**California State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Quarterly Meeting**

July 17 – 18, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. both days

Meeting location: Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), 721 Capitol Mall, Room 301, Sacramento, CA 95814

*Meeting Minutes*

*Approved on September 11, 2024*

# Attendance

SRC members (in-person): Theresa Comstock, Brittany Comegna, Candis Welch.

SRC members (by Zoom): Ivan Guillen, La Trena Robinson, Elizabeth Lewis, Jonathan Hasak, Yuki Nagasawa, Hilary Lentini.

SRC members absent: Chanel Brisbane.

DOR staff (in-person): Kate Bjerke, Jessica Grove, Mark Erlichman, Michael Thomas, Kevin Peaches.

DOR staff (by Zoom): Kim Rutledge, John Hartmire, Trung Le, Jake Johnson, Luis Lewis, Judy Gonzalez, Peter Frangel, Antoinette Deboisblanc, Lori Bruno, Gina Franklin, Sean Nunez, Peter Blanco.

Members of the public (by Zoom): Shellena Heber, Danny Marquez, Shannon Coe, Ligia Andrade Zuniga, Cody Zeger, Shahera Hyatt.

# WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2024

# Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

Ivan Guillen, SRC Chair, called the meeting to order. SRC members, DOR staff, and community members introduced themselves.

# Item 2: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

# Item 3: Approval of the March 6 – 7, 2024 SRC Quarterly Meeting Minutes

It was moved/seconded (Comstock/Welch) to approve the March 6 – 7, 2024 SRC quarterly meeting minutes as presented. (Yes – Guillen, Lewis, Comstock, Comegna, Welch), (No – 0), (Abstain – 0), (Absent – Brisbane, Robinson, Hasak Lentini).

# Item 4: Legislative Update

Kim Rutledge, Deputy Director, DOR Office of Legislation and Communications, and John Hartmire, Legislative Specialist, provided an update on recent legislation of interest:

* [AB 2959](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB2959), as introduced, Ortega. Prisons and jails: food. AB 2959 would require food items in prison vending machines to be priced at the same average market resale price as in the community, and encourages affordable, fresh, nutritious food items. DOR is closely following the bill as it could impact the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) vendors' profit margins.
* [AB 2648](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB2648), as amended, Bennett. Environmentally preferable purchasing: single-use plastic bottles. Would have required state government buildings to eliminate single-use plastic bottles in vending machines, but the bill died.
* [AB 2636](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB2636), as amended, Bains. Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act. AB 2636 makes changes to the Older Americans Act, including updating terminology to "older adult" and repealing obsolete provisions. The bill expands the Department of Aging's authority to administer Older Americans Act programs, which DOR partners with for serving older adults with disabilities.
* [AB 438](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB438), as amended, Blanca Rubio. Pupils with exceptional needs: individualized education programs: postsecondary goals and transition services. This bill would change the IEP process in public schools, requiring measurable post-secondary goals and transition services for students when they turn 16.
* [SB 1384](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB1384), as amended, Dodd. Powered wheelchairs: repair. This bill aimed to change regulations around power wheelchair repairs, allowing individuals to choose their vendor, but the bill died.
* [AB 1906](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1906), as amended, Gipson. California Law Revision Commission: persons with disabilities: terminology. The bill calls for the formation of a work group to study and replace the term "dependent adult" in statutes with more appropriate terminology.
* [AB 2119](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB2119), as amended, Weber. Mental health. Aimed to move toward person-first language in mental health statutes but this bill died in the legislative process.
* [AB 3193](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB3193), as amended, Calderon. State acquisitions of goods and services: rehabilitation services. This bill would exempt DOR from state procurement processes for adaptive technology purchases under $25,000.
* [SB 37](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB37), as amended, Caballero. Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities Housing Stability Act. SB 37 aimed to create an Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities Housing Stability Act but has also died in the process.
* 2024-25 Proposed Budget Trailer Bill Language: Department of Rehabilitation / California Health and Human Services Agency - Office of Employment First and Renaming of Department of Rehabilitation. Subcommittee No. 2 (Human Services) – [Actions Taken 2024-25](https://abgt.assembly.ca.gov/media/7689). The proposed budget trailer bill would have renamed DOR to Disability Works California and moved the Office of Employment First from the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) to DOR. The bill did not move forward due to budget constraints, but there is ongoing support for the name change and rebranding efforts. The Office of Employment First will remain within CalHHS.
* [SB 326, Eggman](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB326). The Behavioral Health Services Act. Signed and chaptered.
* [SB 525, Durazo](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB525). Minimum wages: health care workers. Signed and chaptered.

Rutledge explained that after a bill is chaptered, DOR program staff can provide updates on implementation. SRC members agreed that the Policy Committee will add AB 5, Gonzalez. Worker status: employees and independent contractors to the list of policy topics for discussion. The SRC is interested in learning about the impacts AB 5 has made on the DOR’s utilization of independent service providers (ISPs).

