

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
Workforce & Technology Center
November 19, 2014

Members – Present

Andrew Cohen
Christofer Conklin
Thomas Laverty
Anil Lewis
Sue Page
Barry Shaw
Michael Whitehill
Zosia Zaks

Members Unable to Attend

Laurie Elinoff, Vice Chair
Paulette Epps
Jeff Moran, Chair
Matt Rice
William Stocker

Support Staff – Present

Polly Huston
Donna Lippa

DORS Liaisons to Council - Present

Jean Jackson, Employment Committee
Kimberlee Schulte, Policy and Planning
Susan Schaffer, Blindness & Vision Services

QUESTS

Jody Boone, DORS
Darlene Peregoy, DORS
Jessica Hawes, DORS
Jo Anne Materkowski, DORS
Joseph Barrett, MSRC Candidate for Membership
Cindy LaBon, MSRC Candidate for Membership
Diane Pabich, MSRC Candidate for Membership
Christy Stuart, MSRC Candidate for Membership
Jani Willis, MSRC Candidate for Membership

Introduction and Approval of Minutes

In the absence of the Chair, Jeff Moran and Vice Chair, Laurie Elinoff, Michael Whitehill welcomed guests and members to the Council meeting and asked that everyone introduce themselves. The minutes from the September 10, 2014 meeting were approved as written. Mr. Whitehill welcomed the candidates for membership present at the meeting today: Joseph Barrett, Cindy LaBon, Diane Pabich, Christy Stuart and Jani Willis.

Presentation – DORS Employment Initiatives – Jody Boone, Darlene Peregoy and Jessica Hawes

Jody Boone began by commenting that when talking about Business Services or Business Relations at DORS, we are really speaking about a team of individuals from all areas of the agency, consisting of specialists from the Office of Field Services (OFS), the Office of Blindness and Vision Services (OBVS), and the Workforce & Technology Services Employment Services.

The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) is bringing a renewed and strengthened emphasis on business partnerships and services to employers, so it is very timely that our new Business Relations Services Unit is well underway.

Restructuring of Business Services – now referred to as the Business Relations Branch:

- No longer have an OFS Staff Specialist for Business Services;
- Recruitment is underway Program Manager III, Business Relations:
 - Will supervise all regional Business Service Representatives (1 PIN and 6 contractual positions);
 - Will direct and manage the activities of the Business Relations Branch; and
 - Will serve as the CSAVR National Employment Team (NET) single point of contact for Maryland.

DORS has developed management reports to track the activities and outcomes of the Business Relations staff, using DORS AWARE Case Management System Employer Module.

Regional Business Service Representatives – Highlights of Recent Activities:

- Region I – Provided ADA training to JLG Industries located in Hagerstown; JLG is a federal contractor. Will be following-up with JLG to discuss employment opportunities for DORS consumers

They are working with community partners to conduct a day of mock interviews for DORS consumers.

- Region II – Vacancies (2 Part-Time): Recruitment is underway
- Region III – Vacancy: Recruitment is underway; selection was made

- Region IV – Jena Paquin (temporarily filling a vacancy; recruitment is underway) while managing a caseload, she met with Chesapeake Building Components in Easton.
- Region V – Fred Keene: Fred coordinated several hiring events, including Johns Hopkins and Social Security Administration which has led to several hires and internships.
- Region VI – Nancy Forsythe: Our newest Business Services Representative has been meeting with federal agency selective placement coordinators and attending special hiring events; also developing a partnership with Sodexho, and recently met with Melwood to discuss customized training possibilities.

Jessica Hawes shared the following information about the Workforce & Technology Center Employment Initiatives:

- Disability Mentoring Day – Events were held in October at Johns Hopkins and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Both events went very well.
- The WTC Advisory Boards (Auto, Environmental and Office Technology) met recently. The Advisory Boards were well attended by new and previous employers who provided feedback on hiring.
- WTC Employment Services have just completed reviewing and making changes to the Job Seeking Skills Curriculum Training.
- Have been meeting with other DORS Employment Specialists to discuss what businesses we need to reach out to. Employers have been invited to visit WTC and talk with Employment Services staff and instructors.

