

State Rehabilitation Council Minutes
Callaway Gardens
September 5, 2017

SRC Members Present: Kenneth Slade, Chris Moder, Joy Norman, Brian Mosley, Peggy Veneable, Kayla Wilson, Mike Prior, Jennifer Page, Dawn Johnson, Lisa Leiter, Carl Mckinney, Karen Adams, Ruby Kaspers, Lewis Wheaton, Wina Low, Christina Peggy Venable, Justin Pressley, Rossany Rios, Deborah Lovell, Steve Oldaker, Dana Skelton-Sanders

SRC Liaison: Dana Skelton-Sanders, **Administrative Assistant:** Jacqueline Gregory

GVRA: Sean Casey, Kevin Harris, Crystal Perry, Robin Folsom, Dale Arnold, CeCe Walker, MaryEllen Mendiratta, Jennifer Howell

SRC Chair's Report:

- **Kip Slade** called the meeting at 8:30 AM. Introductions were made.
- He mentioned that the SRC is focused on the customers/VR clients
- He thanked Dana and Jacqueline for their hard work
- He mentioned the requirement that 51% of the SRC must be individuals with disabilities
- He welcomed and thanked the newly-appointed SRC members

SRC Liaison Dana Skelton-Sanders reviewed SRC WIOA regulation, Mandates, and Responsibilities:

- She mentioned nine (9) mandates
- One mandate is to develop, agree to and review the annual VR plan and that's the unified plan we are involved in through workforce development center, including updates or attachments.
- Another mandate is to evaluate the effectiveness of the VR program and services for people with disabilities including those with cultural and linguistic differences.
- Clients with sensory impairments and others are part of "special populations" and the focus of an SRC Committee
- Reviewing and analyzing the customer satisfaction of VR services is another function of the SRC
- Submitting an annual report is also an SRC function

Crystal Perry, Director, WIOA Compliance and Policy Unit:

- She explained that the VR program in Georgia is housed under GVRA
- VR programs around the country may be housed in different agencies
- She explained that the SRC funding for meetings and staff tied to the SRC comes from

what is called a 110 grant

- Dale Arnold is the Chief Client Management Officer and the VR program is housed in his unit

SRC Annual Report:

- Dana mentioned input from the SRC for the report
- The report is due the end of December
- The report contains VR program statistical data
- Satisfaction survey information is included in the report
- Success stories are included in the report
- Information about average hourly wage of VR clients obtaining employment can be included in the report
- Dana asked for ideas from Council members

Sean Casey, GRVA Executive Director:

- Happy to hear the conversation focusing on the VR counselor and the client
- Sean I want to let you know that I'm happy to hear where this conversation is going right now talking about the VR program, the counselor and the client. These are the first pieces of the puzzle.
- The second piece of the puzzle is the employer.
- He said the agency is refocusing efforts on the employer and the community
- Sean mentioned the nine-member GVRS board which is clearly represented by the world of VR but not by employers which is the second piece of the puzzle
- Sean has been reaching out to business leaders throughout the State of Georgia
- As people are cycling off the board, the vacancies will be filled with business leaders.

Comments from SRC Members:

- **Joy Norman** commented on employer concerns about hiring individuals with disabilities
- **Brian Mosley** mentioned the need for onboarding training for SRC members to better prepared. He also mentioned the concerns that employers have in hiring individuals with disabilities

Statewide Needs Assessment:

- It is due June 30, 2018
- The annual customer satisfaction survey is currently being done by the University of Georgia

Savannah SRC Minutes (June 22-23, 2017):

- Kip asked that the minutes from the Savannah meeting be approved
- The minutes were approved by the members of the Council

GVRA Update from Sean Casey:

- He thanked the Council members for their participation and hard work
- He said he was very excited about the partnership with the SRC, especially with so many new members
- He explained that one of his goals is to provide return on investment (ROI) data during the legislative session by providing them with the number of clients who got a job and their average salary and what this means in terms of income taxes and sales taxes they contribute
- GVRA is working with folks in the state budget office to put together the ROI information
- He said it will be a very simple spreadsheet about ROI that will be shared with elected officials
- Sean reported that the total number of clients who gained employment in FY 2017 was 4544, which is an increase of 575 from the previous year
- He also said that in looking through the data with the employment services division, they have identified clients with some of the highest weekly salaries.
- Some of the clients with the top salaries include a person working as a computer systems analyzing making \$2500 per week
- An individual hired by a local District Attorney's office makes \$2300 weekly
- A sales manager with an international technology company is making \$2000 weekly
- He also mentioned that GVRA also helps clients get their first job
- The total client income in FY 2017 is \$78.4 million dollars
- Sean mentioned that he set a goal when he first came to GVRA to visit every single VR office and the two residential campuses
- In October, he has seven (7) offices left to visit
- He mentioned training for staff from all over the state and in different roles that will roll out on October 1st
- GVRA has started 30 second radio and TV ads
- The TV ads were funded for a 90-day contract for July, August and September
- The TV ads will continue the next three (3) months
- The Agency just started its first digital marketing with online ads for the GVRA website and Georgia Trend magazine
- Employers looking for qualified individuals on web sites can call GVRA
- The reach is roughly 53,000 per month
- As regards Georgia Industry for the Blind, Sean toured the facility and learned that every September 11th, GIB honors first responders in their area in Bainbridge by serving them lunch
- Sean mentioned the GVRA leadership summit in November and that HR is securing a location