# Item 5: Apprenticeships

The SRC partnered with DOR on the development of the 2024 – 2027 DOR State Plan priorities and goals, which includes references to apprenticeships. Trung Le, Assistant Deputy Director, DOR VR Employment Division, joined the SRC to provide information on the apprenticeship opportunities available to DOR consumers.

* Pathways into a career can include: getting a job, apprenticeship (6 months – 5 years), community college (2 years), and 4 year college.
* The Earn and Learn model was highlighted, where apprentices earn full wages and benefits.
* Differences between registered apprenticeship and typical internships were reviewed.
* Pre-apprenticeships prepare individuals for apprenticeships through formal training and practical experience.
* The process for finding apprenticeship programs through the California Division of Apprenticeship Standards website was reviewed. The variety of apprenticeships available were highlighted.
* DOR participates on the Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship
* Governor Newsom set a goal of establishing 500,000 earn-and-learn apprenticeships by 2029. Strategies include expanding nontraditional apprenticeships, supporting regional and sectoral apprenticeship intermediaries, supporting youth apprenticeship for in-school and out-of-school youth, expanding state and local public sector apprenticeships, and growing and expanding access to traditional constructions apprenticeships.

SRC member comments included the following:

* The need for reasonable accommodations to support students with disabilities participating in apprenticeship programs.
* Hillary Lentini, SRC member, spoke about the benefits of internships, particularly in the creative services sector, and suggests scaling the Earn and Learn program and marketing it to businesses. Le and Lentini agreed to have a follow up meeting to discuss opportunities to partner with small businesses, and how to share information with Hilary’s network of small business owners.
* Theresa Comstock, SRC member, appreciated the pilot program in Orange County to support 200 health care apprenticeships, and spoke about the need to increase the behavioral health workforce. Comstock spoke about her involvement with the California Division of Apprenticeship Standards and the Interagency Council on Apprenticeships. Le agreed to connect with the Chair of the Public Sector Committee.
* Suggestion to start apprenticeships at the high school level.
* Consider opportunities for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing to work in loud environments.

Public Comment:

* Shannon Coe, State Independent Living Council (SILC) member, suggested sharing the apprenticeship presentation with the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF).
* Ligia Andrade Zuniga, SILC Chair, asked that information on apprenticeship opportunities be presented to high schools and community colleges in the San Mateo area.

# Item 6: Customer Service

Mark Erlichman, Deputy Director, DOR VR Employment Division, along with Michael Thomas, DOR Ombudsperson, and Kevin Peaches, Program Analyst, joined the SRC to share information about DOR’s customer service initiatives. Erlichman began by providing context – approximately 1,500 DOR staff work in the field in nearly 80 offices throughout California in addition to other locations like schools, community colleges and job centers. This past fiscal year, DOR served the highest number of consumers – 154,000, about a 50% increase since 2019. Even with the number of consumers served increasing, the number of fair hearings has decreased. There were only 18 fair hearings last year out of 154,000 consumers served, and most issues are a result of communication breakdown. DOR’s customer initiatives have included:

* Consumer Payment Card, expedited enrollment, and an online consumer portal.
* Improvements to the individual plan development process.
* Presentation on customer service to DOR staff during new employee orientation.
* Training to all team managers on customer service.
* Awards given to DOR staff to recognize exceptional customer service efforts.
* Meeting regularly with the Client Assistance Program.
* Establishment of the DOR Ombudsperson role to help resolve issues at the lowest level, facilitate communication, and work with consumers, advocates and DOR field staff to identify solutions and help consumers reach their employment goals.
* Analyzing the results from the Consumer Satisfaction Survey to identify areas for improvement.

SRC member suggestions and comments included the following:

* Explore ways to inform consumers about the DOR Ombudsperson, like during the intake process, adding a link to staff email signatures, and other communication channels.
* Add information about DOR services in ASL to the DOR website, and an ASL pop-up communication feature.
* It was confirmed that when DOR staff is contacted by the Ombudsperson or Customer Service Unit, they are generally receptive and collaborative about consumer issues.
* Success is a team effort, in addition to DOR staff involvement, consumers also need to fully participate and provide requested information. Some consumers are not tech-savvy so providing both electronic and paper options is helpful.
* Discussion regarding DOR’s approach to helping individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. DOR staff that have contact with the public receive de-escalation training.

# Item 7: Oath of Office

Joe Xavier, DOR Director, administered the oath of office to new SRC member, Brittany Comegna.

# Item 8: Directorate Report

Joe Xavier, DOR Director, and acting Chief Deputy Directors Kim Rutledge and Jake Johnson, reported on leadership and policy topics of interest. National, state, and departmental updates were provided.

