**State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**

**State Plan Committee Meeting**

**April 22, 2025, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.**

Location: Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) Central Office, 721 Capitol Mall, Room 401, 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 State Plan Committee members in attendance (by Zoom): Ivan Guillen, Greg Meza, Michelle Bello, Shannon Coe
* DOR staff in attendance (in-person): Kate Bjerke
* DOR staff in attendance (by Zoom): Peter Frangel, Antoinette Deboisblanc
* Members of the public in attendance (by Zoom): Peter DeHaas, Michael McCullough, Jessica Lee

# Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

Ivan Guillen, SRC Chair and State Plan 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: State Plan Modification Overview

Peter Frangel, Manager, DOR Policy Performance Section, presented an overview of the DOR State Plan, formally known as the VR Services Portion of the California Unified State Plan. The DOR State Plan identifies goals and priorities over a four-year cycle, with a required mid-cycle modification every two years. The current cycle began on **July 1, 2024**, and the next mid-cycle modification goes into effect on **July 1, 2026**. The timeline for the DOR State Plan modification was provided:

* **November 2025**: draft goals and priorities reviewed and approved by DOR and SRC.
* December 2025: DOR’s draft modification submitted to the California Workforce Development Board for inclusion in the California Unified State Plan.
* January 2026: thirty-day public comment period.
* March 2026: DOR State Plan submitted to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) for a 90-day review.
* April – May 2026: DOR and RSA negotiate performance measures.
* June 2026: Final updates to the DOR State Plan are made.
* July 1, 2026: Plan goes into effect.

Frangel provided a detailed review of the sections within the DOR State Plan, and reviewed the goals, priorities and strategies. The SRC’s primary involvement will be with Section A – Input of the SRC, Section B – Comprehensive Needs Assessment, and the development of future goals. Discussion and Q&A highlights following Frangel’s presentation included the following:

* Confirmation that DOR’s goals will need updates to some extent.
* Regarding DOR’s goal to increase the number of students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services or VR services, SRC members asked 1) how budget constraints might affect the ability to expand services and whether funding would be available to support more student engagement, and 2) how to achieve this goal when some DOR offices are understaffed and unable to enroll more students.

Public comments: Peter DeHaas if DOR data is available on individuals pursuing self-employment or small business ownership. Michael McCullough asked about DOR counselor caseloads and how service goals can increase without overburdening staff. Jessica Lee asked if the DOR State Plan includes investments in technology to help counselors manage high caseloads and improve service delivery. Lee suggested that DOR consider the implications of AI tools used by employers, which may introduce bias against neurodiverse job seekers.

# Item 4: SRC Involvement with the State Plan Modification

Kate Bjerke, SRC Executive Officer, discussed how the SRC can inform the State Plan modification. She emphasized the Council’s critical role, especially in contributing to sections such as the needs assessment, and goals and priorities.

To guide SRC engagement, Bjerke introduced seven questions that SRC members can use to gather input from their networks:

1. What are the biggest barriers individuals with disabilities currently face in obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment? What solutions could help reduce or eliminate these barriers?
2. Are there specific disability groups or underserved populations that need greater access to VR services?
3. What specific areas of VR service delivery need improvement (examples: (timeliness, accessibility, effectiveness, consumer choice, etc.)? What improvements could be made?
4. How can DOR’s strengthen partnerships with employers?
5. How can DOR encourage more employers to offer internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training opportunities?
6. Are there policies that limit the effectiveness of VR services? If so, what are they?
7. What innovative strategies, programs, or technologies should be adopted to improve VR services?

Bjerke encouraged the SRC members to provide responses to these questions and also to share the questions with their networks and collect feedback. She proposed the following timeline:

* Late April – June 2025: SRC members reflect on the questions and gather feedback from their networks.
* June 2025: DOR gives an update on the State Plan modification during the June 11 – 12, 2025 SRC quarterly meeting.
* July 2025: The SRC State Plan Committee holds a meeting and drafts input for the State Plan.
* September 2025: The draft input is presented to the full SRC for consideration and adoption during the September 10 – 11, 2025 SRC quarterly meeting.
* October 2025: DOR presents the draft State Plan modification to the SRC State Plan Committee for feedback.
* Late November/early December 2025: DOR presents the final State Plan modification to the full SRC during the quarterly meeting.

SRC members provided feedback on Bjerke’s proposed plan.

* Acknowledgement that the approach will be effective for collecting meaningful feedback from the community and stakeholders.
* Suggestion that SRC members use these questions during their upcoming “Adopt-a-District” discussions to gather feedback from DOR Regional Directors and District Administrators.
* Suggestion to email Bjerke the responses and feedback received.
* Bjerke to send SRC members a draft email template to share the questions with their networks.
* Confirmation that members of the public can provide feedback as well.

# Item 5: Brainstorming Session

During the brief brainstorming session, Ivan Guillen, SRC Chair, spoke about the importance of having clients developing strong foundational skills before pursuing higher education or entering the workforce.

Public comments: Peter DeHaas spoke about fear among some individuals with disabilities around disclosing their disability status. Michael McCullough spoke about the risk of losing benefits such as Section 8 housing, SSI/SSDI, and Medicare, when individuals with disabilities become employed, and how benefits planning can mitigate these risks. Jessica Lee explained that traditional interview practices often disadvantage neurodivergent candidates due to communication style biases. Lee suggested ongoing education for employers, and professional development/coaching services to support neurodivergent individuals.

# Item 6: Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.