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

Wednesday, November 29, 2023 and Thursday, November 30, 2023

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. both days

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

**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

# Attendance

SRC members (in-person): Chanel Brisbane, Theresa Comstock.

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

DOR staff (in-person): Kate Bjerke, Victor Duron, Alfonso Jimenez, Kim Rutledge.

DOR staff (by Zoom): Jessica Grove, Mark Minor, Ava Hacopian, Matt Baker, Nicolas Weis, Kelly Snow, Michael Thomas, Peter Dawson, Peter Blanco, Fatima Dobbs, Joyce Holzer, Trung Le, Mark Erlichman, Carol Asch, Sue Pelbath, Elizabeth Colegrove.

Members of the public (by Zoom): Danny Marquez, Lisa Weiler, Brittany Comegna, Ligia Andrade Zuniga, Kenneth Brooks, Veronica Bravo**.**

# WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2023

# Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

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

# Item 2: Public Comment

Danny Marquez, representing the California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies (CASRA), suggested that the SRC consider the following future agenda items:

* Update on implementation of the CalDOR Consumer Payment Card.
* Update on how use of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model is going, along with updates on the mental health cooperative program contract and fee for services. Is training available for counselors who work with individuals with behavioral health disabilities?
* Follow up on questions regarding Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) – are ALJs with disabilities being hired? Are ALJs receiving disability etiquette training?

# Item 3: Approval of the September 6 – 7, 2023 SRC Quarterly Meeting Minutes

It was moved/seconded (Comstock/Henderson) to approve the September 6 – 7, 2023 SRC quarterly meeting minutes with the following edits: page 4, change “$45” to “45 million” and page 14, last sentence, strike the word “following”. (Yes – Comstock, Brisbane, Guillen, Robinson, Henderson, Hasak, Welch), (No – 0), (Absent – Lewis, Lentini), (Abstain – 0).

# Item 4: California Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) for Students with Disabilities

**Matt Baker**, DOR YLF Program Manager, shared information on the YLF for students with disabilities:

* YLF is a statewide program for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors to prepare them for transition after high school, build self-advocacy, connect them to resources and services and celebrate disability history, culture, and community.
* Students visit the California State Capitol, interact with lawmakers, and discuss policies that impact individuals with disabilities.
* YLF was founded in 1992, has led to national forums, and has seen over 1,500 California alumni thriving in higher education, employment, and leadership roles.
* YLF focuses on self-advocacy, leadership, college readiness, and resource exploration. Sessions cover themes like disability history, policy advocacy, goal setting, and leadership planning. Activities include movie nights, talent shows, barbecues, dances, and campus tours to build friendships and community connections.
* YLF is fully funded, covering travel, accommodations, personal care, and assistive technology costs for students, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity.
* After YLF, ongoing connection is facilitated through alumni workshops, mentorship, and national events, fostering continued growth and networking opportunities.
* Applications for the 2024 YLF program are currently open.
* Baker’s presentation concluded with a video showcasing YLF activities, including an original rap performance by a past participant.

Highlights from the discussion with Baker and the SRC members included the following:

* The goal is to have between 50 students participate in YLF each year.
* During YLF there is a resource fair where organizations like Regional Centers, DOR, community-based organizations, and national organizations have exhibits and share information with the students. YLF is always looking for new partners to join the resource.
* Regional YLF events take place throughout the year.
* On average, 70 – 80 applications are received each year.

Public Comment:

* Danny Marquez asked how a recent YLF informational webinar went, and asked how people can volunteer at YLF.

# Item 5: DOR Legislative Update

Kim Rutledge, Deputy Director, and Nicolas Weis, Legislative Specialist, from DOR’s Office of Legislation and Communications joined the SRC to provide an update on recent legislation of interest.

