**State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**

**Policy Committee Meeting**

**July 24, 2025, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Location: Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) Central Office, 721 Capitol Mall, Room 407, Sacramento, CA 95814

*Draft Meeting Minutes*

Note: This committee meeting was held in accordance with California Government Code section 11123.5. There may be members of the public body who participated in meeting who were granted a reasonable accommodation per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

In attendance:

* SRC Policy Committee members in attendance (by Zoom): Yuki Nagasawa, Ivan Guillen, Theresa Comstock
* SRC Policy Committee members absent: La Trena Robinson
* SRC members in attendance as members of the public (by Zoom): Shannon Coe
* DOR staff in attendance (in-person): Kate Bjerke
* DOR staff in attendance (by Zoom): Victor Duron, Brittany Rossi, Sabah Chaudhry, Nancy Wentling, Jessica Grove
* Members of the public in attendance (by Zoom): Danny Marquez, Sarah Issacs, Andrew Byrne

# Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

Yuki Nagasawa, SRC Policy Committee Chair, welcomed attendees to the meeting. Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, reviewed the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act requirements.

# Item 2: Public Comment

None.

# Item 3: Approval of the June 5, 2025 SRC Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

It was moved/seconded (Comstock/Guillen) to approve the June 5, 2025 Policy Committee meeting minutes as presented (Yes – Comstock, Guillen), (No – 0), (Absent – Robinson), (Abstain – 0).

# Item 4: DOR Staffing, SVRC-QRP Exam

Victor Duron, DOR Chief Deputy Director, began by explaining that the presentation on the SVRC-QRP exam is part of a broader series to update the SRC Policy Committee on DOR’s efforts to address recruitment, retention, and staffing challenges. Duron spoke about DOR’s ongoing collaboration with CalHR and other state entities to streamline hiring, particularly with a focus on disability inclusion. He concluded by highlighting a recent executive order directing state departments to improve efficiency and reduce employment barriers, an effort DOR is actively aligning with.

Brittany Rossi, Associate Personnel Analyst, DOR Human Resources, presented an overview of the updated SVRC-QRP examination. Rossi began by explaining the role of civil service exams in the state hiring process and outlined the three basic steps to securing a state job: searching for the job, taking the exam, and submitting an application. Rossi reviewed the history of the SVRC-QRP exam. In response to stakeholder feedback and a job analysis completed in February 2025, a streamlined version of the exam was launched on July 16, 2025. Key changes included reducing the number of test items from 69 to 10, shortening the retest period to 6 months, and moving from a 6-rank to a 3-rank scoring system. The updated exam emphasizes relevant knowledge and abilities, eliminates unnecessary items, uses more inclusive language, and accommodates applicants from outside state service. Rossi concluded with a scenario walking through the applicant journey, from submitting an exam application to receiving a passing score and becoming eligible to apply for SVRC-QRP positions.

Sabah Chaudhry, Associate Personnel Analyst, DOR Human Resources, presented an overview of the Limited Examination and Appointment Program (LEAP) and current recruitment efforts underway for SVRC-QRPs. She began by announcing the recent release of the LEAP exam for the SVRC-QRP classification. Chaudhry explained that LEAP is a program designed to support people with disabilities in obtaining state employment by offering an alternative to traditional exams. Under LEAP, candidates demonstrate their qualifications through a Job Examination Period (JEP). During this time, performance is evaluated every four weeks. Upon successful completion of the JEP, the participant may receive a permanent appointment. LEAP appointees must meet the same qualifications as those in non-LEAP roles and are eligible for reasonable accommodations.

Chaudhry then reviewed DOR’s strategies for recruiting SVRC-QRPs, including attendance at community and college career fairs, distribution of recruitment materials with QR codes and exam info, and outreach through platforms like Handshake and LinkedIn. Additionally, DOR is building connections with local colleges offering qualifying master’s programs.

Highlights from the Q&A discussion following the presentation:

* Theresa Comstock, SRC member, asked about the declining number of academic programs offering master’s degrees in vocational rehabilitation counseling.
* Nagasawa asked whether DOR planned to expand eligibility to include bachelor’s degrees in related fields. Chaudhry said that while a master’s degree is still required, it does not have to be in rehabilitation counseling specifically. DOR accepts degrees in related fields such as psychology.
* Ivan Guillen, SRC Chair, asked whether a master’s degree is a strict requirement for the SVRC-QRP position or if relevant experience could substitute. Chaudhry clarified that a completed master’s degree is mandatory, along with a required course in theories and techniques from an approved program.
* Guillen also asked whether there had been any movement toward eliminating the master’s requirement to broaden access. Chaudhry responded that there are no updates on that.
* Guillen asked if LEAP opportunities extend beyond SVRC-QRPs and technicians. Chaudhry confirmed that over 140 classifications have LEAP exams available through CalCareers.

Public comments:

* Shannon Coe, SRC Vice-Chair, asked how DOR is working to improve awareness and understanding of the LEAP program among both applicants and state agencies.
* Danny Marquez, CASRA, asked whether DOR has ever requested a three-year waiver from the federal government to temporarily lift the master’s degree requirement for SVRC-QRP positions. Marquez asked how DOR is supporting supervisors who manage LEAP participants.

# Item 5: Debrief and Recommendations Working Session

During the debrief, SRC Policy Committee members expressed support for DOR’s efforts to address staffing shortages and improve recruitment. Committee members discussed limited consumer access to psychological and vocational assessments due to the retirement of in-house DOR psychologists. It was suggested that DOR reestablish partnerships with behavioral health agencies and school districts to support consumers with mental health and learning disabilities. It was suggested that the SRC receive future presentations on the range of DOR assessments available and potential collaboration with the California Department of Education’s Special Education Division. A concern was raised about delays in obtaining reasonable accommodations for DOR employees.

Public comments:

* Sarah Isaacs, Disability Rights California, noted concerns about DOR requiring psychological assessments to determine service eligibility. Isaacs emphasized that assessments should support access and not serve as a tool to exclude consumers.
* Shannon Coe, SRC Vice-Chair, expressed concern about evaluating whether a consumer’s job goal is realistic without fully understanding the range of available assistive technology that could make the goal achievable.

**Adjourn**

It was moved/seconded (Comstock/Guillen) to adjourn the July 24, 2025 SRC Policy Committee meeting.