

Meeting Minutes

Rehabilitation Council of Texas
January 25 & 26, 2016
Austin Marriott South
Austin, Texas

Present:

- Joyce Taylor, Vice-Chair, Houston
- Matt Berend, Abilene
- Jim Brocato, Beaumont
- Neva Fairchild, Carrollton
- JoAnne Fluke, Lumberton
- Rene Gonzalez, McAllen
- Casey Hertel, Abilene
- Bruce Hooper, San Antonio
- Paul Hunt, Austin
- Susie May, Austin
- Troy Myree, Houston
- Mark Schroeder, Grand Prairie
- Karen Stanfill, Houston
- Crystal Stark, College Station
- Joe Tims, Justin

Absent:

- Martha Garber, Chair, Coppell
- Cheryl Fuller, Austin
- Scott Bowman, Austin

DARS Reps:

- David Norman, DRS Liaison
- Ron Ayer, DBS Liaison
- Shiloh Gonzalez, DARS Liaison

DARS Staff:

- Martha Bagley
- Michelle McCall
- Jeff Kaufmann
- Vickie Wilkins
- Sylvia Connor
- Corey Turner
- Carline Geiger
- Cassie Fisher

Guests:

- Kaki Leyens (TWIC)
- Steven Aleman (Disability Rights Texas)
- Karen Latta (TWC)
- Don Roy (DARS)
- Mike Kirkland TWC

Welcome and Introductions

As Martha Garber, Chair, was representing the RCT at the WIOA National Convening Conference, the meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Joyce D. Taylor, Vice-Chair. Each member introduced themselves.

DARS Commissioner Update

DARS Commissioner Veronda L. Durden provided these updates:

- Commissioner Durden told the story of a day dreamer. The moral of the story is there is no substitute for hard work. So, DARS is working hard to ensure that the dream of transitioning our programs from DARS to Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) on September 1, 2016 is successful. We have got to wake up from our dream and put some hard work behind it to ensure it happens successfully.
- She gave an update on the Combined State Plan. It is on track for a March submission to the Department of Labor
- She also shared updates on the transition of DARS to TWC and HHSC.
 - Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) transition plan was submitted to the legislative oversight committee on October 1, 2015.
 - The Rehabilitation Services Administration reviewed and supported the request of TWC for \$3.8 million in VR dollars to support IT and infrastructure needs that must occur in FY16 to accomplish the program transfer. We are finalizing an interagency contract to transfer the funds to TWC.
 - DARS will continue to work with leadership from both TWC and HHSC to share information that will help to develop organization structures, transfer programs, and ensure consumer services are provided at the highest lever possible without interruption.
- Independent Living
- Opened the floor for questions.

Mission Statement

- Joyce Delores Taylor read the RCT Mission statement.

Committee Meetings

- Each Committee Chair explained what their committee does so that the new members could choose where they would like to participate today. New members will have an opportunity to choose their committee at the next meeting.

- The following committees met with their members: Policy, Procedures and Personnel Development, Membership and Education, and Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment.

Planning and Review Committee

- Dr. Rene Gonzalez, Chair of the Committee, talked about the Combined State Plan.
 - Submitted in March 2016
 - Approved in July 2016
 - Transfer to TWC on September 1, 2016
- David Norman, DRS Liaison, and Ron Ayers, DBS Liaison, explained the Combined State Plan to the new RCT members.

Public Comment

- Steve Aleman, Attorney Disability Rights Texas
 - Transition of VR Programs to TWC and VR's connection to pre-employment transition services with public schools.
 - Noted that the RCT remember to work with both DARS and TWC with regards to working with the public schools and students that may or may not be DARS consumers.
- No other public comments.

36th Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI)

- Mark Schroeder, Education & Membership Chair
 - Led the group through Chapter 1: History and Law
 - Questions were answered along the way.

DBS and DRS Assistant Commissioner Report

Jeff Kaufmann provided the following updates on behalf of DBS Assistant Commissioner Scott Bowman:

- Combined State Plan
 - The VR plan, which is a part of the combined state plan, should have passed the TWC Commissioner level today and will be forwarded onto The Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) for the docket February 5th.
 - It is now a four-year plan that can be amended at any time needed.
 - The first amendment will happen right away to change from DARS to TWC.
 - Another amendment that will happen is the merging of DBS and DRS to one unit.
 - It will go into effect July 1, 2016.
- DBS RCT Report
 - Goal 1, Measure 1.1 DBS is slightly behind this goal for the year. We are at 21.1% compared to this time last year at 25%.
 - DBS is not concerned with this number as it will go up during the year,. but this is a good example as to how this report helps DBS to stay on track.
- Pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS)
 - Almost 3 million dollars were carried forward from FY2015.