* July is Disability Pride Month and July 26th is National Disability Independence Day, commemorating the signing of ADA into law in 1990.
* The process for requesting federal VR allotment funding was reviewed. DOR is currently determining how much money to request. Increased funding helps increase service provision and enables DOR to support partnerships and the independent living community.
* At the federal level, the House has reauthorized portions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, but Title IV (vocational rehabilitation) is not included. The Senate draft language includes modifications to the state plan and performance measures, proposal of a designated state entity for data collection and reporting, and elimination of the State VR Director as a mandated member on the State Workforce Development Board.
* An update on the California State budget was provided. Many proposed budget solutions (aka reductions) did not materialize in the final budget. DOR’s budget remains at $577 million with approximately 1,880 positions. DOR received approval for the Voice Options Program, with funding provided by the California Public Utilities Commission.There will be an 8% operating reduction in the State’s overall budget and an elimination of 10,000 vacant positions is proposed.
* Updates were provided on the E-transcript effort, Disability Innovation Fund grants, DOR’s completion of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) corrective action plan, approval of the 2024-27 VR Services Portion of the Unified State Plan, and DOR’s involvement in distributing disaster response resources and updates.
* Updates on staff transitions include the departure of Marko Mijic, CalHHS Undersecretary, retirement of Lisa Niegel, DOR Chief Counselor, recruitment for a DOR Chief Equity Officer and a Stakeholder Initiatives Executive Officer, and recent appointments in the DOR Inland Empire and LA South Bay Districts.

Public comment: Shellena Heber, Executive Director, Valley Center for the Blind, expressed appreciation for the department's messaging about weather events and their impact on services. Heber asked about the potential impact that current DOR vacancies have on consumers.

# Item 9: Homeless Action Plan

California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) representatives Cody Zeger and Shahera Hyatt presented the Homeless Action Plan and SRC members had the opportunity to provide input and feedback. Zeger began by reviewing the structure and goals of the Cal ICH action plan, which emphasizes the need for increased leadership, coordination, and collaboration. The action plan aims to prevent and end homelessness through five tools:

1. Increasing the supply of housing and services,
2. Coordinating and streamlining state programs,
3. Engaging partners and communities,
4. Using data strategically, and
5. Advancing best practices and quality.

The plan includes actions or activities for each department and agency, equity-focused frameworks, and goals and measures to assess progress. For each of the five tools, the SRC was asked to provide input on:

* What should the State and/or DOR prioritize in order to achieve this vision?
* What work is already being done within DOR that should be highlighted and emphasized?
* What additional work within the State and/or DOR would make the most impact?

Input from the SRC included the following:

* Identify and understand DOR’s position on homelessness prevention for individuals with disabilities, and suggestion that this be discussed at the DOR executive level.
* Challenges that individuals who are deaf and experiencing homelessness were highlighted, including lack of accessible services, limited inpatient rehabilitation programs, and the accessibility of small claims court.
* Need for DOR staff to have more information on housing resources they can provide to consumers.
* Concerns regarding board and care facilities and the need for funding, services and support for medical needs.
* Suggestion that Cal ICH identify and standardize performance demographics and data to track housing and employment outcomes.
* Discussion on the challenges of accessing benefits and the need for better education and communication about benefit programs, like CalABLE, SSI, CalFresh, etc.
* Importance of free-flowing communication and data sharing between different agencies and departments to avoid confusion and ensure effective service delivery.
* Suggestion of a mobile unit to provide services directly to communities, addressing barriers to accessing services.
* Suggestion to co-locate different state departments offices to facilitate warm handoffs between services.
* Concerns about the impact of criminalizing homelessness and the need for culturally sensitive engagement.
* The need to create a diverse workforce and use community organizing models to build trust and effective engagement.
* Discussion on the importance of listening sessions and peer support programs to ensure effective community engagement.

Public comment: Shannon Coe, SILC member, suggested that Cal ICH conduct a needs assessments and community mapping to identify existing resources and build trust within communities.

# THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2024

# Item 10: Reconvene, Welcome, and Introductions

Ivan Guillen, SRC Chair, reconvene the meeting and SRC members, DOR staff, and community members introduced themselves.

# Item 11: Public Comment

Danny Marquez, representing CASRA, suggested that the SRC continue to receive updates on expedited enrollment. Marquez said he has received reports of inconsistencies with expedited enrollment across California due to DOR staffing issues.

