

Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council
Main Administration Building
1901 N. DuPont Highway
New Castle, DE 19720
November 18, 2019
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Darryl Garner, Chair; Alice Coleman, Member

Teleconference: Jaqueline Poquette, Member; Blake Roberts, CAP; Kevin McAllister, Member

Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI): Sandi Miller, Acting Director; Shirley Bryson, District Administrator; Jill Morrison, Constituent Relations; Patricia Burrell, Member; Lisa Edmondson, Administrative Specialist I

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

Approval of October 14, 2019 minutes tabled until later in the meeting.

Darryl Garner and Sandi Miller will review the VRAC budget.

Sandi Miller provided raw data to Darryl Garner and Kevin McAllister regarding caseload details such as length of time in VR services, etc. Darryl Garner will forward data to the Council for their review.

Action Item: Chair requested VRAC email addresses to forward emails he has received from Sherry A. Taylor of the SRA. Information is regarding vocational rehabilitation and may benefit the Council.

Old Business:

Sandi Miller reached out to Rehab Services Administration and sent information to the Council regarding the National Association for State Rehabilitation Councils. They provide information, webinars, etc. The Council previously requested that a representative from Rehab Services Administration to be available to answer questions and provide information to the Council.

The Chair stated that the Council needs to understand what resources are available for retreats, town halls, etc. Sandi Miller stated that there is no budget for the VRAC. DVI needs to understand what is needed over the next year and see if they require prior approval or if funding can be made available. The Council will create a tentative list for 2020 for events they intend to participate in to present to DVI to determine if funding may be available. The Chair will send an email to the Council outlining what information is needed by the next meeting.

DVI should be able to offer a Tech Fair in 2020 to correspond with White Cane Day.

The Council continues to recruit new members. J. Poquette has been speaking to people regarding joining the Council. 2020 goal is to get more people involved.

Alice Coleman stated that she feels that the Council needs a sense of direction and coordination with DVI to accomplish their goals.

Jill Morrison reviewed agenda from K. McAllister for the retreat. She suggested holding a virtual Town Hall meeting in the evening. The information from the Town Hall can be discussed during the retreat the following day. Jill Morrison will send out suggestions regarding the agenda and timeline for these events.

Sandi Miller suggests that the NCSRC (National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils) could be a valuable resource for the Council. Getting them engaged could be helpful because the Council can gain a national perspective as to what is going on with other state councils, to see if anyone else is experiencing the same issues and how they strategize around these issues. It would also be helpful to get an idea of what other councils are doing as far as events, activities, etc.

Director's Report:

Business Enterprise Program: DVI held a taste testing for the Faulkland Road office of the Division of Services for Child, Youth and Families (DSCYF) who opened a micro-market on November 4, 2019 in their new offices on Churchman's Plaza. Participation was heavy and sparked a conversation for a potential micro-market at that location.

At the last quarterly Healthy Vending meeting the Business Enterprise Program vending machines were on target to meet the timeline for the 40% healthy vending options by the end of October.

The Chair asked how many BEP operators there are at this time. There are currently 5 BEP operators at this time.

Independent Living Services: Melodye May, Manager of the Independent Living Services unit sat on a panel at the 2019 Swank Dementia Care Conference on October 11, 2019. Her presentation which was entitled Dementia and vision loss and explored the connection between memory loss and low vision. The presentation was very well received, and she has been asked to provide a half-day training on this topic.

Vocational Rehabilitation: In October 2019 DVI-VR participated in the monthly Transition Cadre meetings that the Department of Education holds. Those meetings take place the third Thursday of every month. September, January and May are Statewide Transition Council meetings. The rest of the months are opportunities for transition teams who work with different schools to meet on a monthly basis and discuss transition services. DVI transition

counselors had an opportunity to present information about DVI. One of the DVI counselors talked about her experience as a visually impaired student without any services.

This month DVI-VR partnered with Disability:In Delaware to offer a workshop “Workplace Accommodations Legal Requirements and Hot Topics” at Dover Downs. This event was primarily an employer engagement activity where training was provided for employers.

The VR staff and DVI’s Education Administrator are participating in the Pipeline to Career Success for Students with Disabilities project. It is the second year for the project. Joining Appoquinimink, Capitol and Laurel school districts for the 2019-2020 school year are Colonial, Smyrna and Sussex Tech. This is an attempt to ensure that all students including those with the most significant disabilities are connected to career and technical education pathways while they are still in school. The data shows that most students with disabilities are not included in the pathways or they are not participating in a meaningful way, so they may not get to choose the career pathway that they take. This is a project that is specifically working with schools and community agencies or various government agencies to make sure that we are all working together as a team to support these students.

DVI’s Education and Orientation and Mobility teams provided two days of training to Dr. Sean Healy’s Adapted Physical Education Class at the University of Delaware. Students learned about DVI services and the national shortage of teachers for the blind and visually impaired and certified orientation and mobility specialists. DVI also introduced the Camp Abilities Delaware program and sports equipment used for people who are blind or visually impaired. The training ended with a full day of blind sensitivity training, which is designed for sighted people to experience some barriers faced by people who are blind.

Highlights: A DVI-VR employee recorded a You Tube video for National Disability Employment Awareness month with the National Disability Rights Network. The goal was to show that people with disabilities are talented and ready to work.

Update on Sunset Committee: There will be a meeting scheduled for December. The Sunset Committee co-chairs are in the process of compiling the information that has been submitted by everyone and putting a report together. There will be a meeting to review that report in January.

Update on data requested: Sandi Miller and Kevin McAllister have discussed the data that has been requested. Sandi Miller provided the raw data. Kevin McAllister and Sandi Miller will coordinate to put the data in a useable format, so the Council can analyze the data and collaborate with DVI to make recommendations.

Kevin McAllister discussed the retreat. He suggests a date in March 2020 and asked the Council to work together to develop a date for the event.

Darryl Garner stated that the Council discussed creating a list of items the Council wants to participate in for the next year. Darryl Garner will send an email to the Council asking for suggestions. Kevin McAllister suggested that Mr. Garner discuss this with Sonya Lawrence.

Kevin McAllister discussed the fiscal year ending in October 2019 and the fact that the Council has asked for satisfaction survey results. Shirley Bryson will provide the survey results to Kevin McAllister.

District Administrator's Report:

Current Caseload: 215

Individuals ready to work: 37

Transition aged students 14 -21: 78

Education and training: 50

For the fiscal year 2019 DVI-VR successfully employed 35 individuals.

For the new fiscal year, which started October 1, 2019 DVI-VR has two individuals successfully employed.

DVI has 18 students graduating from high school this year, some will receive diplomas, and some will receive certificates.

DVI transition counselors are coordinating with DVI's internal services to make sure transition students have a technology evaluation, as well as an independent living assessment and anything else that will ensure that they have a clear path of support when they go seek a job or go into post-secondary education.

On Tuesday November 12, 2019 the VR staff was trained with Sarah Loizeaus from WINTAC, and from the Disability Employment Initiative. She provided training for Integrated Resources Team. This is a new strategy That DVI is looking to implement in Delaware.

Approval of October 14, 2019 minutes: Jaqueline Poquette made motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Blake Roberts. Minutes are approved.

The Council agreed to cancel the December 9, 2019 meeting. The next meeting will be held January 13, 2020.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Edmondson

Administrative Specialist I