Rutledge began by sharing information on the role of DOR’s Office of Legislation and Communication. Each year, the Office tracks hundreds of bills, with priority given to bills that directly impact DOR programs or DOR employees. In addition to tracking bills, DOR’s Office of Legislation and Communication provides analyses and recommendations to the California Health and Human Services Agency, offers technical assistance, works on amendments with bill authors and advocates, and drafts enrolled bill reports. Weis then reviewed eight bills of interest from the past legislative session:

* SB 43, Eggman. Behavioral health. Updates the criteria for determining if a person is “gravely disabled” to include a new focus on preventing serious physical and mental harm stemming from a person’s inability to provide for their needs for nourishment, personal or medical care, find adequate shelter, or attend to self-protection or personal safety, due to their mental or substance use disorder.
* AB 531, Irwin. The Behavioral Health Infrastructure Bond Act of 2023. Proposes a bond measure of nearly $6.5 billion for BHSA funding, focusing on supportive housing for veterans, behavioral health challenges in residential settings, and more. Aims to address homelessness and prioritize behavioral health services.
* SB 326, Eggman. The Behavioral Health Services Act. Coupled with AB 531, it proposes changes to the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), now referred to as the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA). Allows BHSA funds to be used for substance use disorder treatment. Alters funding allocations for housing interventions, behavioral health services for children and youth, and reserve requirements for counties. Proposes a bond measure (AB 531) for BHSA funding, subject to voter approval.
* AB 121, Committee on Budget. Developmental services. A budget trailer bill which includes making the State Internship Program (SIP) permanent, potentially increasing program participation.
* AB 222, Arambula. Civil Rights Department: Californians with disabilities workgroup. A two-year bill focused on civil rights. Requires the California Civil Rights Department to convene a workgroup to include members from DOR, State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Department of Social Services, Disability Rights California, and the Commission on Disability Access. The workgroup will develop recommendations for developing accessibility and anti-discrimination laws related to workforce employment for people with disabilities.
* AB 248, Mathis. Individuals with disabilities: The Dignity for All Act. Removes outdated and stigmatizing terms from statute and replaces it with person-first language.
* AB 857, Ortega. Vocational services: formerly incarcerated persons. Requires the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to provide every inmate upon release with information about vocational rehabilitation (VR) and independent living services. Expands the definition of VR services to also mean “services to formerly incarcerated persons with disabilities, designed to promote rehabilitation and reduce the likelihood of recidivism.” DOR will work with CDCR to develop program specific resources.
* AB 1163, Luz Rivas. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Disparities Reduction Act. Will require DOR to collect voluntary self-identification information by July 1, 2026. DOR will need to update the Department’s AWARE case management system to collect the data.

Future agenda item: Rutledge offered to join the SRC during a future meeting and provide an update on 2024 bills of interest.

# Item 6: Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

Kelly Snow, DOR BEP Program Manager, provided an overview of DOR’s BEP program, shared information on program status and utilization, and discussed opportunities for program modernization and improvement. Highlights included the following:

* BEP dates back to 1936 and was mandated by federal legislation. The program aimed to create employment opportunities for individuals with visual impairments, particularly during the challenging economic conditions of the 1930s. The program began with a focus on establishing food related businesses, and over time expanded to include state and local government buildings and facilities.
* To be eligible for the BEP, individuals must be 18 years old, legally blind, U.S. citizens, and eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. Once meeting these criteria, candidates undergo a training program which includes classroom sessions and on-the-job training, emphasizing skills like business management and customer service.
* Over time, the BEP program has evolved due to changing circumstances, particularly with COVID-19 and decreased populations in federal and state buildings. Current emphasis for BEP vendors is the importance of customer service, merchandise management, and public relations skills for BEP vendors entering the private sector. In the post-COVID era, many vendors have needed to take on additional, smaller locations to maintain income levels.
* BEP vendors operate different types of locations and operations, ranging from small vending machines to full-scale cafeterias. Vending machines are most profitable due to lower overhead costs. BEP also contracts with the Department of Defense military facilities.
* BEP vendors receive ongoing support including educational conferences, business counseling, and fiscal oversight.
* Efforts are underway to modernize the BEP, such as having BEP vendors in private sector facilities, converting cafeterias and snack bars into “micro markets”, establishing vending routes that cover larger areas, and introducing electronic credit card readers on vending machines. Innovative ideas include food trucks, ghost kitchens, exploration of non-food businesses such as laundry mats and dry-cleaning services, and possible expansion into childcare services. It is acknowledged that the future of BEP depends on expanding into the private sector.