# Item 12: Consumer Satisfaction Survey (9:10 – 10:00 a.m.)

Luis Lewis, Staff Services Manager I, and Judy Gonzalez, Research Analyst II, with DOR’s Strategic Initiatives Office, provided an update on the status of 1) the 2024 Consumer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) and 2) the SRC’s feedback regarding survey administration, communication, and design. Reference [Attachment A](#_Attachment_A:_Consumer) for the full presentation. SRC member discussion, comments and suggestions regarding the CSS included:

* Confirmed that the results of the 2024 CSS will be presented to the SRC during the September 11-12, 2024 SRC quarterly meeting.
* Confirmed that an updated survey that incorporates the SRC’s recommendations be available for the SRC’s review in early 2025.
* Suggestion that a deaf linguist with ASL expertise reviews the CSS to ensure it is translated accurately. Also, have a deaf linguist who is a Certified Deaf Interpreter available to sign and interpret the survey questions for people who are deaf and might not want to take the survey in English.
* Suggesting that the ethnicity and race questions could be combined into one question; however, DOR staff noted that demographic questions such as this will be removed in future surveys because this information can be captured from DOR’s AWARE case management system.
* Ensure the survey is screen reader compatible and available in different languages. the need for language translations of the survey.

# Item 13: VR Services Portion of the Unified State Plan

Peter Frangel, Staff Services Manager I, and Antoinette Deboisblanc, Program Analyst, with DOR’s Program Performance Unit, provided an update on the status of the 2024 – 2027 VR Services Portion of the Unified State Plan. Reference [Attachment B](#_Attachment_B:_State) for the full presentation. SRC member discussion, questions and comments focused on sustainable, living wages including:

* Balancing use of labor market information, in-demand jobs, and informed choice when selecting an employment goal that will offer sustainable living wages.
* Importance of supporting a consumer’s dreams and goals, and embracing skill sets.
* The right of individuals with disabilities to have fulfilling and enjoyable jobs and careers.
* The need for businesses and employers to understand the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and how to provide effective accommodations.
* Objective 3.1 sets a goal of consumer quarterly median earnings around $7,000. This is less than a living wage, due in part to some consumers wanting to work part-time. Request that the SRC receive data on DOR consumers who are working full-time and gainfully employed for comparison purposes.

Public comment: Shannon Coe, SILC member, asked about the groups identified for the behavioral health goals and if underrepresented groups like immigrants and refugees will be included.

# Item 14: Adopt-a-Region Report Outs

* Theresa Comstock, SRC member, met with Brian Winic, Regional Director, and Justin McIntire, District Administrator, DOR Santa Barbara District. Challenges include the need for in-person ASL interpreters and the elimination of the “hire above minimum” option. The District is making progress with filling vacancies.
* Bjerke reported out on behalf of SRC member, Elizabeth Lewis. Lewis met with Northern Sierra District leadership who reported that 9,370 consumers were served and 652 cases were successfully closed this fiscal year. The median wage for Northern Sierra District successful closures from 7/1/23-5/31/24 is $21.59/hour. Northern Sierra District has contracts to serve students with disabilities, is collaborating with Project Search and Best Buddies, partnering with the Office of Youth and Community Restoration and re-entry programs.
* Ivan Guillen, SRC Chair, met with Peter Blanco, Regional Director, and Jeff Noyes, District Administrator, DOR San Diego District. Updates included internships, work experience opportunities, and utilization of the State Internship Program. The District reports that implementation of the Consumer Payment Card is going well. The District is experiencing an increase in applications.
* Bjerke reported out on behalf of SRC member, Hilary Lentini. Lentini has connected with the Greater Los Angeles District (GLAD) team three times over the past quarter. She provided consultation for a consumer self-employment situation and held a check in call on June 10, 2024 and discussed retention of team members, community partnerships, and initiatives to support foster youth and students. Lentini presented to the GLAD management team on July 15, 2024.
* Candis Welch, SRC member, connected with Daphne Leake, District Administrator, DOR Los Angeles South Bay. Welch plans to connect the District to the Long Beach City Council to increase hiring opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
* Bjerke reported out on behalf of SRC member, Chanel Brisbane. Brisbane connected with Sherri Han-Lam, Regional Director, DOR Orange San Gabriel District, who provided updates on the increase in referrals, staffing, Pathway to Success project, and a new Community Resource Navigator position.
* New SRC member, Brittany Comegna, will be assigned to DOR Greater East Bay District and the Van Nuys/Foothill District.

# Item 15: Consumer Payment Card (CPC)

DOR representatives Lori Bruno, Chief of Fiscal Services and Reporting, Sean Nunez, Redwood Empire Regional Director, Peter Blanco, San Diego Regional Director, and Gina Franklin, CPC Manager, CPC, provided an update on CPC implementation. To date,over 31,000 CPC cards have been issued to DOR consumers, and $18 million has been spent on educational and vocational training, transportation, and vehicle services.

The CPC is a debit card linked to MasterCard and administered by WEX Health, designed to provide consumers with a new payment method for authorized goods and services. The CPC offers timely, convenient payment options, with funds available within an hour and 24/7 transaction visibility. A CPC webpage is available and has information and resources for consumers, including a startup kit and a consumer testimonial. Positive consumer feedback includes flexibility, timeliness, the convenience of a mobile app and the ability to upload receipts. The WEX Health call center offers support for consumers needing help with account balances, activating cards, or changing PINs. The CPC provides equitable access and is an opportunity for consumers to develop financial literacy and technology skills. Consumers appreciate the ability to purchase items from a wider range of stores and the convenience of quicker service.

