yusufu, Barbara Wieskamp, Brenna Lammerding, Cynthia Butler, Daniel Benitez, Della Randolph, Desiree Jackson, Elizabeth Musgrove, Erika Miller, Inez de Ocio, Jeffrey McKey, John Anderson, Kelly Montelongo, Kim Rutledge, Lisa Cushman, Lisa Niegel, Maria Aliferis-Gjerde, Matthew Brown, Peter Dawson, Rachel Mendoza, Regina Cademarti, Shannon Coleman, Shanti Ezrine, Valerie Massey, Zak Ford.

Members of the public: Danny Marquez, Chris Fendrick, Mitch Pomerantz, Yolanda, Lesley Gibbons, Jennifer Gass, Miguel Venegas, Aaron Espinoza, Cheyanne Garcia, Janice Walth, Melanie Wong, Tricia Robertson, Victor Duron, Lisa Rodriguez.

## Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

Theresa Comstock, SRC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed SRC members and meeting attendees. The SRC members introduced themselves and a quorum was established.

## Item 2: Public Comment

Danny Marquez asked that the SRC consider receiving an update on DOR’s expedited enrollment initiative as a future agenda item

## Item 3: New SRC Member Welcome

The SRC welcomed the following new members who were appointed by Governor Newsom on March 30, 2022:

* Lisa Hayes, representing the State Independent Living Council
* Sara Abdrabou, representing Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
* Elizabeth Lewis, representing Business, Industry and Labor

The SRC members shared background information and spoke about their professional experience and the networks they represent.

## Item 4: Approval of the March 23–24, 2022 SRC Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Motion: It was moved/seconded (Guillen/Henderson) to approve the March 23 – 24, 2022 SRC quarterly meeting minutes as presented. A roll call vote was taken (Yes – Comstock, Brisbane, Henderson, Aviles, Wavrin, Guillen, Lewis) (No – 0) (Abstain – Weller) (Absent for vote – Hasak, Hayes).

## Item 5: Directorate Report

Joe Xavier, DOR Director, joined the SRC to provide a report out on national, state, and departmental topics of interest.

National Updates

Director Xavier spoke about the recent Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) meetings, legislation introduced to reauthorize the Rehabilitation Act, and the national landscape as it relates to VR funding. One in three VR agencies across the US are reverting funds back to the Treasury. Since 2010, $1 billion in VR funds have been reverted. Fortunately, California’s experience is different in that DOR has been able to spend VR funding, meet funding requirements, and pursue additional funding.

State Updates

Director Xavier posed the following policy questions for the SRC’s consideration:

* Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: The California Health and Human Services Agency is assessing what participant data is being collected by the various departments, and what initiatives are taking place to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion. DOR anticipates that the Department will be asked to develop an equity action plan.
	+ How can inequities in DOR’s programs and services be identified, and what methodologies can be used to address these equity gaps?
	+ What communities are unserved and underserved, and how can DOR effectively reach them?
	+ What methods and models should DOR consider to address these inequities?
* Gun Violence: is both a public health and a public safety crisis in California. How can DOR contribute to the strategies and actions that address this crisis? What are examples of those strategies?
* 2023/24 Budget: work is already starting on the 2023/24 budget. The DOR welcomes the SRC’s feedback or suggestions on new funding initiatives for consideration.

Department Updates

Director Xavier reported on the many changes happening at the DOR senior leadership level:

* Departure of Andi Mudryk, DOR Chief Deputy Director, who was appointed by Governor Newsom to serve as a Sacramento County Superior Court Judge.
* Appointment of Kimberly Rutledge, Deputy Director, DOR Legislation and Communications.
* DOR Regional Director appointments: Brian Winic (Santa Barbara), Della Randolph (Greater East Bay), Vivian Hernandez-Obaldia (Northern Sierra) and Sherri Han-Lam (Orange San Gabriel)
* Vacant Deputy Director, DOR Specialized Services Division position.
* Appointment of David Kwan, Deputy Director, DOR Administrative Services.
* Upcoming retirement of Wan-Chun Chang, Regional Director, DOR Van Nuys/Foothill District.

