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# Agenda Items Requested by the Public

## CalDOR Payment Card:

**11/30/23**: update on program implementation, seeing some challenges in the community.

## Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model:

**11/30/23**: updates on how use of the IPS model is going, along with the mental health cooperative program contract and fee for services.

## COVID-19

How can DOR prepare for an anticipated influx of individuals seeking services due to disabilities resulting from long COVID-19?

# Agenda Items Requested by DOR

## Dual Customer Approach

How to effectively describe VR services and DOR’s “dual customer approach” that addresses both the needs of VR consumers and the needs of businesses.

# Agenda Items Requested by SRC Members

## Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) Program

**2/2/24**: Receive updates on how the OIB program services are being administered and monitored. Receive an update on DOR’s competitive grant rulemaking package.

## CA Department of Social Services, State Hearing Division

**2/2/24:** Invite the State Hearing Division to present on Administrative Law Judges and the fair hearing and mediation process.

## Apprenticeships

**11/30/23:** The 2024-2027 DOR State Plan priorities, goals and strategies make references to apprenticeship programs. Receive a detailed presentation on apprenticeship opportunities available for DOR consumers.

## Master Plan on Career Education

**9/7/23**: Stay updated on, and inform, DOR’s involvement in the Master Plan for Career Education, which is due to the Governor’s Office by October 1, 2024. **2/2/24**: The SRC’s Policy Committee will have the Master Plan on Career Education as a reoccurring agenda item during the monthly Policy Committee meetings.

## Serving Immigrants and Refugees

**11/30/23:** How does/can DOR connect with groups that serve immigrants and refugees to provide information on VR services and Independent Living Centers?

## Connecting with Workforce

**11/30/23:** Information on how DOR connects with local Workforce Development Boards and America’s Job Centers of California. How to organize employment demand and re-think the perception of talent?

## Legislative Update

**11/30/23:** DOR Deputy Director, Kim Rutledge, offered to come back in 2024 and provide another legislative update.

* Request list of bills in advance
* Need more info and time to understand details and impacts of bills. Example: CARE court.

## Behavioral Health

**11/30/23**: follow up from the November 30, 2023 presentation from Peter Blanco, Regional Director, DOR San Diego District, on DOR’s behavioral health goals, initiatives, and local efforts.

## Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

**11/30/23:** follow up from the November 30, 2023 presentation on BEP. How is the BEP training going?

## DOR Student Services

* **11/30/23:** There needs to be communication to individuals with disabilities from a young age about available resources. Address the cultural barriers to accessing services. Are DOR staff receiving training on cultural barriers and impacts?
* **9/7/23:** Invite a panel of youth who have received DOR Student Services to come and speak about their experience.
* Follow up discussions based on the information received during the June 8 – 9, 2023 SRC quarterly meeting regarding DOR Student Services and Community Rehabilitation Programs, Local Education Agencies, CA Education Code 45125.1, and clarification on DOR’s Student Service goals.
* Students with disabilities do not always receive the same guidance and support from high school college and career counselors. What are possible solutions?

## Updates on DOR Initiatives

* Integrating Employment in Recovery (IER)
	+ IER is an initiative supported by opioid funding.
	+ How can success be defined and measured for individuals participating in the IER initiative at opioid treatment centers?
* Demand Side Employment Initiative (DSEI)
* VR Connections
* Labor Market Sector Specialty Teams
* State Internship Program (SIP)
* CalDOR Payment Card
* Pathways to Success Project (PSP)
* DOR’s California Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment Project (CSP)

## DOR In-Service Trainings:

* As a follow up to the June 7, 2023 presentation on the in-service trainings that are offered to DOR employees, are there any gaps and/or additional training opportunities that should be considered?
* **11/30/23:** question from member of the public - what training is being provided to DOR counselors on working with consumers with behavioral health disabilities?

## Individual Service Providers (ISP)

Members will receive an update on DOR’s use of ISPs. ISPs are independent contractors who assist individuals with disabilities to participate in vocational rehabilitation services and to achieve and maintain an employment outcome. DOR did not discontinue authorizations for ISPs and their services by September 1, 2021, as previously communicated.

## Adult Work Experience

Members will receive an update on the availability of Adult Work Experiences for DOR consumers. Work experiences are intended to be temporary placements to gain experience in the workplace.