Implementation of the CPC in DOR’s field offices is going well, despite a learning curve for staff. Technical assistance is provided to staff and monthly meetings are held to support CPC enrollment and utilization. There are receipt requirements for certain transactions, such as clothing purchases, to meet requirements set by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). The CPC team works to make the receipt upload process as simple as possible for consumers. The CPC team is continuously innovating to find new ways to use the CPC, which may include the ability to purchase medical services, medical items, and car repair services. It was confirmed that a YouTube video with instructions on the CPC will be released in the near future.

# Item 16: Policy Committee Report Out

Ivan Guillen, SRC Chair, reported out from recent SRC Policy Committee meetings. On May 15, 2024 DOR presented to the Policy Committee on the Department’s involvement in the Master Plan for Career Education. Afterwards, the Policy Committee continued efforts to develop input on the Plan. The Policy Committee also reviewed and discussed follow-up information regarding Administrative Law Judges and the fair hearing/mediation process. On June 13, 2024, the SRC Policy Committee finalized draft input on the Master Plan for Career Education for the full SRC’s consideration. On July 11, 2024, in response to a public comment, the SRC Policy Committee learned about DOR’s accreditation requirements for Community Rehabilitation Program vendors. The Committee also received an update on the changes made to the consumer application based on the SRC’s feedback from the March 2024 quarterly meeting.

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, presented the draft memorandum with feedback on the Master Plan for Career Education. It was moved/seconded (Comstock/Welch) to approve the SRC’s feedback on the Master Plan for Career Education. (Yes – Guillen, Hasak, Comstock, Comegna, Welch, Lentini), (No – 0), (Absent – Brisbane, Robinson, Lewis), (Abstain – 0). The memorandum will be submitted to the Master Plan team for consideration.

# Item 17: Election of the 2024 SRC Nominating Committee

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, explained that on June 7, 2024, the SRC Executive Planning Committee (EPC) convened to recommend a slate of candidates to serve on the 2024 SRC Nominating Committee. The responsibility of the SRC Nominating Committee is to recommend a slate of candidates for the annual election of the SRC officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and if applicable, Immediate Past Chair). Serving on the Nominating Committee does not preclude members from being included on the recommended slate of candidates for the officer elections. The members identified by the SRC EPC on June 7th to serve on the 2024 Nominating Committee are: La Trena Robinson, Chanel Brisbane, Theresa Comstock, and Ivan Guillen. In addition to this slate of candidates, the floor was open to additional nominations. Candis Welch was nominated to serve.

It was moved/seconded (Comstock/Welch) to elect SRC members La Trena Robinson, Chanel Brisbane, Theresa Comstock, Ivan Guillen, and Candis Welch to the 2024 SRC Nominating Committee (Yes – Guillen, Hasak, Comstock, Comegna, Welch, Lentini), (No – 0), (Absent – Brisbane, Robinson, Lewis), (Abstain – 0).

# Item 18: Debrief and Recommendations Discussion

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, reviewed notes from the meeting discussions. The SRC debrief included the following:

* Recommendation considerations: As the SRC develops recommendations, considerations should include budget limitations, the increase in consumer applications, staff shortages, and DOR resources. How can the SRC make recommendations that are manageable but impactful? An example that worked well was the SRC’s recent feedback on the application for VR services.
* ASL interpreting: Explore concerns regarding the lack of in-person ASL interpreters available in the Santa Barbara area, as this issue has been reported multiple times.
* Self-Employment: Suggestion of having specialized VR Counselors for consumers pursuing self-employment, similar to how there are VR Counselors specialized in blind field services and services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Discuss the potential benefits of teams that focused on other specialized cases like supporting individuals with traumatic brain injuries and behavioral health disabilities.
* Suggestions on consumer engagement and outreach strategies:
  + Host consumer panels and social media campaigns to increase awareness and engagement.
  + Include certified behavioral health peer support specialists to enhance services.
  + Have VR Counselors discuss with consumers about the State Internship Program (SIP), Limited Examination and Appointment Program (LEAP), and federal Schedule A hiring authority during the intake and Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) development process.
  + Host a webinar and/or open forum for people to hear about DOR services and connect them with a counselor.
* Reporting: Consider developing a recommendation that DOR report data and outcomes for consumers that achieve sustainable, living wages, and for DOR to identify what the sustainable living wage is for regions throughout California.