Director Xavier provided updates on the following DOR initiatives:

* Community Living Fund: DOR will establish a $10 million Community Living Fund, a bridge program to provide goods and services not available through other programs to help individuals transition out of institutions and to keep individuals from being institutionalized.
* Demand Side Employment Initiative: will incentivize and provide funding to small and medium employers across California to create workplaces that are more disability inclusive.
* Integrating Employment in Recovery Initiative: DOR staff (VR Counselors and Staff Services Analysts) will work in four opioid treatment centers to provide VR services to individuals in treatment. Funding for this initiative is still pending final signing of the budget, but both the legislature and Governor have indicated support.
* Diversity and Inclusion: DOR is hosting a “Persist with Pride” event and will host the Department’s third Juneteenth event. DOR’s affinity groups include the African American affinity group, Native American affinity group, Middle Eastern affinity group, Asian American affinity group, LGBTQIA affinity group, and the Latin X affinity group.
* Event Highlight: a report out from the May 2022 registered apprenticeship program for the health care sector in the DOR Orange/San Gabriel District was provided.

Member of the public, Yolanda, provided comment about increasing awareness for individuals who are blind, including seniors and people of color throughout the many geographic areas of California.

## Item 6: Update on the BAC Taskforce on Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

Blind Advisory Committee (BAC) members Chris Fendrick and Mitch Pomerantz provided the SRC with background information on the origins of the taskforce, which was formed in response to situations occurring at out of state training centers. The BAC taskforce developed eight recommendations which were submitted to DOR in August 2021. The recommendations included items such as incorporating Title IX into Department policies and procedures, establishing an anonymous hotline, developing a code of conduct for contractors, standards for contractors entering the home of a consumer, requiring digital fingerprinting, using an independent trainer to provide sexual harassment and misconduct training, annually obtaining written policies and procedures from out of state training centers, and suspending future authorizations for out of state training centers that have a documented pattern of unsafe conditions. It was noted that in the DOR’s response, the Department disagrees with the BAC taskforce recommendations four through eight. Mitch Pomerantz reviewed rebuttals to DOR’s responses to recommendations four through eight.

## Item 7: DOR Student Services - Current Outreach and Training Methods

Mark Erlichman, Deputy Director, and Carol Asch, Assistant Deputy Director, from DOR’s VR Employment Division, joined the SRC to provide information on the current outreach methods used by DOR to provide local education agencies and teachers with information and training on DOR student services. The purpose of the discussion was to help inform the draft SRC recommendation under development that proposes to provide training and information to all teachers, administrators, counselors, parents, and students about DOR Student Services.

* Data was provided to the SRC on the scale of California’s educational system (example: there are over six million public school students in approximately 10,545 schools).
* Information on DOR’s outreach efforts was provided, which includes letters that are distributed to Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Directors, workforce development boards, organizations providing services to youth.
* Approximately 210 DOR staff are assigned to provide full-time DOR Student Services across California.
* A point of clarification was made that DOR provides outreach, not training, to teachers. DOR’s outreach includes (but is not limited too) connecting with Special Education Coordinators, community organizations, workforce development boards, community transition events, connecting with youth involved in the foster system and justice system, etc., and developing partnerships with schools and nonprofits.
* There was discussion about the benefit of adding more information on DOR Student Services to secondary transition planning resources such as the California Transition Alliance Handbook, California Department of Education (CDE) transition handbook, CDE website, Individualized Education Programs (IEP) templates, and the universal referral form.

## Item 8: VR Connections Update

Conan Petrie, Staff Services Manager III, DOR VR Employment Division, and Russell Schutte, Information Technology Specialist I, DOR Information Technology Services Division, provided an update on the VR Connections Portal, an online platform used by DOR staff, vendors, and consumers to enhance collaboration, business processes and service delivery. Schutte provided data on the portal usage, gave a demonstration of the online request for service feature on the DOR website, and explained how the information is routed and responded to. Schutte spoke about features that are under development, like the ability for consumers to directly submit files to their case records, ability for vendors to submit invoices online, providing a comprehensive welcome guide for consumers, and providing geographic specific information on critical need resources. Sara Abdrabou, SRC member, noted that the portal has improved the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) process.

Public comment: Lesley Gibbons provided feedback on the automated verification of goods and services feature.