# Ongoing/Reoccurring Agenda Items

## Coordination with DOR’s Independent Living & Community Access Division

* How can DOR provide coordinated “no wrong door” services to address the whole person whether they enter the systems through the VR or independent living programs?

## Biannual Updates on California Department of Education Initiatives

* Alternative Pathway to a High School Diploma program
* Standardized Individualized Education Program template (IPE)
* Learning about the new IEP and 504 plans and the intersection with VR services.
* Reporting Requirements – Could it be possible to update reporting requirements to include the provision of VR services and/or a warm hand-off for VR services (when desired)?

## VR Services Portion of the State Plan

* Ongoing collaboration with DOR to develop future State Plan priorities, goals, and strategies.
* Ongoing partnership with DOR to evaluate the current State Plan priorities, goals and strategies.

## Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Ongoing partnership with DOR on the annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

## Annual Review of -

* Fair Hearing and Mediation Decision Summaries
* SRC Annual Report
* SRC Bylaws

# SRC Policy Committee – 2024 Topics

## Master Plan on Career Education

In addition to the topics below, the SRC Policy Committee will have the Master Plan on Career Education as a reoccurring agenda item during their monthly meetings.

As identified during the November 30, 2023 SRC Quarterly Meeting, the SRC’s Policy Committee will address the following topics in 2024:

## Administrative Law Judges

* Questions addressed on February 2, 2024:
	+ Do Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) receive disability etiquette and implicit bias training?
	+ Are ALJs with disabilities and/or lived experience being hired?
	+ How are ALJs trained on the DOR regulations?
	+ Do DOR consumers have a right to an in-person hearing or mediation, or only when requested as a reasonable accommodation? By default are all hearings or mediations conducted virtually or over the phone?
	+ Continued interest from the SRC about learning if the transition to utilizing the California Department of Social Services, State Hearings Division to conduct fair hearings for DOR consumers has resulted in positive changes, increased engagement, and neutrality, and if it is more user friendly for DOR consumers.
	+ Thoughts on offering DOR consumers a post hearing/mediation survey.
	+ Consumers receiving DOR evidence and position statements three days in advance.
* Follow-ups identified on February 2nd:
* Request a copy of DOR’s handout that explains consumer rights and remedies in plain English (if available).
* Request a copy of the implicit bias training that the ALJs receive.
* Request a link to Cal. Welf. and Inst. Code § 19705.1
* When a consumer files for mediation or fair hearing, are they given information on, or referred to, the Client Assistance Program?
* Who at DOR explains all the steps to a consumer about fair hearings and mediations? Is the Counselor involved? Does the relationship between the Counselor and client tend to turn adversarial if the consumer files?
* Instead of a survey, perhaps a neutral DOR staff person could just call the consumer after a fair hearing or mediation to see how it went and get feedback?

## Self-Employment

* **2/2/24**: Have other states had positive results and outcomes with consumers pursuing self-employment? This information could help the SRC develop policy recommendations.
* How can individuals with disabilities (in addition to those who are blind or low vision) access self-employment services and resources, and get help with establishing businesses?
* How can self-employment services be better utilized?
* How can other consumers get support with starting businesses similar to the Business Enterprise Program (BEP)? There have been thoughts about expanding BEP into other areas like laundry mats. Connects back to the board and care self-employment concept.
* Many consumers will try BEP but not all make it through the program as it’s competitive. Are these consumers then being connected to DOR’s self-employment resources?
* How can awareness of self-employment options be increased and utilized?
* There is a need for the SRC to better understand self-employment and its options and limitations.
* Explore if it’s possible to update the Rehabilitation Administrative Manual (RAM) self-employment policies to note that consumers and/or the Client Assistance Program can ask for a different vendor other than Kramer, Blum & Associates to provide self-employment services and review of self-employment plans. This will help ensure the practice is consistent statewide.

## Traumatic Brain Injury

* There is a limited number of TBI sites, vendors, and services are not available in all areas. How can access be increased?
* How can DOR improve employment services and outcomes for individuals with TBI?
* How can TBI be more openly included in discussions, both at DOR and with community-based organizations?
* How can TBI stigma be reduced?