# Item 19: SRC Officer and Member Reports

* Ivan Guillen reported on the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and the shift towards self-advocacy for clients. CAP and DOR are a team with the shared goal of helping consumers reach their employment goals.
* Theresa Comstock reported on the work of the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards & Commissions. Implementation of Prop 1 initiatives will start in the coming years.
* Candis Welch reported on receiving the Disabled Resources Center, Inc.’s Jerry Stein Independent Living Award, and spoke about the importance of outreach and community engagement.
* Yuki Nagasawa reported on the challenges of securing work experiences for students and the need for job coach support.

# Item 20: Future Agenda Items

SRC members identified the following future agenda items for consideration.

* Receive information about initiatives and efforts to connect individuals with disabilities experiencing homelessness with VR services and housing. Potentially connect DOR with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and explore how LAHSA could incorporate DOR services into their mobile units.
* Learn about job coaching supports that are available for students with disabilities to provide support with preparing for a professional workplace.
* Learn about VR services for individuals who are neurodivergent and understand how DOR serves this population.
* Include consumer perspectives as the SRC discusses policy recommendations.

# Item 21: Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

# Attachment A: Consumer Satisfaction Survey Presentation

**Slide 1:**

**Consumer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) SRC’s CSS Recommendations**

State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) – July 18, 2024

Presented by: Department of Rehabilitation, Planning Unit

**Slide 2:** **Presentation Topics**

1. Update on SRC Recommendation Memo received on December 12, 2023
2. Update on 2024 Consumer Satisfaction Survey
3. Questions/Feedback for the Planning Unit

**Slide 3: Meet the Planning Unit**

Luis Lewis - Planning Unit Manager

* 10+ years with DOR
* Political Science Degree
* Avid concert goer
* Dog father of two

“We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard.” – John F. Kennedy (1962)

Judy Gonzalez – Research Data Analyst

* 8+ years with DOR
* Studied Computer Science
* Avid cycler, hiker, gardener
* Double Century Cycler

“I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet.” – Jack London (1916)

**Slide 4: 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4)**

(4) To the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with—

(i) The functions performed by the designated State agency.

(ii)The vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the Act; and

(iii) The employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this part, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with those employment outcomes.

**Slide 5: Survey Administration Recommendations**

The following slides will address SRC recommendations pertaining to administration of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

**Slide 6: Survey Administration (1 of 4)**

***SRC recommendation: Research the principles of survey methodology to identify and establish effective sampling processes.***

* The Planning Unit utilizes an industry standard survey methodology for determining sample sizes that takes into consideration:

| **Criteria** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| Population | The overall group you’re interested in. |
| Margin of Error | The potential deviation from the total population. |
| Confidence Level | The percentage of how reliable a measure is. |
| Response Rates | The percentage of people that respond. |

**Slide 7:** **Example of Sample Size Calculation (1 of 2)**

This slide shows a picture of the SurveyMonkey site that calculates a sample size based on the criteria input.

* Using a population size of 76,499, (2021-22 consumers)
* A confidence level of 99%,
* A margin of Error of 4%
* We get a result of 1,027 for our sample size.

Our next slide will show how we use that number.

**Slide 8:** **Example of Sample Size Calculation (2 of 2)**

This slide shows the criteria from the previous slide, and the DOR estimated response rate of 14%.

Final Calculation

To obtain the number of surveys to send out we take the result of sample size calculation, 1,027 we saw in the previous slide, and divide it by our estimated response rate of .14 to get the result of 7,336 invitations to send.

**Slide 9:** **Survey Administration (2 of 4)**

***SRC recommendation: Send the CSS to consumers who have received services within the last six months.***

* Currently being researched by the Planning Unit.

***SRC recommendation: Instead of sending out surveys once per year, send the surveys out within three months of the consumer receiving services.***

* Based on current administrative limitations, the Planning Unit is unable to send surveys every three months.

**Slide 10:** **Survey Administration (3 of 4)**

***SRC recommendation: Consider alternatives to providing survey links directly in emails, as some email providers may relegate a message that includes links to the junk or spam folder.***

* The Planning Unit is researching the viability of texting surveys to consumers and/or posting to DOR’s website. Additional considerations and further discussion are necessary to assess DOR’s ability to utilize these functionalities.

***SRC recommendation: Utilize texting as a survey distribution method.***

* The Planning Unit is reviewing DOR policies and procedures in relation to texting consumers. Texting is not a viable option at this time and will be revisited following discussion with DOR’s VRPRD and ITSD divisions.

**Slide 11:** **Survey Administration (4 of 4)**

***SRC recommendation: Explore how the DOR website and the VR Connections Consumer Portal could be used to facilitate survey completion.***

* The Planning Unit has met with DOR’s internal VR Connections project manager. Due to contract limitations, VR Connections is currently unable to assist in survey facilitation. Additional considerations and further discussion are necessary to assess DOR’s ability to post the survey on the public website.