## Item 9: Election of the SRC Nominating Committee

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, reviewed the SRC Nominating Committee timeline and responsibilities, provided information on the annual officer election process, and reviewed the slate of candidates recommended by the SRC Executive Planning Committee on May 23, 2022.

Motion: It was moved/seconded (Henderson/Aviles) to elect the recommended slate of candidates – Theresa Comstock, Chanel Brisbane, Jonathan Hasak, Kecia Weller and Ivan Guillen – to serve on the 2022 SRC Nominating Committee. A roll call vote was taken: (Yes – Comstock, Brisbane, Henderson, Aviles, Wavrin, Guillen, Lewis), (No – 0), (Absent for vote – Hasak, Hayes, Weller). (Abstain – 0).

The SRC Nominating Committee will convene prior to the August 31 – September 1, 2022 SRC quarterly meeting to recommend a slate of candidates for the annual election of the SRC officers (Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer). In addition to the recommended slate of candidates, the floor will also be open to additional nominations prior to the election.

## Item 10: VR and Local Behavioral Health Agencies Partnerships

Diane Shinstock, Staff Services Manager I, DOR Cooperative Education Programs, Carol Asch, Assistant Deputy Director, DOR VR Employment Division, and Jessica Grove, Deputy Director, DOR VR Policy and Resources Division, joined the SRC for an interactive discussion. The purpose of the discussion was to provide information that may help inform the SRC’s draft recommendation that DOR establish a blueprint for state and local agencies/organizations to expand partnerships between VR and behavioral health agencies. Theresa Comstock, SRC Chair, began by providing background information and framing the issue. Diane Shinstock gave an overview of DOR’s cooperative programs that contract with approximately 250 entities throughout California such as high schools, colleges, county welfare departments and county mental health departments. Discussion was held regarding evidence-based practices and the individual placement and support (IPS) model. It was noted that in California there is no overarching entity (i.e., California Department of Mental Health) that oversees all of the county metal health programs, and that this is an important distinction to consider when looking at the Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Blueprint as a possible model when comparing VR and local behavioral health agency partnerships.

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, reviewed the SRC’s draft recommendation, and the following questions posed by the SRC Executive Planning Committee regarding this topic:

* What are DOR’s current coordination and partnerships with local behavioral health agencies?
* Which case management and evidence-based practices are DOR and local behavioral health agencies using for serving individuals with mental health disabilities?
* Which service provider(s) offer individuals with mental health disabilities with a stabilization period and supports before the individual transitions to receiving vocational rehabilitation training and job placement services?

Discussion highlights included the following:

* There is the need for more discovery and increasing the understanding of the landscape and various workgroups.
* There may be opportunities as the CalAIM program rolls out, which focuses on transforming and strengthening Medi-Cal, increasing the program’s equity, and looking at the social drivers of health.
* DOR is communicating with and learning what other States are doing.
* There is a need to embed employment in behavioral health discussions, along with the need for stabilization support and services prior to employment.
* Mention of DOR’s mental health restoration services.
* Mention of the DOR Inland Empire District’s Pathway to Success program.
* Discussion of the opioid program that will embed DOR staff (SVRC-QRP and Business Specialists) into four treatment centers throughout California. For this initiative, how can success be measured?

## Item 11: Employment Panel

Spencer Hoke, DOR Regional Business Specialist, joined Elizabeth Lewis, SRC Member, for an informal panel discussion on hiring individuals with disabilities and DOR/employer engagement. Discussion highlights included:

* Windmills training offers employers with disability education, reduces stigma, and increases awareness for recruiters and hiring managers about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities
* A helpful support is to assist consumers with understanding their strengths and preparing for interviews.
* The skills needed by employers vary among industries, but many hiring managers across sectors are looking for individuals with computer skills, interpersonal skills, a good attitude, communication skills, a willingness to learn, and an energy and drive to work.
* Partnering with the Workforce Development Boards and sending them job announcements is helpful.
* The role of the DOR Regional Business Specialist is important for building relationships and approaching companies identifying opportunities,
* Job placement circles are helpful in supporting consumers with preparing for interviews and building a network.
* Mention of the State Internship Program.

## Item 12: Adopt-a-Region Reports (part 1 of 2)

SRC members reported out from their recent Adopt-a-Region discussions.

