

MINUTES OF MEETING
Georgia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)
October 23, 2024, 1pm – 4pm
In Person and Virtual Meeting

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Juliet Hardeman (Chair)
Karen Addams (Co-Chair)
Matthew Barnes
Jerry Haywood
Myndi Pryor
Lisa Leiter
Moses Little
Michele Mason
Joy Norman
Samuel Verniero
Jennifer Page

Guests

Jennifer Howell (GVRA)
Jeff Allen (GVRA)
Jennifer Statham (GVRA)
Deana Brown (GVRA)
Lauren Knox (GVRA)
Katie Brown (GVRA)
Ed Ashe (GVRA)
Matthew Salmon (GVRA)
Dennis Medders (GVRA)
Carla Murphy (GVRA)
Mark Malone (GVRA)
Erica Shedd (GVRA)
Cindy Armstrong (GVRA)
Jaylen Pope (GVRA)
Joel Armstrong (GVRA)
Justin Kidd (GVRA)
Rebecca Williamson (GVRA)
Stephanie Cutrufelli
Cyndi Smith (Southeast ADA)
Tom Wilson, GVS Board Chair

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The roll call was done. Welcome to the group by SRC Chair. Introduced Tom Wilson, GVS Board Chair. Will address any concerns that come out of today prior to the January meeting through a virtual discussion.

Minutes from July 2024 meeting were reviewed & minutes were approved unanimously.

Agenda for today was also approved.

Chair Update – Juliet Hardeman

Provided brief overview of the following recent events she attended:

- FODAC- Friends of Disabled Adult Children - Savannah Opening
- Savannah Blind & Low Vision Luncheon
- CTI Emerging Leaders Day - Covington
- GA Parent Mentor Kickoff Conference - Macon
- NENA Conference
- GVRA GVS Board Meeting and Fair Day

NDEAM – Matthew Barnes provided a bit of background & video was viewed.

During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, NDEAM celebrates the achievement, value and successes for individuals with disabilities in the workplace – workforce. NDEAM celebrates this every October & reaffirms the contributions and values I.W.D.’S play in the workforce and economy.

Employment Theme for 2024 – “Access to good jobs for all!”

Each week, Advancing Employment has a NDEAM Employment themed webinar. In 2024, these Employment themed webinar topics are:

- Georgia Systems: Improvements, Progress and the Future!
- Lived Experience: Tips, Tools, and the Job-Seeker as a Customer!
- Employers, Engagement, and Innovation!
- Partnerships, Collaborations & Social Capital.

Advancing Employment is hosting a big event Monday, October 28, 2024, at the Carter Center from 9:30 am - 1:00 pm.

Thank you note to SRC from ED Wells was read.

Community Partnership

Southeast ADA Center – Cyndi Smith, Program Manager

- The ADA National Network (ADANN) consists of 10 Regional ADA Centers. Southeast ADA Center is Region 4.
- Project of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University.
- Funded by National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), part of the Administration for Community Living (ACL).
- Southeast ADA Center serves 8 states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee).
- Facilitates voluntary compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).
- Conducts research: to reduce and eliminate barriers to employment and economic self-sufficiency; to increase the civic and social participation of Americans with disabilities.
- Partners with APSE, CILs & other universities (GA State) to educate individuals on what their rights are & what is available under ADA. Provides training & education on what the law itself says.
- Website is Adasoutheast.org

SRC Committee Reports

Membership - Karen Addams

Jerry Haywood, Katie Hearn, Joy Norman & Juliet Hardeman have been recently reappointed for 3 more years; certificates will be provided.

Aarti Sahgal chose not to be reappointed at the end of her term.

Wina Low recently retired & replacement hasn’t been hired at this time. Shaun Owen, Deputy Director of Education, attending SRC meetings in the interim.

Karen Addams – will be reappointed; mandatory position.

Juliet recommended collecting applications prior to end of terms; looking at replacements for her in 3 years.

Public Outreach - Katie Hearn

No update.

Policy - Michele Mason

Requested to step down as Policy Chairperson.

No update.

CAP – Jennifer Page

No update.

Executive Committee Update – Juliet Hardeman

Next CSNA is due in 2026, which must be on the budget in 2025.

Proposed dates for 2025 SRC meetings were discussed, voted on & approved. Locations TBD.

- January 22, 2025
- April 23, 2025
- July 23, 2025 - virtual
- October 22, 2025

GVRA Program Updates – Jennifer Howell, Director of Program Support, on behalf of Executive Director, Chris Wells

Employees of the Month for June, July & August 2024 & Client Success Stories were highlighted.

Intake Process Update provided by Matthew Salmon, District Manager for Intake Unit & Specialty Unit

- 1,169 total referrals entered as of 10/01
- Processed 201 VR applications
- Processed 414 PTS applications
- Continuing to work with 513 referrals
- Intake Unit has been present at the GVRA Day at the Fair, The Sunbelt Expo, and 1 job fair hosted to take applications on site, which has resulted in 9 in-person applications and 40+ referrals taken.
- Intake process was discussed.