- DBS will continue to service children 10-22 years of age. As per a state agreement.
- All funds will be transferred to TWC.
- Scott Bowman and Cheryl Fuller are in Washington at a WIOA meeting and they will be talking with their counterparts to get an idea of how they are working with their workforce systems and schools to better serve the students.

Carline Geiger provided the following updates on behalf of DRS Assistant Commissioner Cheryl Fuller:

- Performance
 - Carline provided an overview of the DRS AC Report to the RCT dated January 25, 2016 and provided in your packet. DRS has been providing a multitude of training for our staff and some of the community providers that we contract with to work with our consumers. The numbers in the DRS AC Report reflect that this training is paying off as our numbers increase.
 - Measure 3.1 has been below target for the last two or three reports. DRS and DBS are working with TEA as to how we can meet this goal.
- A counselor member posed a question about if a counselor just gives the consumer the list of vendors in their area or do they help the consumer to find the best vendor to fit their needs. Ms. Geiger made the following two points in reply.
 - A counselor may say there are ten vendors in the El Paso area. At this time the consumer may assume that they are all equal and say I want the one that is closest to me. The counselor could say, the one closest to you has been assigned 10 clients in the past six months and only one of them has been placed compared to the one that is ten miles further away has been assigned 10 clients and all but one have been placed.
 - There is improvement needed in communicating choices to the consumer.
- Ms. Geiger reported that Erin Wilder, DRS Transition Program Specialist, has conducted a multitude of training across the state on WIOA and has held meetings to talk about the employment transition services and what that looks like.
- A council member asked if VR monies are being used for groups such as Boy's Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Boys and Girls Clubs that benefit all children and help children with disabilities to integrate with their peers without disabilities. Ms. Geiger stated that federal funds are required to be spent specifically on groups of students with disabilities.
- Ms. Geiger also mentioned that DBS is aligning their 12 regions with the five DRS regions. This will involve moving consumers in some counties from one caseload to another caseload.

RCT Committee Reports

Education & Membership Committee

Chair Mark Schroeder – There are seven new members that were appointed since our last meeting. Currently there is one open position for the business, industry and labor committee. In October there are four memberships expiring. Three of these four will be eligible for

reappointment and one will not be eligible. That will leave another open position for business, industry and labor committee.

Action: Mark will be working with Cassie Fisher and Lisa Godwin to prepare a recruitment letter to send to business contacts. We will need to keep in mind that we must continue to meet our disability membership ratio.

Policy, Procedure & Personnel Development Committee

Chair Karen Stanfill – There is a new system for policies. DBS and DRS will email the policies to the RCT near the end of the month. This will give the RCT a chance to look them over. Then they will hold a conference call with RCT on the first Tuesday of the month to discuss the policies being proposed for changes and why. This will allow the RCT a week to look over the policies and make suggestions to DBS and DRS.

DRS Request: The committee requested a list of positions from DBS and DRS that provide direct service to consumers. We would also like to know how many VR counselors and supervisors are Certified Rehabilitation Councilors (CRC) eligible and how many have their CRC.

DARS Request: We would like to have a training calendar from DARS Center for Learning Management offers for the year. We would like to receive this before the April meeting.

DBS request: The Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation Education and Professionals (ACVREP) was discussed. This is a certification program available to persons with a degree. They would not have to have completed the master's program to get the certification. Is DBS aware of this or do you use this program?

Consumer Satisfaction & Needs Assessment Committee

Chair Joe Tims –

- David Norman provided an update on the Consumer Satisfaction Survey process. He also talked about the delays in procurement of a contract for the DBS survey.
 - Because of the delay in contract some of the consumers weren't surveyed until six or seven months after their cases were closed. This could affect the results as people tend to forget this far out. The closed-case surveys are usually conducted one month after their case is closed.
 - One of the areas that had a substantial increase was the number of former consumers who reported that they were working at the time of the DRS survey.
Action: There will be a webinar that will include the RCT, in which we will walk through the findings of the needs assessment and discuss the results.

JOINT MEETING WITH SILC – DAY TWO

Welcome and Introductions

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Joyce D. Taylor, Vice-Chair. Each member introduced themselves

RCT /SILC RELATIONSHIP MOVING FORWARD

- RCT and SILC would like to continue the great working relationship and combined annual meeting.
- Jim Brocato will be the key communication between the two groups.
- Insure collaboration with RCT, VR and SILC with regards to student transition and VR services for their consumers within SILC service areas.