* Santa Barbara: Theresa Comstock, SRC Chair, connected with Brian Winic, Regional Director, DOR Santa Barbara District. Challenges include staff vacancies, high cost of living, and commutes. The Santa Barbara District is reducing their office spaces to reduce cost. Successes include referrals, increase in new applications, advancement in consumer training and degrees, the We Can Work Contract, the State Internship Program, and expedited enrollment.
* Redwood Empire: Theresa also connected with David Wayte, Regional Director, DOR Redwood Empire District. Challenges include counselor vacancies and the large geographic area of the district. Successes include expedited enrollment improvements, enrolling Transition Partnership Program students into VR services, and a father/son VR success story.
* Greater Los Angeles: Nick Wavrin, SRC Vice Chair, connected with Maria Turrubiartes, Regional Director, DOR Greater Los Angeles District. GLAD is preparing for their quarterly meeting with the Los Angeles Unified School District.
* Los Angeles South Bay: Benjamin Aviles, SRC Treasurer, connected with Sorath Hangse, District Administrator, DOR Los Angeles South Bay District. Planning efforts are taking place for an all-District training in August 2022. Community partnerships were mentioned. Challenges include technology to support a hybrid workforce, filling vacant positions, and upcoming retirements. Future opportunities include focusing on students with disabilities and collaborating with America’s Job Center of California (AJCCs).
* Inland Empire: Benjamin also connected with Robert Loeun, Regional Director, and Alfonso Jimenez, District Administrator, DOR Inland Empire District. The District is leading the State with successful employment outcomes and is collaborating with many community partners. A challenge in the District is identifying employers that offer competitive, good pay, and also finding American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. Inland Empire hopes to increase supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Self-employment opportunities are increasing in popularity amongst consumers. Inland Empire has a partnership with Hyatt Hotels.

## Recess

The SRC meeting recessed until 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 9, 2022.

## Item 13: Reconvene, Welcome, and Introductions

Theresa Comstock, SRC Chair, welcomed SRC members back for day two of the quarterly meeting and a quorum was established.

## Item 14: Public Comment

Jennifer Gass and Miguel Venegas, members of the public, made public comment about their concerns with a vendor utilized by DOR in the Stockton area that provides services to individuals who are blind. These concerns have been shared with DOR Counselors in Stockton, but Jennifer and Miguel feel that their concerns have not been addressed in an appropriate or timely manner. Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, will submit this public comment to DOR Specialized Services Division leadership.

## Item 15: Career Pathways Grant (Pathways to Success)

Mark Erlichman, Deputy Director, and Trung Le, Assistant Deputy Director, from DOR’s VR Employment Division, provided the SRC with an overview of the Career Pathways Grant. This is a unique service delivery design by assigning, building, and serving statewide caseloads based on the identified goal in the consumer’s Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) rather than geography. Highlights included:

* Activities of this $18.3 million five-year grant are designed to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion, through a unique service delivery design supported by sector-specific teams specializing in high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers for individuals with disabilities.
* Online tools are being developed that can help facilitate communication between consumers and DOR staff.
* All the staff (five SVRC-QRPs and three sector specialists) for the sector specific teams have been hired. The sectors include health care, advanced manufacturing, construction and transportation, green energy, information technology, and biotechnology.
* Job seekers will have the opportunity to connect with peers via online cohorts.
* The Pathways to Success program is a National Innovation Grant and will include a detailed evaluation component.
* A goal is to have 200 individuals enrolled by the end of September 2022.
* A focus of the grant is ensuring there is diversity, equity and inclusion in opportunities, and that individuals with a variety of disabilities in underserved populations are participating.
* SRC members engaged in an interactive discussion and asked a range of questions about the Pathways to Success Program.