Highlights from the question-and-answer discussion with Snow and the SRC members included the following:

* The BEP program provides support for startup inventory, supplies and insurance for new vendors.
* A question was asked regarding backlogs with processing BEP applications. Snow confirmed that the BEP training program is up and running again. A new training manager has been hired and the first post-COVID-19 BEP class will begin in January 2024.
* It was asked if the BEP program model could be used for licensed board and care facilities and other types of businesses, and if the BEP program could be expanded so it’s open for all people with disabilities. Snow explained that currently the Randolph-Sheppard Act limits participation in the BEP program only for individuals who are blind. SRC Chair Guillen noted that the SRC can perhaps focus on exploring how other disability groups can access self-employment resources to establish their own businesses.

Public comment:

* Brittany Comegna asked if individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing can participate in the BEP program.
* Kenneth Brooks asked if a BEP vendor can have co-owners or partners that have other types of disabilities.

# Item 7: Oath of Office

Victor Duron, DOR Chief Deputy Director, administered the Oath of Office to new SRC members Yuki Nagasawa, Candis Welch, and Hilary Lentini.

# Item 8: Directorate Report

Victor Duron, DOR Chief Deputy Director, joined the SRC to share information on leadership and policy topics of interest. Highlights included the following:

Acknowledgements

* Winter holidays
* Native American Heritage Month (November)
* International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3)

National updates

* No updates regarding confirmation of a new Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Commissioner.
* Update on the federal budget impasse. DOR remains in strong fiscal condition with the ability to navigate a federal funding shutdown.
* California continues to successfully spend down all federal VR funds, and other states are starting to trend in the right direction.
* RSA released monitoring plans and will focus on states that have experienced challenges in spending their VR dollars. California is not on the monitoring list for the next round.
* DOR is reaching out to other states that have successfully spent down VR funds and engaging them as thought-partners.
* Priorities for the federal Office of Special Education Programs include raising expectations for youth with disabilities, providing program outcome data, training the workforce not only for the jobs of today but also for the jobs of tomorrow, leveraging evidence-based practices, ensuring that accessible materials are available up front for programs and services, and continuing to engage stakeholders.

State updates

* The Governor’s Proposed budget will be released in January 2024. Budget deficits are anticipated, but DOR does not expect major impacts to the Department’s budget.
* DOR is engaged in cross-agency initiatives including the phase out of subminimum wage. There is a focus on current subminimum wage employees, systems change, and ensuring meaningful employment for individuals who would typically enter subminimum wage jobs.

Department updates

* In August 2023, the Governor released an executive order requiring the development of a Master Plan for Career Education. DOR is a named partner in the executive order, highlighting the commitment to inclusion of people with disabilities. A draft of the Master Plan will be released in Fall 2024.
* DOR continues to support the State of California becoming a model employer for individuals with disabilities and DOR is engaging with executives from other state departments.
* With the 2024 – 2027 VR Services Portion of the Unified State Plan, DOR will not pursue an Order of Selection. All priority categories will be open and the Department commits to serving all Californians with disabilities. Duron expressed thanks to the SRC for their thought partnership regarding the Order of Selection.
* Duron asked the SRC to consider the following question: DOR does a good job of engaging advocates and the community at large – but how can DOR connect with individuals who are not associated with the disability community or professional advocates?

Highlights from the discussion with Duron and SRC members included the following:

* When meeting with executives from other State of California departments to encourage hiring of people with disabilities, what common themes and concerns has DOR heard? Feedback has included that government hiring and procurement timelines can be challenging and there is a need to promote civil service to individuals with disabilities as an option.
* It can be challenging to find agencies that provide services to individuals with traumatic brain injuries. Discussion regarding national shortage of qualified community service providers.

Public comments:

* Danny Marquez asked if SRC members can engage politically.
* Kenneth Brooks asked if other State of California departments have a target goals, like a percentage, for hiring individuals with disabilities.

# Item 9: Behavioral Health Framework

Peter Blanco, Regional Director, DOR San Diego District, presented DOR’s behavioral health goals and supporting initiatives. The presentation is a follow-up to DOR’s June 7, 2023 response to SRC recommendation 2022.3. Blanco began by explaining that DOR’s goal is to improve the employment outcomes and earnings for people living with behavioral health conditions, with a focus on equity, with four specific targeted goals for individuals with behavioral health disabilities:

1. Universally increase employment outcomes from 44% to 55%​.
2. Universally increase quarterly median earnings for all to $7,000​.
3. Ensure Black or African American participants also see an increase in quarterly median earnings to $7,000​.
4. Ensure Hispanic participants also see an increase in quarterly median earnings to $7,000.