**Slide 12: Survey Communication Recommendations**

The following slides will address SRC recommendations pertaining to communication of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

**Slide 13:** **Survey Communication (1 of 3)**

***SRC recommendation: Ensure that DOR has accurate and up-to-date emails on file for consumers.***

* The Planning Unit has researched survey deliverable rates. Deliverable rates over the past five years have ranged within 90% - 94%. While not 100%, DOR’s process for obtaining email addresses has proven effective for survey communication.

***SRC recommendation: Have DOR staff discuss the CSS with consumers during the first encounter and talk about the information that will be collected.***

* The Planning Unit has initiated discussions with VRED to assess feasibility.

**Slide 14:** **Survey Communication (2 of 3)**

***SRC recommendation: Have SVRC-QRPs reach out to consumers and students directly and request that they complete the survey.***

* The Planning Unit has initiated discussions with VRED to assess feasibility.

***SRC recommendation: Inform parents about the survey. Many students are learning about online safety and may be hesitant to complete an online survey.***

* The Planning Unit has initiated discussions with VRED to assess feasibility.

**Slide 15:** **Survey Communication (3 of 3)**

***SRC recommendation: Have State Internship Program participants send individual emails and follow up with consumers about the survey.***

* The Planning Unit has initiated discussions with State Internship Program staff. Further research is required to assess SIP participation viability in survey facilitation.

**Slide 16: Survey Design Recommendations**

The following slides will address SRC recommendations pertaining to the design of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

**Slide 17: Survey Design (1 of 3)**

***SRC recommendation: Consider a shorter survey and let the consumer know up front how long it will take to complete.***

* The Planning Unit has researched additional survey instrument functionality. Questions related to demographics will be removed from future surveys and acquired from DOR’s case management system. Additionally, the Planning Unit recommends transitioning from a seven-point scoring system to a three-point scoring system (five-point max) to reduce cognitive load in survey completion.

**Slide 18:** **Survey Design (2 of 3)**

**DOR Planning Unit Suggestions:**

* Embed the first survey question into the invitation email.
* Change from a Likert scale rating to a star rating.
* Shorten and update the email language.
* Update the survey background to a color instead of white for visual interest.
* Develop cohort specific surveys.
* Add a question for overall counselor satisfaction to match overall service provider satisfaction.
* Only ask specifics about counselor and service provider services if overall satisfaction is rated low. (Low- TBD but could be neutral and lower.)

**Slide 19: Comparison of Star Rating and Likert Scale Rating – Phone View**

This slide shows a mockup of what changing from the Likert scale to the star rating scale could look like when viewed on a cell phone. This mockup includes a pastel-colored background which is accessible and adds visual interest. On the cell phone view multiple questions and responses can fit in the view, whereas with the Likert scale barely fits one question on the screen. The user would need to do much more scrolling and if the question is lengthy, the question and response selections may not all fit within the view.

**Slide 20: Embedded First Question**

This slide shows a mockup of what an embedded first question looks like. In this example the email text is very short and is a place holder for this example. We need to work on the email language as well. Note that the DOR logo is in the banner with the title of the survey. The survey recipient can select their star rating and that is what takes them to the survey page.

**Slide 21: Survey Design (3 of 3)**

SRC recommendation: Add a comment box after every question for consumers to leave additional details.

* Based on current administrative limitations, the Planning Unit is unable to analyze up to 20 fill-in/comment box responses.

**Slide 22: 2024 CSS Update**

The following slide will provide an update on the progress of the 2024 Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

**Slide 23:** **2024 CSS Update**

1. When will the 2024 CSS be released? When are responses due?
   * The Planning Unit released the 2024 CSS on May 1, 2024. Responses were collected until May 29, 2024. 974 responses were received in 2024, compared to 849 in 2023.
2. When will the 2024 Student Services survey be released? When are responses due?
   * The Planning Unit anticipates release of the 2024 Student Services Survey to take place in September/October 2024. Survey is currently being drafted and reviewed.
3. When will an updated survey that incorporates the SRC’s recommendations be available for the SRC’s review?
   * The Planning Unit has completed an initial mock-up and anticipates completion of a full draft for SRC and DOR internal review in early 2025.

**Slide 24: Questions?**

**Slide 25: Contact Information**

**Planning Unit**

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# Attachment B: State Plan Presentation

**Slide 1: State Plan 2024-2027**

SRC Presentation

Thursday, July 18, 2024

**Slide 2: State Plan Background**

* Sections 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to establish the State's goals and priorities for implementing the VR and Supported Employment programs.
* The goals and priorities are based on:
  + The most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), including any updates
  + The State’s performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA
  + Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act.

**Slide 3: Timeline**

Program Year Quarters:

* Quarter 1: July 1 – September 30
* Quarter 2: October 1 – December 31
* Quarter 3: January 1 – March 31
* Quarter 4: April 1 – June 30

Next State Plan Two-Year Modification draft due December 2025. Will go into effect July 1, 2026.