Action: It was suggested that RCT and SILC form a focus group to brainstorm regarding IL and VR transition. This will be discussed more in the April meeting.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT – DAVID NORMAN

- DARS has a mandate requirement to conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment every three years.
- DARS contracted this out to University of Texas Department of Social Work.
- The 2015 needs assessment focused on youth and students with disabilities.
- The draft report has been received and will be reviewed and cleaned up and then sent to the Accessibility Unit. The final report should be released within the next week.

Action: It was suggested that RCT and SILC look at each other's needs assessment and collaborate to make a stronger product. This will be a part of the April discussion.

STATE PLAN FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING – REGINA BLYE

- SILC invited members of the RCT to attend their upcoming meetings or listen online and provide comments.
- Sandra provided additional information about the SILC state plan
 - They are dividing into seven different work groups to draft the state plan in sections.
 - For the needs assessment they have a series of public hearings around the state.
 - They also have listening webinars where they invite the public to go online with SILC and have a conference/video call to discuss what they feel are priorities for the state to focus on for independent living.
 - February 11 and March 3.
 - Full Public Hearing in San Antonio on April 3. This is also the kick off to the SILC Conference.
 - State plan to be submitted by July 1.

LIAISON REPORTS

The following people presented reports or briefings from their agency, and reports were emailed to council members prior to this meeting and included in their binders:

Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

Jim Brocato presented the report included in your binder

- Mr. Brocato talked about the background and structure of CILs
- New board members were announced.
- CILs have worked with Uber to assist with the company's assistive programs for Texans with disabilities.
 - Pilot program in Austin for accessible van and other needs for persons with disabilities.

State Independent Living Council (SILC)

Jim Brocato presented the report included in your binder

- Mr. Brocato talked about the background and structure of SILC.
- PCG project or Capacity Study – DARS through Sunset Commission review was asked to conduct a capacity study at all of the centers for IL. This study was to help determine if HHSC will be able to provide IL services the same as DARS did.
 - One accomplishment for this study was that a map was created of all the centers in Texas.
- SILC currently has five projects funded by DARS and Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD).
 - 1st is the SILC Conference being held on April 3-5 in San Antonio TX. The theme is Innovate, Connect, Collaborate and Create. Registration \$185.
 - 2nd SILC is hosting a series of workgroups with CIL.
 - 3rd The health and fitness project called Get Fit, work and play. This focuses on youth with disabilities and helping them to learn and remain active and practice healthy living.
 - 4th Texas SILC published in November the first quarterly report to the IL network on recent activities in the transportation arena.
 - 5th SILC is working with SPIL program 4.

TEA Council

Susan May presented the report included in your binder

- TEA along with DARS presented to the executive educational directors for the educational service centers. This included information about DARS counselors working with the schools with transition and ARD meetings and getting involved with students earlier than age 16.
 - TEA has a workgroup that is trying to come up with a structure, maybe a checklist, to determine when the DARS Counselors should attend ARDs.
- Texas Transition Conference being held February 18-19.
- TEA continues to work with DARS, DRS and DBS on discussing of transition to TWC concerning WIOA.

CAP Council

Karen Stanfill presented the report included in your binder.

- CAP has made an open record request for the budget for Independent Living Programs.

- We also met with the program specialist for IL to discuss the changes that are being considered.
- Karen Stanfill participated in a DARS stakeholder focus group in December regarding IL programs.
- Policies – Karen Stanfill is working with DARS about a policy in their manual that says they cannot pay deposits for consumers. Regulations specifically states that the VR agency can pay deposits for consumers if needed.
- Executive Director of Disability Rights Texas, Steve Aleman, and Karen Stanfill met with the TWC Commissioner, Mr. Larry Temple, to inform him about Disability Rights Texas and CAP. This was an effort to begin our relationship with TWC.

TWIC

Joyce Taylor presented the report included in your binder.

- Joyce gave an overview of TWIC for the new members.
- TWIC last meeting was on December 4, 2015
 - We approved the evaluation of 2015 accomplishments and outcomes of the Texas Workforce System.
 - The Texas skills and standards were discussed. The needs of statutory charges which would transfer to the council by the 84th Texas Legislature.
 - The council approved prior actions by the Texas skills standards board.
 - This included the approval of the set of policy documents to govern the Texas skills standard system and all skill standards previously recognized by the TSSB.
- The next meeting will be held in Austin at ACC Highland business center on Friday February 5th, this is an open meeting.

DARS Stakeholder Relations

Shiloh Gonzalez presented the report included in your binder.

- The Texas Autism Research and Resource Center has redesigned their website and the link is in my report.
- DARS Council meeting that was scheduled for January 7 has been moved to January 17 at CCRC.
- Public Hearings for Centers for Independent Living will be held
 - February 17 -18 Fort Worth
 - February 22-23 Midland
 - February 25-26 San Antonio

DBS

Martha Bagely presented the report included in your binder.