Blanco shared information on DOR’s statewide initiatives that will help DOR achieve these goals:

* Partnering with behavioral health agencies and utilizing the supported employment/individualized placement and support wrap-around model.
* DOR’s Integrating Employment in Recovery (IER) initiative. DOR launched the IER in 2022/23 to train the emerging substance use disorder (SUD) treatment workforce on the proven benefits of incorporating employment services early in the recovery plan. This program also embeds vocational rehabilitation staff with lived experience in the treatment teams at four diverse California-based SUD treatment centers serving individuals with opioid-related SUD.
* DOR’s Pathway to Success Project, a disability innovation grant awarded to DOR by RSA. The Pathways to Success Project will support DOR consumers in advancing to high-demand, high quality careers.

Blanco shared information on DOR’s local initiatives that will also support DOR’s goals, including:

* The DOR Redwood Empire District’s collaboration with Napa State Hospital and the Sonoma County Workforce Development Board.
* The DOR San Joaquin Valley District’s involvement with serving individuals with disabilities who are involved in the justice system through the Prison Education Project and Project Rebound.
* The DOR San Diego District’s partnership with the local workforce development board to serve individuals with behavioral health disabilities.

SRC members thanked Blanco for the information and requested a future update.

# Item 10: 2023 SRC Annual Report

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, presented the draft 2023 SRC Annual Report which covers the October 2022 – September 2023 term. The report includes messages from the SRC Chair and DOR Director, background information on the Rehabilitation Act, information on the SRC and DOR partnership, an overview of the California SRC, summaries of the quarterly meetings, the SRC’s policy recommendations, details on the SRC’s involvement in the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and VR Services Portion of the State Plan, and a roster of SRC members. SRC member Theresa Comstock suggested that the SRC’s policy recommendations be highlighted in the first page of the report in the Message from the SRC Chair. It was moved/seconded (Comstock/Brisbane) to approve the 2023 SRC Annual Report. (Yes – Comstock, Brisbane, Guillen, Henderson, Lewis, Welch), (Absent – Robinson, Hasak, Lentini), (No – 0), (Abstain – 0).

# Item 11: Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, presented a draft memorandum that summarized the SRC’s feedback and requested changes for the annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey (CSS):

Survey Administration

* Research the principles of survey methodology to identify and establish effective sampling processes.
* Send the CSS to consumers who have received services within the last six months.
* Instead of sending out surveys once per year, send the surveys out within three months of the consumer receiving services.
* 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.
* Utilize texting as a survey distribution method.
* Explore how the DOR website and the VR Connections Consumer Portal could be used to facilitate survey completion.

Survey Communication

* Ensure that DOR has accurate and up-to-date emails on file for consumers.
* Have DOR staff discuss the CSS with consumers during the first encounter and talk about the information that will be collected.
* Provide consumers with incentives for completing the survey.
* Have SVRP-QPRs reach out to consumers and students directly and request that they complete the survey.
* Emphasize that the goal of the survey is to improve services.
* Assure consumers that their responses are anonymous.
* Inform parents about the survey. Many students are learning about online safety and may be hesitant to complete an online survey.
* Have State Internship Program participants send individual emails and follow up with consumers about the survey.

Survey Design

* Consider a shorter survey and let the consumer know upfront how long it will take to complete.
* Add a comment box after every question for consumers to leave additional details.

It was moved/seconded (Comstock/Brisbane) to approve the memorandum with the SRC’s suggested changes to the CSS. (Yes – Comstock, Brisbane, Guillen, Henderson, Lewis, Welch), (Absent – Robinson, Hasak, Lentini), (No – 0), (Abstain – 0). Bjerke will submit the memorandum to DOR’s Planning Unit, who will join the SRC at a future quarterly meeting to provide an update on the requested survey changes.

# Recess

The SRC quarterly meeting recessed until 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, November 30, 2023.

# THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2023

# Item 12: Reconvene, Welcome, and Introductions

Ivan Guillen, SRC Chair, reconvened the meeting. SRC members and meeting attendees introduced themselves.