Presentation – Restructuring of the Office of Field Services – Jo Anne Materkowski, director, Office of Field Services

Jo Anne Materkowski stated that in an effort to promote organizational efficiencies and align division goals and objectives, DORS is preparing to implement some organizational changes in 2015. Initially prompted by the 2013 Statewide Needs Assessment that examined the disability population and related DORS staffing patterns, it was determined that several areas of the state could benefit from structural enhancements. Close review of the six (6) existing regions has resulted in plans to reduce the number of regions to five (5). The existing offices in Region IV, Eastern Shore, will be incorporated in existing regions. Region IV has been comprised of office sites in Salisbury, Easton and Elkton, with one regional director and two supervisors. The new structure will incorporate the Easton and Salisbury Offices into Region II, Southern Maryland. The Elkton Office has already been integrated into Region V, Central Maryland, while moving the

Eastern Baltimore County to Region III, Baltimore City, resulting in a more equitable statewide alignment.

It is anticipated these changes will result in enhanced service delivery to consumers of the Division and appropriately align resources based on demonstrated need.

Council member Anil Lewis asked if flexibility has been built in if the numbers increase in years to come. Ms. Materkowski commented that numbers have remained consistent over the years.

Update – Workforce Innovations Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 - Sue Page, Director

Sue Page stated that the public VR program is looking forward to how WIOA will positively impact the services that DORS provides and the outcomes achieved with consumers. Are currently in a position of looking at the specifics of the Act and what the impact will be on the VR Program both nationally and locally. Some of the parts of the Act that we are looking at are: (1) performance measures (there will be common performance among all workforce agencies), (2) how the Act will enhance services to transitioning youth, particularly the pre-employment services and how we can reach out to students in school at an earlier age, (3) how WIOA will impact our Maryland Standards for quality professional rehabilitation counselors.

Director’s Report – Sue Page

DORS Fiscal Year 2014 Accomplishments

- The Maryland Disability Determination Services (DDS) exceeded federal performance standards established by the Social Security Administration by processing 75,434 disability claims.
- The MD VR Program met and exceeded federal performance standards and indicators established by the U.S. Department of Education by assisting 2,545 persons with significant disabilities achieve successful employment.
- The Office of Field Services assisted 2,377 individuals with significant disabilities achieve their employment goals.
- The Office of Blindness and Vision Services assisted 168 persons with vision impairments achieve successful employment.
- The Workforce & Technology Center served 2,026 persons with significant disabilities in FY 2014.
- DORS served a total of 9,675 youth with disabilities transitioning from

school to post-secondary education and careers.

DORS Waiting List Update – The current DORS waiting list has a little over 2,000. This time last year, it was a little over 3,000.

Committee Reports

Policy and Planning Committee, Tom Laverty

Tom Laverty stated that the Policy and Planning Committee met on November 5, 2014 and reviewed the changes that will result in the program as a result of the passage of the workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. The Act requires that the Division expend 15% of their State allotment on pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. An individual is considered a student with a disability until the age of 21 and a youth with a disability is 24 years old or younger.

A brief discussion was held regarding pilot implementation of the Division's Quality Assurance Program. The Division has been reviewing the initial findings of their review of services provided and will be discussing these findings with the DORS Policy Review Committee in December.

Public Relations and Quality Assurance Committee

Committee report not available at this meeting.

Membership and Resource Committee, Laurie Elinoff

- Four long-term, committed and irreplaceable Council members are completing their terms of membership on the State Rehabilitation Council tonight. We're so grateful for the many contributions of:
 - Tim Daly
 - Charlie Crawford
 - Al Sonnenstrahl, and
 - Mike Bullis

Many thanks for your service to the Council and to individuals with disabilities in Maryland.

- We have been working with DORS Employment Specialists to try to identify some additional representatives of business and industry for the council.

Employment/Career Development Committee, Paulette Epps
Committee report not available at this meeting.

Blindness and Vision Services Committee, Anil Lewis

Anil Lewis stated that at the last Blindness and Vision Services Committee meeting held on October 22, 2014, the committee elected him as Chairperson. At this meeting, the committee received an update on the transitioning services in the DORS Office for Blindness and Vision Services by Toni March, VR Supervisor. The committee also received an update on the activities for the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind and the Blind Industries and Services of Maryland. The committee will be developing their meeting list for the upcoming 2015 calendar year.

Update on Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council (Laurie Elinoff)

- Laurie Elinoff announced that the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is waiting for approval of their 2014 – 2016 State Plan for Independent Living.

The meeting concluded at 7:00 p.m. The next full Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 4, 2015, Annapolis, Maryland.

Respectfully submitted.

Donna Lippa
MSRC Staff Support