## Item 16: Unified State Plan Committee Meeting

Ivan Guillen, Chair, SRC Unified State Plan Committee, welcomed Alicia Lucas, Manager, and Avantika Sharma, Analyst, from DOR’s Planning Unit to the meeting. The Planning Unit team provided a brief overview of the State Plan, the 2022 modification, and then reported out on DOR’s progress in meeting the five State Plan goals. The Planning Unit team then presented plans for collecting qualitative data for the current Comprehensive Statewide Assessment and the options for SRC involvement. The SRC had the opportunity to provide their feedback and insight, and their suggestions included the following:

* Contacting the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN), a statewide multicultural health advocacy organization, for information on underserved populations.
* The California Department of Aging may be able to provide insight on seniors looking to rejoin the workforce, and this may be a growing underserved population in terms of employment.
* SRC members Sara Abdrabou, Ivan Guillen and Kecia Weller expressed interested in participating on key informant interview panels.
* A survey of counselors to assess knowledge and understanding of the variety of DOR services that are available could be insightful.
* Through the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, data might be available on how consumers are learning about DOR.
* Connecting with college rehabilitation counseling programs may be a good source for key informant interviews.

## Item 17: Selection of Future Meeting Dates

SRC members reviewed scheduling options and selected the following SRC quarterly meeting dates for the 2022/23 federal fiscal year:

* November 30 – December 1, 2022
* March 8 – 9, 2023
* June 7 – 8, 2023
* September 6 – 7, 2023

## Item 18: Intersection of Retention Plans and Order of Selection

Jessica Grove, Deputy Director, DOR Vocational Rehabilitation Policy and Resources Division, joined the SRC to discuss the policy landscape and potential fiscal challenges that VR agencies may have to consider in the future. Jessica explained that this topic is being brought to the SRC as a policy consideration. She noted that California is not currently facing this challenge, however, DOR wishes to start discussions with advisory boards. Background information was provided on VR funding and ramifications if a state is unable to draw down all of their federal VR funds. This can occur for a variety of reasons, like if a state’s VR program is unable to spend the 15 percent set aside for student services, or the state match funding is not available. When a state cannot draw down all of its federal funds, the program must shrink their budget, and there are only a few ways in which this can be done. One way to reduce a budget is through order of selection, which requires a state to decide how they want to handle and prioritize consumer retention services. It is a challenging question, to consider which is higher priority – the consumers whose job can be saved through retention services, or the new consumer who needs VR services to obtain employment. To move forward on this topic and question, the SRC will hold future discussions regarding the prioritization of job retention services versus new VR services for consumers, and discussion questions may include: what stakeholders and perspectives need to be considered, what are the possible ramifications, and what policy decisions will need to be made?

## Item 19: Independent Living Program

## Item 20: Traumatic Brain Injury Program

Ana Acton, Deputy Director, and Megan Sampson, Chief, DOR Independent Living and Community Access Division, along with Lisa Hayes, SRC Member and Chair of the State Independent Living Council (SILC), provided information on the work of California’s Independent Living Centers (ILCs), the SILC, and the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) program. Highlights included:

* An overview of the history of the independent living movement, philosophy, core services, and information on the SILC and the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) was provided.
* ILCs are community based, nonresidential, cross disability, nonprofit organizations serving individuals of all ages, providing five core services. Primary sources of funding come from the federal Administration for Community Living and from the State of California.
* The SPIL establishes the priorities of the ILCs and is developed by the SILC Chair and Independent Living Center Directors, with public input.
* In California, many State departments provide a variety of different disability and aging services, and this can be complex and challenging for individuals to navigate.
* Information on the Aging and Disability Resource Connection, and the No Wrong Door initiative was provided.
* In California, many State departments provide a variety of different disability and aging services, and this can be complex and challenging for individuals to navigate. A discussion was held about the increasing coordinating between VR, employment services, independent living, and community services in California.
* There are nine centers in California that provide TBI services, with the potential to award up to three additional sites. Services include support and training services designed to maximize independence and the skills for the activities of daily living. Services also include community reintegration, designed to develop, maintain, and maximize independent functioning with the goal of living and participating in the community.
* The DOR TBI Advisory Board membership is 51% TBI survivors, and also includes caregivers, family members, rehabilitation counselors, professors and providers. A focus is ensuring that rural and minority communities are served, as those communities are impacted the most and the least likely to be served. The TBI state plan is also moving the program towards assisting victims or survivors of intimate partner violence and increasing outreach to the homeless population.
* Details on the specific services offered by the nine TBI centers was provided.

## Item 21: Debrief and Recommendations Discussion

SRC members debriefed from the meeting’s discussions and worked on the draft recommendations under consideration.