# Item 13: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

# Item 14: State Internship Program Update

Fatima Dobbs, DOR Exams Analyst, LEAP Coordinator and Pathways to Employment Volunteer Program Coordinator, presented an overview of the State Internship Program (SIP), an alternate eligibility process for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to gain employment with the State of California. Highlights included the following:

* The DOR’s Pathways to Employment Program is designed to support competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities by providing access to on-the-job experience and support in the areas of recruitment, onboarding, individual development, and accommodations.
* Employment options state managers and supervisors can use to hire or provide work experience for individuals with disabilities include Limited Examination Appointment Program (LEAP) recruitments and the LEAP SIP.
* Entities involved in the SIP include: the State Agency interested in having an intern, DOR, Department of Developmental Services, Regional Center, Community Rehabilitation Program, and Cal-HR.
* Departments currently using the SIP include DOR, the Employment Development Department, Atascadero State Hospital, Americas Job Center of California, Anaheim, Cal Veteran’s Home, California Conservation Corps, Department of State Hospitals, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.
* DOR’s responsibilities include identifying internship candidates, working with consumers to develop an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE), and working closely with the Community Rehabilitation Program to ensure the intern receives needed supports.
* After completing the internship, the intern is placed on the LEAP list for their specific job classification and becomes eligible for employment.

Joyce Holzer, Team Manager, DOR Temecula Branch Office, joined the SRC to answer questions and share her experience hosting SIP interns. Holzer confirmed that the SIP is available only for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Holzner spoke about the program's positive impact and shared her experience supporting seven SIP interns, including overcoming challenges and celebrating successful outcomes. The SIP program provides interns with exposure to office settings, work experience, and gives interns the opportunity to make informed decisions about their career goals. After completing the internship, the intern’s IPE can be revised, if needed. The CRP supporting the intern provides monthly updates to the intern’s DOR Counselor, and progress reports are completed throughout the program. Chanel Brisbane, SRC Vice-Chair, spoke about her experience supporting six SIP interns through Best Buddies, International. SRC members and DOR staff discussed data collection, the intensive nature of supporting SIP participants, expanding the SIP to departments outside of DOR, and the difference between SIP and customized employment.

# Item 15: State Plan Priorities and Goals

As a follow up to the November 13, 2023 SRC Unified State Plan Committee meeting, members of DOR’s Executive Team joined the SRC to present the final draft priorities and goals for the 2024-27 VR Services Portion of the Unified State Plan. The presentation was led by Mark Erlichman, Deputy Director, DOR VR Employment Division (VRED) with support from the following DOR representatives:

* Carol Asch, Assistant Deputy Director, DOR VRED
* Trung Le, Assistant Deputy Director, DOR VRED
* Jessica Grove, Deputy Director, DOR VR Policy and Resources Division
* Sue Pelbath, Deputy Director, DOR Specialized Services Division
* Michael Thomas, Assistant Deputy Director, DOR Specialized Services Division

Erlichman provided background information and explained that the priorities and goals can be updated in 2025. Over the next two years the SRC and DOR will continuously work on and evaluate the priorities and goals in anticipation of the 2025 State Plan modification. Erlichman then reviewed the final draft priorities, goals, objectives, and strategies. Highlights included the following:

* Priority: Increasing the quality and quantity of employment outcomes for all Californians with disabilities served by the DOR.
  + Goal 1: Increase the unsubsidized employment rate of participants during the second and fourth quarter after exit from program.
  + Goal 2: Support increased work-based learning including intermediate employment, career technical education and training, and post-secondary education for all DOR participants receiving VR services.
  + Goal 3: Expand and improve VR services to those who have been underserved and underrepresented in the VR program.
  + 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.
* Priority: Provide effective services to businesses
  + Goal 1: Support businesses in California to employ more individuals with disabilities.
  + Goal 2: Improve California state government employers’ parity rate for hiring and promotion of people with disabilities.
* Priority: Provide effective services to California students with disabilities.
  + Goal 1: Increase the number of students with disabilities, ages 16 through 21, who receive high quality pre-employment transition services, also known as DOR Student Services.
  + Goal 2: Increase the percentage of students with disabilities receiving DOR Student Services who go on to receive VR services.