Update from Kevin Harris, Deputy Director

- Kevin mentioned the SRC annual report as one of the best things the SRC has to do for

the state of Georgia

- He said the goal is to have the SRC draft report done by Thanksgiving break in November

VR Update from Dale Arnold, Chief, Client Management:

- Two new positions in the VR program are the Service Area Managers and Team Leads
- They were hired last September or October 2016
- They began their job functions on March 1, 2017 after receiving training in February 2017
- The Service Area Manager is an individual who is agency based
- With respect to the new computer system, test runs will begin in December
- The new system will go live on April 28, 2018
- Currently transferring data out of System 7 (GRACI) on a regular basis
- Staff will be trained on the new system
- The RSA audit mentioned compliance and with respect to staff turnover and timeliness the Team Lead will now be the manager of all the cases in a VR office
- So the CRC's will not be assigned caseloads
- All of the cases will be under the Team Lead's responsibility
- The Team Lead will delegate the work to each of the CRC's and the new Career Specialist positions
- WIOA now allows for reportable individuals who are students between the ages of 14 and 22 and on an IEP or 504 plan to have transition services
- Some of these students may then become eligible VR clients

Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey from CeCe Walker, Service Satisfaction Manager:

- Purpose of survey was to look at the services our administrative staff provides to program staff
- The survey was sent to get a baseline that can provide a basis for improvement
- The survey provides a way for staff to give honest feedback and constructive criticism to make the Agency better
- Survey helps to document areas of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction
- Survey can identify service delivery gaps that prevent work from being done
- Results from survey can help determine what improvements are important to internal customers
- Survey results will help prioritize continuous improvement initiative to make the offices more efficient
- The survey contained 98 questions as well as demographics and comment areas
- There were six (6) areas of focus in the survey
- It opened on August 7th and closed on August 22nd
- The focus areas included embracing the Agency mission, teamwork, reliability, communication, knowledge and skills and effectiveness
- Going forward, they hope more staff will participate in the survey
- Survey results show a substantial number of staff did not know what some

administrative offices offered or were not clear about this so this is an area for improvement

Jennifer Howell, Policy and Appeals Manager with the VR Program;

- She reviewed the 8 exceptions this past quarter on granted reimbursements
- She explained how they approved a client case that exceeded the financial GVRA schedule situation with a family who was having some financial difficulties
- She spoke on how they granted an exception for the students to continue to received it prior to the policy change
- She explained how they did some more education with staff on financial needs regarding whether they could include family's medical expenses

MaryEllen Mendiratta, Director of Advancement, Provider Management;

- She spoke on how they help to recruit and maintain their providers that provide direct services to all of their clients
- She explained the ticket to work incentive program
- She explained how they are trying to solicit providers for free employment transition services
- She spoke on how they are in the process of managing new check writing system
- She emphasized the need for training
- She also explained a Webinar series they are developing that will be separated in three components

Steve Oldaker, SILC Update;

- Spoke on the federal and state funding
- He explained having a meeting to provide opportunities for the following to provide input on independent living for people with disabilities
- He explained the policy is simple put to emphasize control with the idea that people with disabilities are the best experts of their own needs
- He spoke on independent living prognosis is they have to provide five core services to receive their funding
- He also spoke on transitioning and accessible affordable housing

Peggy Venable, 121 Program Update;

- Spoke on the background of Native Americans
- She spoke on job training and job placements
- She spoke on an enterprise that helps in providing several services
- She also spoke on adversity and how they have housed a lot of people

SRC Elections:

- Suggestion of having a different structure of officers
- A suggestion was made about having co-chairs and co-vice chairs but concern about potential conflicts

- Nothing in the present bylaws allow for co-chairs or co-vice chairs
- Rossany Rios expressed interest in becoming SRC Chair
- It was suggested that those interested Council members who want to run for office send their willingness in an email so that people know the candidates in advance
- After more discussion a vote was taken to hold elections or to wait and it was decided by a show of hands to wait
- It was decided that Kip would remain as SRC Chair until January and that candidates interested in being chair would send in their candidate statement as to why they should be elected and then the voting will take place in January

Kip made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:23 pm.