Contact Name on DOR Goods and Services Authorization Form

Motion: It was moved/seconded (Guillen/Weller) that the suggestion of adding a DOR contact name to the DR 297B Authorization for Vocational Rehabilitation Services form will be submitted as informal feedback by email, via Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, to the appropriate DOR program representatives instead of a formal policy recommendation, as the nature of this suggestion is operational. A roll call vote was taken. (Yes – Comstock, Brisbane, Henderson, Hayes, Aviles, Wavrin, Weller, Guillen, Lewis), (No – 0), (Abstain – 0), (Absent for vote – Hasak)

*Addendum*: on June 28, 2022, Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, emailed the following suggestion to DOR program representatives –

Issue: The current authorization form only has the VR counselor name, phone number, and email address. Contractors (vendors and service providers) may have questions about items on the form that the VR counselor cannot answer. The contractors need a direct phone number to DOR staff, such as the service coordinator, to ask questions.

Suggestion: The DOR should ensure the DR 297B Authorization for Vocational Rehabilitation Services form clearly identifies the name(s) and contact information of DOR staff that the contractor (vendor or service provider) can contact with questions about the services or authorization.

DOR Student Services

Motion: It was moved/seconded (Henderson/Weller) to modify the draft recommendation language from “To increase awareness that all students with disabilities, including those without an Individualized Education Plan, are eligible for vocational services, the DOR should partner with local education agencies to *provide training* and information to all teachers, administration, counselors, parents and students” to instead read “…DOR should partner with local education agencies to *increase awareness*…”. Reference will be made in the recommendation to secondary transition resources. Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, and Theresa Comstock, SRC Chair, will make final wordsmith edits before this recommendation is submitted to the DOR Directorate. A roll call vote was taken. (Yes – Comstock, Brisbane, Henderson, Hayes, Aviles, Wavrin, Weller, Guillen, Lewis), (No – 0), (Abstain – 0), (Absent for vote – Hasak)

*Addendum*: On June 28, 2022, Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, submitted the following finalized recommendation to the DOR Directorate:

Recommendation 2022.2 – Working with Local Education Agencies to Increase Awareness of DOR Services

Issue

Information on DOR services to students with disabilities should be shared with all teachers, not only teachers in Special Education. There are students with disabilities that may not qualify for Special Education, such as those with 504 plans, that could potentially utilize DOR services.

Recommendation

To increase awareness that all students with disabilities, including those without an Individualized Education Program, are eligible for vocational services, the DOR should partner with local education agencies to increase awareness and information to teachers, administration, counselors, parents, and students.

Strategy

Including additional details about DOR Student Services in secondary transition planning handbooks and resources may be an effective strategy to increase awareness. Examples of these resources include the California Transition Alliance Handbook, the Individualized Education Program template, the universal referral form, and the California Department of Education website.

VR and Local Behavioral Health Agency Partnerships

Motion: It was moved/approved (Guillen/Aviles) to update the recommendation to read as follows: “In order to increase and sustain successful employment outcomes for individuals with mental illness, the SRC recommends that DOR consider developing a blueprint that-

1) Identifies barriers, challenges, and successful programs,

2) Identifies the key stakeholders and leaders on the state and local level, and,

3) increases communication, resources and training for agencies and organizations.”

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, and Theresa Comstock, SRC Chair will make final wordsmith edits before this recommendation is submitted to the DOR Directorate. A roll call vote was taken. (Yes – Comstock, Brisbane, Henderson, Hayes, Aviles, Wavrin, Weller, Guillen, Lewis), (No – 0), (Abstain – 0), (Absent for vote – Hasak).

*Addendum*: On June 28, 2022, Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, submitted the following finalized recommendation to the DOR Directorate:

Recommendation 2022.3 – Expanding Partnerships between Vocational Rehabilitation and Behavioral Health Agencies

Issue

Local behavioral health agencies could benefit from a state level partnership model like the Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint. A formalized process (example: local partnership agreements) could help enhance services and increase opportunities for employment for individuals with behavioral health disabilities.

Recommendation

To increase and sustain successful employment outcomes for individuals with mental illness, the SRC recommends that DOR develop a blueprint that:

1. Identifies barriers, challenges, and successful programs;
2. Identifies the key stakeholders and leaders on the state and local level; and,
3. Increases communication, resources and training for agencies and organizations.