Feedback from the SRC members included the following:

* Concept of DOR becoming a direct hiring service and suggestion of public private partnerships that provide third-party staffing services to businesses. Opportunity to increase awareness of DOR services for businesses through workforce development boards.
* Acknowledgement that DOR considered and incorporated the SRC’s input that was provided during the November 13, 2023 SRC Unified State Plan Committee.
* As it relates to the priority of increasing employment outcomes, suggestion that DOR staff receive training on how to assist individuals with finding meaningful careers with advanced training opportunities.
* Suggestion to provide high school counselors with information on DOR and to have information about DOR available in school wellness centers.

Public comment:

* Brittany Comegna asked how DOR determined the second quarter median earnings benchmark for goal three, objective one.
* Brittany Comegna spoke about increasing awareness of DOR student services.
* Danny Marquez asked how DOR will inform community-based organizations and stakeholders about the State Plan priorities and goals.

It was moved/seconded (Comstock/Brisbane) to approve the 2024-27 DOR priorities and goals as presented for inclusion in the VR Services Portion of the California Unified State Plan (Yes – Comstock, Brisbane, Guillen, Henderson, Lewis, Hasak), (No – 0), (Abstain – 0), (Absent – Robinson, Welch, Lentini).

# Item 16: Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act

Elizabeth Colegrove, DOR Attorney, joined the SRC to review statutory changes made to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act with the enactment of Senate Bill 143 that take effect on January 1, 2024. Colegrove explained that many of the Open Meeting Act requirements, such as posting and distributing the meeting agenda, remain unchanged. Changes to the definitions of “teleconference location” and “remote location” were reviewed. Colegrove reviewed the updated options for remote participation available under California Government Code Section 11123. The first option allows members to participate virtually from various teleconference locations that are publicly noticed and accessible to the public, without the need for a quorum in one physical place. The second option necessitates a primary physical meeting location, where a quorum of state body members must be present. Additional members, beyond the quorum, can participate from remote locations that do not need to be noticed. Members with disabilities can request reasonable accommodations to support their full participation in meetings. Colegrove confirmed that members with approved accommodations for remote participation do contribute to the quorum. Colegrove spoke about the requirement for remote participants to keep their cameras on during the meeting and to disclose if other adults are present in the room during remote participation. In conclusion, Colegrove acknowledged the complexity of the changes, emphasizing that the department is actively working on refining procedures and providing support to ensure compliance with the temporary amendments while facilitating effective remote participation in meetings.

# Item 17: Unified State Plan Committee

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, presented draft *Description A – Input of the SRC* for inclusion in the 2024-27 VR Services Portion of the Unified State Plan. The description includes a confirmation that the SRC meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act, a roster of current SRC members, information on member recruitment efforts, the SRC’s participation in developing the State Plan, Consumer Satisfaction Survey, and the SRC’s policy recommendations. Bjerke provided clarification on the SRC tribal representative position. It was suggested that references to “PE [potentially eligible]” be changed to “better understand the experiences of students.” It was then moved/seconded (Comstock/Brisbane) to approve *Description A – Input of the SRC* with the suggested change for inclusion in the 2024-27 VR Services Portion of the Unified State Plan (Yes – Comstock, Brisbane, Guillen, Henderson, Hasak), (Absent – Robinson, Lewis, Welch, Lentini), (No – 0), (Abstain – 0).

# Item 18: Adopt-a-District Report Outs

Ivan Guillen, SRC Chair, met with Peter Blanco, Regional Director, DOR San Diego District. Several innovative projects and community collaborations are taking place in the district, including a potential opportunity to partner with the Navy on work-experience opportunities. The district is working closely with local workforce development boards and AJCCs. Challenges include some private schools lacking proper accreditation for vocational training. There is an ongoing need to recruit and retain VR Counselors.

Jonathan Hasak, SRC member, met with Sorath Hangse, Regional Director, DOR San Jose District. The district has filled all Team Manager positions and is experiencing less staff turnover. Efforts are underway in the district to create learn-and-earn opportunities and there is enthusiasm about a new seasonal farm worker program. They discussed the need to change perception about talent and engage more employers.

Chanel Brisbane, SRC Vice-Chair, met with Sherri Han-Lam, Regional Director, DOR Orange/San Gabriel District. No major challenges in the district were reported. There is a focus on increasing participation in student services. Local initiatives include efforts to support the phasing out of subminimum wage employment through a new community college partnership. The district has collaborated with Best Buddies, International, and is working on ongoing projects like implementation of the CalDOR Consumer Payment Card and the State Internship Program.

