

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council Minutes

May 10,2023

Members Present:

Katherine Jones – Chair

Scott Dennis

Penny Reeder

Cory Richo

Rosa Raez

Aaron Stephen

Todd Tolson

Members Unable to Attend:

Michelle Day

Mindy Lipsey

Ronza M. Othman

Tamara Smith

Aaron Stephen

Tassie Thompson

Hunter Whitt

Marlo Lemon

Melissa Blubaugh

Kristen Patterson

DORS liaisons to Council:

Jody Boone – OFS Director

Toni March, Director OBVS

Wanda Peele, Business Services

Patrick Peto, Program Manager Policy and planning DORS

SRC Meeting

May 10, 2023

Kim Schultz, DORS — Public Affairs

Guest:

Alison Axelrod, DORS Rehabilitation Counselor-Wheaton

Brian Haas, DORS Business Relations Specialist - Annapolis

Carmen Procida, DORS Rehabilitation Supervisor - Annapolis

Connor McGinley, DORS Rehabilitation Counselor - Linthicum

Mindy Potter, DORS Rehabilitation Counselor - Annapolis, representing LEAP

Christina Nixon, DORS/OBVS Rehabilitation Teacher- OBVS Baltimore, representing LEAP

Patrice Sedgwick, DORS Rehabilitation Counselor, Lanham

Todd Tolsen, Executive Director, Blind News Foundation

Interpreters:

Karon Roundtree

Josie Brown

Support Staff for the Council:

Erica Kneessi, Staff Specialist for Training & Professional Development

Sherri Alban, Executive Associate

Welcome:

Katherine Jones – Good Evening Everyone

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes – Motion accepted.

The February 8,2023 minutes are approved as written and will be available on the State Rehabilitation Council website.

Scott Dennis

CSAVR 2023 Spring Conference April 17th -19th, 2023

SRC Meeting
May 10, 2023

We had three full days of training:

- Financial side of operating the VR program
- Monitoring of the VR program – contract monitoring
- DORS: Looking at outcomes - using last 5 years of Data.

The SRC is invited to attend the Fall CSAVR conference: Destination and date to be announced.

Retirement announcement:

Jean Jackson will be retiring effective June 1,2023.

Jean started out at the Crownsville Mental Hospital with DORS. She was the 1st Medical Relations Officer with DDS and then Director of the Workforce Technical Center

Patrick Peto

New Cap Director:

Open recruitment was held for this position, we had close to fifty applicants.

Marla Freedman has accepted the position and will start on May 31,2023

Marla is coming to us with a wealth of experience from Life Bridge, Sinai where she wore many hats.

We are very excited to have her.

Katherine Jones

Public Comment: N/A

Jody Boone

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Unit:

- Proposal to create DORS DHU went out on March 21st.
- Goal is to create by July 1,2023
- The purpose is to improve services, support for RCDS and consumers.
- Unit will be part of Region I
- Currently we have eight Rehab. Counselors for the Deaf.

- We have a Supervisor pin that we will start recruiting soon. Applicant must know ASL, Culture & Innovation in Deaf Community.
- There are three open positions for support staff that we are currently recruiting for. Applicants will be required to know ASL.
- With the creation of the unit, we are hoping to improve the employment rate within the deaf community.

Timeline:

- Sent proposal out for review March 21st.
- Recruitment in May
- Employ in July

I want to thank Noe Turcios, Staff Specialist, Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing Services, Derick Serra, Program Manager, Technical Branch who did the bulk of the research.

Deaf Blind will continue to be served through the Office of blindness and Vision Services.

Scott Dennis

Directors Report:

HB 660 Commission Report

- Commission was chaired by Marlo Lemon
- 7 meetings were held between Sept 2022 and March 2023
- Video presentations of all meetings are available on the state website:
- Final report was sent to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House.
- The final report is available on the [DORS.maryland.gov](https://dors.maryland.gov) website. See link below:

[HB660 Commission Final Report](#)

Topics of Discussion and Recommendations:

Methods for improving Stake holder input with the Division of Rehabilitation Services

Methods we use

1. Input from State Rehab council
2. Performance data
3. Customer satisfaction reports

Recommendations

SRC Meeting
May 10, 2023

Partner with the developmentally disabled community and provide information to the underserved population about DORS services.

- Utilizing existing organizations such as the state agency Transition Collaborative, Department of Labor, Behavioral Health Administration, Developing Disabilities Administration, Parents place of Maryland, and Department of Disabilities to work on how we can break down barriers and improve the transition process for individuals and their families.
- Develop a two-way communication system between DORS, School staff and students' families.
- Online Referral form – add a How you heard about DORS link on the form.
- Add Plain language review of documents on website and in brochures – **currently working on that.**
- Currently working on short videos with Maryland Public television to give out basic information on getting started with services for transition students through DORS.

