

# State Rehabilitation Council

## Quarterly Meeting

September 13, 2023

<b>In Person:</b>	<b>Zoom:</b>
555 W Monroe Chicago, IL 10th floor, Champaign room	<a href="https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1603859572?pwd=bG00dUZ6UEdiNUJnTEdCdHhHRUNjZz09">https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1603859572?pwd=bG00dUZ6UEdiNUJnTEdCdHhHRUNjZz09</a>  Meeting ID: 160 385 9572 Passcode: 598669

### 9:00 Call to order and Introductions

#### **In-Person Attendance:**

SRC: Kelsey Thompson, Earl Jordan, Allyson Fox-Crump,

DRS: Kim Borowitz,

Others: Sharon Howerton

#### **Zoom Attendance:**

SRC: Rachel Weisberg, LaDonna Henson, Grace Tsao,

DRS: Robyn Lewis, Kim Pinckney, Marcus Deamer,

Others: Lee Reese, Lily Diego-Johnson, Chris Lenart, Megan Mutti, Alici Mc. Neal, Shelly Richardson,

All participants provided a brief introduction to themselves stating their name, where they are from, experience with disability, and what they wanted to be when they grew up when they were in Kindergarten.

### 9:25 Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- February 2023 and June 2023 meeting minutes will be approved;  
Quorum
- September agenda approval

### 9:30 SRC Refresher—

- What is our function/role?
- Why are we important?
- What do we want to achieve?
- How can our work improve employment for people with disabilities across the state?

### 10:30 Committee

- Roles/purpose of each committee

- Committee Assignments
- Draft work plan and products for FY24

### 11:30 DRS Staff and Liaison Reports

Kim Pinkney, Asst. Chief of Staff provided updates on current programming and initiatives.

Christy Pean provided an update on Deaf services and initiatives for VR customers. She mentioned a summer program for Pre Employment Transition Services at Southern Illinois University- Edwardsville. She also discussed advocating and including the deaf community in Apprenticeship programs across the state.

Robyn Lewis provided an update on DRS Policy and legislation and the SWTCIE IL grant. Robyn reported newly adopted rules (89 ILCS 567.20, 590.600, 590.660, 590.670). Rules in process of changing are 89 ILCS 590.400, 590.410, and 590.415 involving vehicle and van modifications and purchase of modified vehicles. 590.100, 590.490, 590.90 Hearing aids, Auxiliary services and hearing aid evals. 89 ILCS 530 Criteria for the evaluation of programs of services in community rehabilitation agencies has exited its first notice and received two public comments. In response to those public comments, DRS is creating an appendix to the rule that lists the standards for those interested in becoming a CRP with DRS. Once the appendix is completed, the rule will move to Second Notice.

SWTCIE IL: All sub-awardee contracts are in place (UIUC, The Workshop, Kreider Services, AID, CTF Illinois, Human support Services, Centerstone). DRS counselors, business engagement, and supervisors have been assigned to the project. Year 2 federal budget has been approved with RSA. Met with experts at Virginia Commonwealth University and UIUC to develop ACRE certified training for 12 employment specialists (two per facility).

Kim Borowicz provided an update on Programs and Services for the Blind. 7 students graduated from ICRE Wood September 11, 2023. ICRE-W graduates students every three months. Vocational rehabilitation services are provided throughout the state to those with vision and impairment. Six counselors positions were posted throughout the state. The third program is the Business Enterprise program for the blind. Individuals learn vending services/programs in primarily state buildings. The telework of state employees is negatively impacting the income of individuals working in this program. Two training centers and a 6 month training program is available for qualified individuals. The program is looking for ways to expand. The Bureau also has an older program for the Blind grant, which assists individuals over the age of 55 who need vision accommodations that are not work related. A new position was posted for a Grant Manager.

All other DRS Bureaus provided written reports which were shared with the Council ahead of the meeting. An In-Person report out was not required this quarter as the SRC meeting coincided with the Statewide VR Regional meetings.

Sharon Howerton provided an update on Blind Services Planning Council. The Council meets March, June, October, and December. Vacancies have been a regular problem in VR Blind Services for many years and has been a primary focus of the BSPC. Their hope is to see some movement in hiring for these vacancies throughout the state. A letter was submitted to DHS and DRS Director by the BSPC and Blind Vendors to address vacancies.

Rachel Weisberg represented the Client Assistance Program. CAP provided many trainings in the last quarter: VR services for college students, what to expect with DRS services; All trainings are recorded and posted on their website equip for equality; Outreach events: State Fair, transition fairs, and Disability Pride parade. CAP has completed many fact sheets that are posted on their website. CAP is connecting with VR counselors. This quarter 67 new Information and Referral cases opened; Opened 108 cases in the last year. Cases vary from closure questions, communication breakdowns. Ladonna wants to know about cases who have been closed. Rachel recommends types of cases and the level of intervention required could be made available. A successful closure is when a client's goals are being met.

Grace Tsao represented Statewide Independent Living Council. SILC has coordinated a statewide transportation meeting. They also hosted a meeting to determine ways for ILCs to be more open to people with varying gender identities. The annual statewide transition conference will be November 2-3, 2023 in Bloomington-Normal. Transportation complaint form link was shared with the group, and everyone is encouraged to report their transportation problems: <https://silcofillinois.org/>.

Robyn provided reminders regarding travel reimbursement and

- Compile questions for DRS staff
- Travel reminders
- Board Training.

#### **12:00- 1:15 LUNCH**

- Lunch on your own- Reconvened at

#### **1:15 Statewide Needs Assessment Discussion**

- Develop recommendations for VR

#### **2:00 State Plan**

The Executive committee will organize and distribute the work for the Council

#### **2:45 Public Comment**

Lily Goodfellow reported her experiences with College of Dupage.

Nancy Goodfellow provided parental insight to transition services in the state and recommended a unified plan to transition that will allow all students with disabilities similar opportunities.

Shelly Richardson asked for Transportation complaints to be sent to SILC. Lily is wondering a timeline for complaints (Shelly says within the last year and a half).

Lee Chota Business manager for Illinois Community of Blind Vendors. Read letter written to the Secretary Hoe, Director Patrick, and Governor Pritzker expressing concerns with vacancies and the failure to fill vacancies and provide adequate services to the Blind by qualified personnel. Last 5 years pervasive DRS vacancies in Blind Services- with little to no change. Recommend 1/3 of vacancies to be filled prior to the end of 2023.

Sharon Howerton also indicated the need for Orientation and Mobility technical training and the need for training instructors and qualified counselors. The time it takes to obtain the materials needed is unduly long and cumbersome. Sharon also suggested getting some interns to assist at ICRE-W.

Kelsey wants to know how the SRC members can assist with advocating for DRS vacancies.

Ed Birmingham also represented the Illinois community of blind Vendors wanted to add that the letter requested a meeting by the 15<sup>th</sup> to discuss the issues presented in their letter to the Governor, Secretary, and Director.

### **3:00 New Business**

- IL State University technical support to SRC board
- Any new business topics will be welcome

No new business items were introduced.

### **4:00 Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 3:54.