- 1st Quarter SILC Report
 - DBS served 736 individuals in active services.
 - 470 individuals successfully completed their IL program.
 - 556 new referrals were received in the IL program.
 - DBS received state funds for technology & services that can prevent institutionalization of consumers.

- We currently have 26 IL skill vendors and 98 individuals who were served through these vendors.

DRS

Jonas Schwartz presented the report included in your binder.

- DRS currently provides grants to 15 of 27 centers for independent living.
- As of Dec 31, 2015 DRS served 2,753 individuals at these centers.
- The number of consumers that have reached their goal to date is 204.
- 1,228 individuals on the interest list.
- 314 individuals on the waiting list.

Texas Dept of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)

Terri Richard presented the report included in your binder.

- There are a lot of opportunities for you to provide input on the TDHCA website.
- We have another website that is the Housing Services Coordination web page. We are looking for someone to serve on this council who received service enriched housing, affordable, integrated accessible housing and subsidy and can also coordinate with voluntary services.
- We also have three other open positions on our council.
- We would like to coordinate with everyone involved with housing so that we can coordinate and give the same message in our submitted plans.
- Data is another concern going into the legislative session.
 - Power in numbers, let's find common things and be able to provide the data.
- TDHCA is holding an academy on February 9-10.
 - The goal is to educate and provide training for consumers and those providing services to learn more about housing.
 - There are nine teams of five people each.
- TDHCA's ADA barrier removal program – provides up to \$20,000 to be able to help a person modify their home.
 - We have money but we need more administrators.
- Section 811 Project is a rental assistance program, TDHCA partnered with HHS agencies.
 - We have 18 properties that have set aside units for persons with disabilities.
 - Hoping to have our first person housed in March or April of this year.
 - We have \$24 million. We are hoping to serve 695 people.

DADS

Wesley Yeager presented the report included in your binder.

- Advisory Committees that were approved by HHSC to continue that are close to DADS. Check DADS and HHSC website to apply for these committees.
 - Texas Respite Advisory Committee
 - Aging and Disability Resources Center Advisory Committee.
 - Aging Texans Well Advisory Committee

Additional Discussion:

- Mack Marsh talked about Parking Mobility
 - Non- profit organization
 - Developed a program that provides for better enforcement, greater community engagement and education to solve accessible parking issues.
 - Need people to get involved locally to collect data.

OLD BUSINESS:

- October 19-20, 2015 RCT Minutes – Mark Schroeder made a motion to approve minutes, Bruce Hooper seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.
- Reviewed the January To-Do List
 - Executive Committee
 - CARRY FORWARD: Review Strategic Planning
 - CARRY FORWARD: Invite Dr. Suzanna Hupp Associate Commissioner for Veteran's Affairs at HHSC to speak at April RCT meeting.
 - ON-GOING: IRI Book Review - Review a chapter each meeting
 - ON-GOING: Discuss updates of State Plan at every meeting
 - Planning and Review Committee
 - ON-GOING: Review the combined state plan
 - Consumer Satisfaction Committee
 - ON-GOING: Continue to review consumer satisfaction results, emphasizing transition services
 - Membership and Education Committee
 - ON-GOING: Continue to work with Governor's Office on appointing new members
 - Policy Procedures and personnel Development
 - ON-GOING: Review the training provided to DARS and IHO.
 - CARRY FORWARD: Follow up on the DBS policy manual, specifically for Social Security policy
 - CARRY FORWARD: Follow up on DARS policy on developing vocational goals
 - ON GOING: Review impartial hearing results
 - ON GOING: Continue to review all policy manual revisions
 - **Karen will clarify the training request for hearing officers**

NEW BUSINESS:

- RCT Coordinator – New To Do
 - Make sure council meeting books are prepared in word (accessible) format and put in folders corresponding to the tabs. Also put the name of the file in the footer for identification purposes. Make this available to blind and seeing impaired members.
 - Order IRI Books and send link to the new members

- Coordinate with RCT members that would like additional copies of the Annual Report
- Prepare a letter for recruitment and get contact for business and labor membership
- Get with DRS and DBS to prepare a list of positions serving the clients and the job descriptions. Find out how many counselors are CRC eligible and how many already have their CRC. As well as how many supervisors have their CRC.
- Get a copy of the CLM calendar for staff training.
- Email the link to the RCT Members for the Texas Workforce System's strategic plan for years 2016-2023.
- Budget Update – Lisa Godwin noted that there were no concerns about the budget. She will prepare a projection for the rest of FY16 to report on at the April meeting. Budget has been updated through December 31, 2015.
- Next meeting will be in April 25-26, 2016.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm, January 25, 2016.