**Item 22: Adopt-a-Region Reports, (part 2 of 2)**

San Jose: Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, gave SRC member Jonathan Hasak’s report on his behalf. Challenges for the DOR San Jose District include vacancies and the need for new vendors. A success is the San Jose District’s closure rates.

San Francisco: Chanel Brisbane, SRC member, connected with Theresa Woo, Regional Director, DOR San Francisco District. Challenges include vacancy rates, high cost of living, and loss of contractors. The district is making progress with self-employment cases, the We Can Work Contract, and a focus on serving those who have experienced homelessness and reentry.

Van Nuys/Foothill: Kecia Weller, SRC member, connected with Wan-Chun Chang, Regional Director, DOR Van Nuys/Foothill District. Chang is retiring on June 30, 2022, after working 45 years with DOR. Challenges include transitioning staff to working in the office again, and high counselor caseloads.

Northern Sierra: Elizabeth Lewis, SRC member, connected with Vivian Hernandez-Obaldia, Regional Director, DOR Northern Sierra District. Successes include the districts strong leadership team, knowledge of regulations and policies, and ability to adapt to change. A challenge is vacancies; however, vacancies are typically due to promotions. Another challenge is there are less candidates in the SVRC-QRP candidate pool. Lewis reported out on the district’s local initiatives.

San Diego: Ivan Guillen, SRC member, spoke about his recent opportunity to connect with Peter Blanco, Regional Director, DOR San Diego District, and the team managers. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce a new Disability Rights California (DRC) advocate in San Diego, and the district was encouraged to collaborate and view DRC as a resource.

Greater East Bay: Susan Henderson, SRC member, connected with Della Randolph, Regional Director, DOR Greater East Bay District. A challenge for the district is staff vacancies. Successes include the Summer Steps Program, expedited enrollment, and connecting with youth.

## Item 23: SRC Officers, Members, and Executive Officer Reports

Theresa Comstock, SRC Chair, expressed appreciation for the hybrid in-person/virtual meeting format.

Nick Wavrin, SRC Vice Chair, provided updates from the California Department of Education (CDE). Highlights included information on the Alternative Pathways to High School Diploma initiative, the standardized statewide IEP, Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint, Assembly Bill 2427, and transition planning in elementary schools.

Benjamin Aviles, SRC Treasurer, reported that the SRC budget continues to have less expenditures as there is less member travel due to the availability of a hybrid meeting format. An update was provided on the CalABLE program recently increasing the savings limit.

Susan Henderson, Chair, SRC Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, noted that an update may be available at the next SRC meeting.

Ivan Guillen, Chair, SRC Unified State Plan Committee, reported that the DOR Planning Unit team is working on the Comprehensive Statewide Assessment and other activities mentioned during the presentation that was given. DRC is offering more self-advocacy trainings and tools for clients.

Kecia Weller, SRC member, no report.

Chanel Brisbane, SRC member, reported that Best Buddies is recruiting for Employment Consultants.

Lisa Hayes, SRC member, noted that staffing is a challenge for many Independent Living Centers.

Elizabeth Lewis, SRC member, no report.

Sara Abdrabou, SRC member, spoke about the Rehabilitation Counseling Advisory Board at Cal State University, San Bernardino, and a research study in progress to determine training needs for transition professionals.

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, reported on SRC recruitment and, the hiring of an Office Assistant, information sharing, and upcoming SRC meetings.

## Item 24: Identification of Future Agenda Items

The following future SRC quarterly meeting agenda items were identified.

* Update on DOR’s transition to the CDSS State Hearing Division.
* Strategies on how VR Counselors can transition potentially eligible case types to VR case types and the need for a universal/seamless process.
* Information on the order of selection and job retention services.
* Presentation from the Department of Health Care Services on the “Money Follows the Person, California Community Transition” program.
* Update on expedited enrollment.
* Update on DOR’s use of Individual Service Providers.
* Information on the consumer reimbursement process, in response to this being a trend in administrative hearings.
* Update on the DOR Consumer Payment card.
* Information on how DOR engages with consumers and stakeholders through social media.

## Adjourn:

Motion: It was moved/seconded (Weller/Guillen) to adjourn the June 8 – 9, 2022 SRC quarterly meeting.