SWTCIE Update

- New Leadership: Frank Anderson was recently hired to lead the project moving forward.
- School System Sites: The project has been working with Forsyth County Schools over the past year, and the project has now started working with Gwinnett County Schools. The team has a presentation planned for November with students and families at Oakland Meadow School to begin enrolling eligible students.
- 14(c) and CRP Sites: Currently, Creative Enterprises in Gwinnett County serves as the pilot site. Staff at the pilot site have received "ACRE Basic Customized Employment Services" and "Everybody Can Work" trainings, which will aid staff in job coaching with the project's 16 participants. The project has

engaged with other 14(c) holders as well about participating as sites but have not finalized plans with any replication CRP sites as of yet.

- Business Relationships: Recently, the project team met with GVRA's Business Relations team to discuss current agency partnerships and relationships with industry leaders, chambers of commerce, and rotary clubs. Existing relationships and partnerships were identified in the Arts and Green industries (which is SWTCIE's focus), and the project will be coordinating efforts with our CRP sites to identify employment and/or internship opportunities for participants.
- Disability Benefits 101: The project is working with a web developer on the "DB101" website. During the planning for this project, we reviewed Georgia's Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, and a barrier identified in the CSNA is fear of losing public benefits as someone moves into competitive, integrated employment. That said, part of our project is to ensure individuals with disabilities receive benefits counseling that will address their unique concerns as their work situation changes. The website will provide information, estimators, and expert help on both benefits' eligibility and the relationship between work and benefits. Full launch is set for November 2025.

Pre-ETS Data was reviewed & discussed by Rebecca Williamson, Strategic Initiatives Manager.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

- GVRA & SRC will work together to identify survey questions.
- GVRA has previously worked with Platform 28 & other consultants to determine the best way to collect customer service data.
 - Concerns are related to the number of questions.

GVRA/SRC Partnership with Bobby Dodd Institute

- Quick Benefit Counseling videos to be developed.

Hiring Update

- Currently interviewing to fill 40+ Counselor positions, as well as 11 Transition Liaisons.

GVRA Legislative Update

- GVRA has no legislative priorities.

Pathways to Partnerships

Shannah Mabry, Project Manager

Vincent Bass, Project Coordinator

Leigh Thrailkill, Family Liaison

Disability Innovative Fund - 5-year grant awarded to the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) and the Centers for Independent Living (CIL), to substantially improve training and preparation of children and youth with disabilities in Georgia to eventually obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment (CIE) in conjunction and coordination with other state, local, and private entities.

Identified Needs; Missions & Goals; Actions Steps; Partners & Data were reviewed & discussed.

Pre-ETS Partnership

Katie Brown, Assistant Director RWS Transition Initiatives

Partnering Together with the School Systems

- Liaison's primary role is one of exploring appropriate post-secondary goals and needed supports that lead to employment
- Services supplement those not provided by the school

Liaisons will:

- Participate in 504 and IEP meetings
- Consult with teachers
- Attend parent/teacher conferences and meetings
- Help students move through VR process into becoming a VR client
- Share information about Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Provide individual and/or group lessons on pre-ETS to students at the high school (In-House)
- Connect schools with providers that can also provide pre-ETS

Advantages for the School, as well as Data were reviewed & discussed.

Annual Report

Please submit a short paragraph for each event that you participated in throughout this year, as a member of the SRC:

- Name/Title of event
- Date of event
- One to two sentence write-up regarding the details of the event & what it entailed.

Due to RSA by December 30, 2024. Juliet will send email request with internal due date.

Old Business

None

New Business

Letter of Recommendation will be made to the Agency regarding putting QR code survey on their literature, specifically for pre-ETS. Motion was made & 7 members voted yes.

- Myndi would like to see VR adult data, in addition to pre-ETS data.
- Possibly discuss VR at next meeting.

Elections will be held in January 2025 for Chair, Parliamentarian, Outreach, Policy & Membership positions. Voting will be conducted electronically. These positions are for 1 year.

Public Comments

Chandler – 26 years old – totally blind with cerebral palsy, which affects her right side, as well as cognitive disabilities due to being born premature – wants to work in technology; really good with iPhones. Stated she worked with Wiregrass & it didn't work out. VR isn't working out either.

Mother stated they are getting nowhere with VR; daughter feels defeated. VR counselor changes constantly.

Further discussion will be held once meeting adjourns.

Adjournment

Upcoming Conferences/Events:

- NDEAM Event at the Carter Center - October 28, 2024 from 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- RWS Fall Graduation - December 12, 2024

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 22, 2025 & will be held in-person – location TBD.

The meeting adjourned at 3:38 pm.