**Slide 4: Descriptions of the VR State Plan**

* (a) State Rehabilitation Council
* (b) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
* (c) Goals, Priorities, and Strategies
* (d) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals
* (e) Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services
* (f) Annual Estimates
* (g) Order of Selection
* (h) Waiver of Statewideness
* (i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
* (j) Coordination with Education Officials
* (k) Coordination with Employers
* (l) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies

**Slide 5: New Goals**

2024-2027

**Slide 6:**

Goal 1: Increase the unsubsidized employment rate of participants during the second and fourth quarter after exit from program.

* Objective 1.1: The unsubsidized employment rate of participants during their second quarter after exit from program will increase from the 51.6% rate in PY 2022 to no less than 55% by PY 2025.
* Objective 1.2: The unsubsidized employment rate of participants during the fourth quarter after exit from program will increase from the 49.7% rate in PY 2022 to no less than 53% by PY 2025.

**Slide 7:**

Goal 2: Support increased work-based learning including intermediate employment, career technical education and training, and post-secondary education for all CDOR participants receiving VR services.

* Objective 2.1: The Credential Attainment rate by CDOR program participants will increase from the PY 2022 rate of 43.5% to no less than 48% by PY 2025.
* Objective 2.2: CDOR will increase the Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) rate for CDOR participants from the PY 2022 rate of 28.6% to no less than 40% by PY 2025.

**Slide 8:**

Goal 3: Expand and improve VR services to those who have been underserved and underrepresented in the VR program.

* Objective 3.1: Consumers with Behavioral Health (BH) disabilities who are Black or African American or Hispanic will have second quarter median earnings no less than $7,000 per quarter and be no less than the overall median earnings of all CDOR consumers with BH disabilities by PY 2024 and will increase to no less than $7,200 and be no less than the overall median earnings of all CDOR consumers with BH disabilities by PY 2025.
* Median earnings as of Q3 of PY 2022 were: $6,340 for Black/African American (AA); $6,586 for Hispanic; and $6,759 for all individuals with BH disabilities who exited the program.

**Slide 9:**

Goal 4: Provide effective VR services with quality IPE developments consistent with in-demand workforce needs that lead to a career track offering sustainable living wages.

* Objective 4.1: The percentage of consumer IPE goals for local/regional, high-wage, in-demand occupations will increase from the current 19% of all new IPE goals to at least 30% of all IPE goals for plans developed and approved during PY 2025. (IPE goals matching the EDD labor market information regional report of the 25 highest demand occupations making, on average, no less than $22/hour.)

**Slide 10:**

Goal 5: Support businesses in California to employ more individuals with disabilities.

* Objective 5.1: For PY 2024 and PY 2025, develop, implement, and deliver services to at least 100 new, unduplicated businesses annually

**Slide 11:**

Goal 6: Improve California state government employers’ parity rate for hiring and promotion of people with disabilities.

* Objective 6.1: CDOR will provide direct hiring services and supports to no less than 30 unduplicated State Departments, Offices, or Agencies by the end of PY 2025.

**Slide 12:**

Goal 7: Increase the number of students with disabilities, ages 16-21, who receive high quality Pre-Employment Transition Services, also known as CDOR Student Services.

* Objective 7.1: CDOR will increase the number of students with disabilities annually served by 35% from the 46,000 served in PY 2022 to no less than 62,100 in PY 2025.

Slide 13:

Goal 8: Increase the percentage of students with disabilities receiving CDOR Student Services who go on to receive VR services.

* Objective 8.1: CDOR will increase the percentage of students enrolled in CDOR Student Services who go on to receive an IPE for VR services from 19.5% in PY 2022 to no less than 35% during PY 2025.

**Slide 14: Performance Measures**

| **Performance Indicator** | **PY 2024**  **Expected Level** | **PY 2024**  **Negotiated Level** | **PY 2025 Expected Level** | **PY 2025**  **Negotiated Level** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)** | 52.0% | 52.0% | 55.0% | 55.0% |
| **Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)** | 50.0% | 50.0% | 53.0% | 53.0% |
| **Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)** | $7,000 | $7,000 | $7,200 | $7,200 |
| **Credential Attainment Rate** | 42.0% | 44.5% | 48.0% | 48.0% |
| **Measurable Skill Gains** | 37.0% | 37.0% | 40.0% | 40.0% |
| **Effectiveness in Serving Employers** | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |

**Slide 15: Order of Selection**

No Order of Selection is being implemented at this time. However, if and when implementing Order of Selection in future State Plans, related policies and procedures are available and can be put into effect.

**Slide 16: Next Steps**

* Accessible version will be available on DOR internet page, coming soon
* We will be closing the last State Plan Goals by November 2024
* Next update will reflect new goals for program year 2024

**Slide 17: Contact**

Policy Unit

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