Improving our relationship with DORS and DDA – **We are conducting joint training sessions with DORS and DDS.**

- Memorandum of Understanding with DDA– **last agreement was done in 2018 and it is currently being updated.**

Work on the amount of time it takes to provide services -**On average our time frames are well below requirements.** RSA is looking into putting sanctions against agencies that do not meet requirements.

Ways to increase public and private partnerships in delivering services – **we are looking to increase some of our services into being more community based.**

Methods on improving accountability and transparency, providing information for all stake holders concerning performance – **Take a look at our website where we have expanded on that and will continue to expand. If there is additional information that the SRC would like for us to include, please let us know.**

Outreach to Families and programs – **we are partnering with Parents Place and will continue to work with them on outreach. We also have our Community Rehab. Provider Advisory council which is open to every provider and where we welcome all feedback.**

Eligibility Requirements – **Those are set by law**

Where the VR agency is located & Should DORS become a separate agency?
Decision was not made.

Budgetary Request – Support Job training.

- HB1222 match requirement 21.3% of the grant. **State has matched to date. We will fall short this year. Next year we will see a short fall - Working with the department of Budget and Management for additional funding in 2025.**

Any other improvements

- See if money from the Blueprint for Maryland's future can help fund DORS services.

DORS Planning Meeting

June 13,2023 – Sheridan in Towson

Purpose:

To set directives and direction for the upcoming year, take a look at what we accomplished this year.

We will be addressing recommendation from:

- HB 660 Commission Report
- RSA monitoring recommendations
- Policy Issues – making policy changes going forward.

SRC members are welcome to attend, we welcome your feedback. Let us know if interested in attending.

Emailed invitations with details will be sent out.

Disability Innovation Grant –

- Between 20 & 30 grants will be awarded – between 4 to 10 million dollars each.
- Focus – Transition Children (10-13) youth (14-24)
- Currently working on this grant – partnering with the UM Center for Transitioning Career innovation and Parents Place of Maryland.
- We will also be reaching out to local education agencies.
- Grant will be submitted June 5th.
- Will be for 5 years.

Quality Assurance updates – Patrick Peto

SRC Meeting
May 10, 2023

Agency Policy Review meeting will be on May 18th. We will reach out to members of the Policy committee to schedule a meeting to talk about the following policy updates that we are working on now:

- Post Secondary Education policy.
- Preparing for change in the financial participation requirements where we will be removing that part from policy.

Blindness and Vision Services (Penny Reeder)

Toni March:

Blind Subcommittee –

Guest: Kim Schultz

Kim went over what we can and cannot do with the website.

We discussed how OBVS is presented on the site and what we should add, change or tweak to better serve our consumers.

Next meeting – review

Membership - Scott Dennis

We are looking for SRC members to sign up for committees.

Also looking for individuals and Businesses to join the SRC.

Employment and Career Development – Michelle Day

Katherine Jones:

I will be doing a presentation in the greater Salisbury community to talk about apprenticeship programs as well as work-based learning experiences.

Wanda Peele:

We are offering paid Quest internships through the DORS facilities.

Strategic Planning & Public Affairs- Kim Schultz

Due to lack of members, the committee did not meet.

If anyone is interested in joining the Strategic planning & Public Relations committee, please contact Kim Schultz at kimberlee.schultz@maryland.gov

Council Sharing

Katherine Jones-

I would like to ask Todd Tolson who is new to the council to share something about himself and the business that he represents.

Todd Tolson, Executive Director, Blind News Foundation-

Thank you, Katherine. I am the Executive Director of Blind News Foundation. Our foundation was started to create a relationship with local Blind and visually impaired nonprofits and to pair them up with local businesses.

I come from a background in the travel agency and sales and understand the importance of networking and building relationships from the ground up.

During covid when the travel agency crashed, I decided to take that same skill set and instead of working with luxury travelers, put that into an area where I believe I could bring communication and networking. It was important for me to really get the local community involved. I have always been involved, I am part of the ACB and have always been involved with my local chamber of commerce and local networking groups and that is the way things get done.

I know that Agencies like DORS are overwhelmed, underpaid, and overworked and have way too much to do and that is why I am here and would like to be on the council.

Katherine Jones -

New Project Bay Area CIL

There are 20 acres within the city limits of Salisbury that we are leasing through the Maryland Department of health. We are looking into how we can develop this land into low income and accessible housing, Wicomico County has a long waiting list for such housing. We Will be working on this project for the next few years.

Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted

Sherri Alban
MSRC Staff Support

SRC Meeting
May 10, 2023

SRC Meeting
May 10, 2023