# Running List of Policy Questions

## Stakeholder Engagement

**11/30/23:** How can the SRC engage stakeholders that are not necessarily professional advocates or identify with the disability community?

* Ensure that stakeholder groups receive the SRC agenda if there are topics that relate to their work.
* Reach out to the California Reducing Disparities Project, which represents underserved populations.

## Community Engagement

DOR welcomes the SRC’s thinking on: how can CalHHS and its departments do a better job of communicating directly to communities that have been historically marginalized and have a reason to be skeptical or suspicious of government. How to reach communities in a way that’s culturally and linguistically accessible?

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The California Health and Human Services Agency is leading many initiatives to improve DEI and as a result, DOR will likely 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, and,
* What methods and models should DOR look to and consider to address these inequities?
* Updated data sets on what communities are underserved and unserved – especially from a regional perspective. How does DOR staffing impact underserved and unserved communities?
* What is DOR currently doing in terms of marketing and outreach?
* It is great to have all these DEI ideas and initiatives – but who at DOR is ultimately going to implement them?
* Need for DOR’s language policy to align with CalHHS’ updated DEI language access policy.
* **9/7/23**: Update on DOR’s development of a DEI plan and have a representative from one of DOR’s affinity groups come and speak.

## Benefits Planning and Employment

SRC members will receive updates on the progress of the Benefits Planning Cross-Advisory Workgroup, comprised of representatives from the following advisory bodies: the California Committee of Employment of People with Disabilities, the CalABLE Act Board, the California Behavioral Health Planning Council, the California Commission on Aging, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

* How can DOR increase awareness for consumers about available benefits?
* There is a need to include vocational rehabilitation and the benefits of employment when community supports are being discussed. Where and when does employment fit into the conversation?
* **9/7/23**: Suggestion that the basics of benefits planning could be taught to all SVRC-QRPs who could then provide introductory benefits planning information to their consumers.
* **9/7/23**:Encourage DOR Work Incentives Planners (WIPs) share information about the Independent Living Centers (ILCs).
* **9/7/23**:Is there a way to incentivize CRPs to have WIPs on staff?
* **9/7/23**: It would be helpful to hear directly from an SVRP-QRP regarding their familiarity about benefits planning and if/when they share information about benefits planning with their consumers.

## Leveraging Programs

A number of initiatives are underway at the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) including: a proposal to renew the managed care organization fee through 2026; 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline; additional funding for distressed hospital loans; CalRX – California’s prescription drug program to help create and compete for lower drug prices: additional funding for older adults with behavioral health needs; legislation proposing expanded access to childcare for low income families; and efforts to modernize the behavioral health system including the Mental Health Services Act. Although not directly related to VR, these programs and proposals impact the individuals served by DOR. How can DOR leverage these initiatives happening across systems? “

## Gun Violence

The California Health and Human Services Agency is calling upon Departments, including DOR, to recognize gun violence as a public health and public safety crisis, and for Departments to do more to act on this issue.

* How can DOR contribute to the strategies and actions that address this crisis?
* What are examples of those strategies?

## Rehabilitation Administrative Manual (RAM) Chapter 3078.1

Review of DOR’s policy for addressing threatening or harassing behavior by applicants or consumers.

# General Policy Questions

## Budget Change Proposal (BCP) Concepts

If DOR was going to make a budget ask, what should that ask be, and why? Requests should be new initiatives, not a request to do more of the same. The DEI analysis requirements in Executive Order N-16-22 should be considered when developing BCP concepts.

## Legislative Policy Change

If DOR had an opportunity to make a legislative policy change, what would that change be, and why should DOR ask for that change?

## SRC Recommendation Review

Which SRC recommendations from the past five years should the SRC revisit and request updates on?

## Information and Data Analysis

What can the data and trends from the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, fair hearing and mediation decision trends, and Comprehensive Statewide Assessment tell us about the impact of DOR’s programs and the opportunity to improve service delivery?

## Program Development

* Before developing a new initiative or program what are the core, guiding principles that need to be identified and established?
* What are some of the core principles that should guide efforts to integrate health and human services programs?
* What systems and policies are outdated and need to be modernized? Or instead, do we need to let go of them?
* What procedures might be impacting policy?
* DOR is reviewing department controls and policies that may have outlived their use. Consider SRC input before discontinuation.