Elizabeth Lewis, SRC member, met with Vivian Hernandez-Obaldia, Regional Director, DOR Northern Sierra District. The district serves 15 counties, many of which are rural areas with limited resources and wi-fi access. District successes include an increase in applications, serving individuals involved in the justice system, and the State Internship Program. Opportunities include strengthening partnerships with colleges, job centers and schools.

Theresa Comstock met with David Wayte, Regional Director, DOR Redwood Empire District. The district is participating in several statewide initiatives and provides outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Members agreed to assign the new SRC members to the following DOR districts:

* Candis Welch – DOR LA South Bay
* Hilary Lentini – DOR Greater Los Angeles District
* Yuki Nagasawa – DOR Inland Empire and Blind Field Services

The DOR Van Nuys/Foothill and San Joaquin Valley Districts will remain vacant until new SRC members are appointed.

# Item 19: SRC Bylaw Review

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, introduced a bylaw amendment for the SRC’s consideration. Bjerke reviewed the proposed amendment to add the position of Immediate Past Chair (if available) as an SRC officer position. The duties of the Immediate Past Chair will be advising the incoming Chair and Vice-Chair to support effective transition, ensure continuity, and serve on the SRC Executive Planning Committee. SRC members supported the amendment, which will be presented to the SRC at the March 6 – 7, 2024 quarterly meeting for a vote.

# Item 20: Debrief and Recommendations Discussion, Future Agenda Items

SRC members had the opportunity to debrief, and Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, reviewed discussion highlights from the past two days:

* Public comment that the SRC have future agenda items on the implementation of the CalDOR Consumer Payment Card and questions regarding Administrative Law Judges.
* A legislative update in 2024, with the list of bills provided to the SRC in advance.
* Learning how other disability groups can access self-employment resources, perhaps similar to that of the Business Enterprise Program, and how self-employment can be better utilized.
* How to engage with stakeholders that are not necessarily professional advocates or identify with the disability community
* Follow up presentation from Peter Blanco, Regional Director, DOR San Diego District, on the implementation of DOR’s behavioral health framework.
* Ongoing engagement with DOR on the State Plan priorities, goals, objectives, and strategies
* Learning how local workforce development boards and AJCCs link with VR. Discuss how to organize employment demand and re-think the perception of talent.

Feedback from SRC member:

* Support for further exploration of self-employment opportunities with licensed board and care facilities.
* Explore reported gaps in services for individuals with traumatic brain injuries.
* Discussion about job coaching provided for individuals pursuing state employment.
* Engaging stakeholders who are not typically represented or participate on advisory boards. Ensure that stakeholder groups receive the SRC agendas when there is an agenda item of interest to that group. Suggestion to reach out to the California Reducing Disparities Project.
* Need to engage with students at a young age and their parents about available resources and services. Consider additional training that would be beneficial to DOR staff regarding cultural impacts and perceptions of disability.
* Request to learn about DOR’s services for individuals involved with the justice system, and to learn more about apprenticeship opportunities available to DOR consumers.

The SRC members agreed to have the SRC Policy Committee prioritize and address the following topics: questions regarding administrative law judges, self-employment, and traumatic brain injury services and resources. Ivan Guillen, SRC Chair, appointed Chanel Brisbane, SRC Vice-Chair, to Chair the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee members are Chanel Brisbane, Jonathan Hasak, La Trena Robinson, Theresa Comstock and Ivan Guillen, and the Policy Committee will meet on a monthly, reoccurring basis.

# Item 21: SRC Officers, Members, and Executive Officer Report Outs

Ivan Guillen, SRC Chair, shared a report out from the October 21 – 22, 2023 National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) conference in Bethesda, Maryland. He spoke about a recent consumer mediation he supported which resulted in DOR and the consumer reaching agreement.

Susan Henderson, SRC member, spoke about a training her organization, Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, recently received on disability culture. She suggested connecting DOR with organizations that support refugees and immigrants to ensure communities are aware of VR and independent living resources. Henderson also spoke about the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange.

Theresa Comstock, SRC member, spoke about upcoming behavioral health events, including a Behavioral Health Task Force meeting on January 17, 2024.

Adjourn

It was moved/second (Comstock/Brisbane) to adjourn the November 29 – 30, 2023 SRC quarterly meeting.