Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Council

August 12, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Council Members in Attendance: Carolyn Peters, Th.D., Chair, Matt Sauer, Ph. D., Andrea Kramer, David Baker, Alison McKay, Margie Hegg, Jane Gerhardt, Jeremy Morris, John Moore, Matthew Sauer, Ph.D., Vice-chair, Karis Spence, jw Smith, Ph.D, Kevin Miller, Lisa Hickman, and Pete Moore

OOD Staff: Employer and Innovation Services Deputy Director Kristen Ballinger, Chief Legal Counsel Matt Lampke, Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired Deputy Director Greg Dormer, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Deputy Director Susan Pugh, Chief Information Officer Michelle Burk, OOD Council Liaison Shirley Marchi, Chief Financial Officer Maria Seaman, Chief of Communications Kim Jump, Marlena Smith, OOD Interpreter

Guests: Jane Allinder, Interpreter, Emily Turner, Executive Director, Ohio Association of Goodwill Industries and Kelly Manns, Assistant Director, Evaluation and Training Services, Ohio Valley Goodwill Industries

Welcome and Introductions

OOD Council Chair Dr. Carolyn Peters welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Council member jw Smith moved to approve the May 6, 2020 minutes, seconded by Council member Jane Gerhardt. Motion carried.

Written Public Comment

There were no written public comments.

VR Policy Subcommittee Update

VR Policy Subcommittee co-chairs Alison McKay and Lisa Hickman reported the OOD Council’s VR Policy subcommittee met on July 8, 2020 via Microsoft Teams. The VR Policy subcommittee consists of the following OOD Council members: Dave Baker, Lisa Hickman, Andrea Kramer, Alison McKay, and Dr. Matt Sauer. Dr. Carolyn Peters attended the meeting as ex-officio (non-voting) member. The VR Policy subcommittee members elected Alison McKay and Lisa Hickman as co-chairs of the VR Policy Subcommittee.

Ms. McKay stated OOD’s Chief Legal Counsel Matt Lampke provided information about the duties of the OOD Council as noted in Ohio state law and federal regulations.

Ms. McKay stated BVR Deputy Director Susan Pugh provided information about OOD 17 VR policies. VR policies include federal requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), state requirements under the Ohio Revised OOD Council Meeting Minutes Page 2 August 12, 2020

Code or Ohio Administrative Code, OOD Director expectations, and fiscal responsibilities that rise to the level of agency policy. In addition, Ms. Pugh stated OOD has VR procedures that instruct staff on how to implement the policies in completing day-to-day operations.

Ms. McKay stated OOD VR policies are updated on a regular basis and reviewed quarterly. Policy is still reviewed even if there are no changes. However, when necessary to meet the needs of participants, VR policies may be updated in-between review date cycles to implement programmatic changes.

Also, Ms. McKay reported OOD is required to get public comment. The 10-day public comment is required for the Ohio Administrative Rules. OOD also offers public comment through the Participant Focus Groups. Additionally, the VR Policy subcommittee can be another avenue to get feedback.

Finally, Ms. McKay reported OOD does not receive a lot of responses. OOD follows the Ohio Administrative Code provisions. OOD always gives responses back for rules and for policy. The VR Deputy Director sees all public feedback and ensures it is always considered. OOD staff will keep the Council updated and then look to the future to see what is coming and get the Council’s feedback before it goes out to the public for comment.

Ms. Hickman reported the subcommittee members reviewed the following policies: Rehabilitation Technology, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), and Transportation to participate in services,

Ms. McKay and Hickman stated the VR Policy subcommittee recommends the subcommittee meet twice per year with a report out to the full Council.

VR Policy subcommittee members approved the July 8, 2020 meeting minutes.

OOD Update

OOD Director Kevin Miller reported Governor Mike DeWine has press conferences weekly about COVID-19. The Governor shared a video on his social media and linked the video to OOD’s on-demand version of Disability Etiquette Training in conjunction with the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26. In addition, the Governor recognized OOD’s 50th birthday at his June 9 briefing. His office shared a video about OOD. Both videos can be found on OOD’s YouTube channel.

Director Miller further reported OOD staff are working remotely. In the past 21 weeks, OOD has placed a total of 1,586 Ohioans into jobs in customer service, food prep, stocking, and more. OOD has conducted virtual hiring events. OOD has put flexibilities OOD Council Meeting Minutes Page 3 August 12, 2020

in place this summer to provide in-person work experiences or virtual summer youth services. More than 2,000 students across the state are participating this summer. Over the last couple of weeks, OOD has held virtual, regional Youth Leadership Forums.

In addition, Director Miller stated OOD supported the Ohio Department of Administrative Services with the Disability Inclusion Conference for state employees.

Also, Director Miller reported OOD’s number one priority with its budget is to not go back on an Order of Selection. Director Miller and his executive team are figuring out where to trim back. OOD is shrinking its footprint with administrative costs. The OOD team is being strategic to work within the confines of a future, reduced budget.

Lastly, Director Miler reported about diversity and inclusion. He stated conversations are taking place with OOD staff. Implicit bias training is mandatory for all state employees. Embracing diversity competency is to be a part of staff evaluations. OOD is recruiting a Diversity and Inclusion Manager and views this as a great opportunity, but this is just one piece of the puzzle.

Council members requested that OOD keep them updated on the diversity and inclusion activities.

Employer and Innovation Services Update

EIS Deputy Director Kristen Ballenger reported OOD is hosting virtual hiring events in several areas throughout Ohio to facilitate interviews for Employer Partners and OOD candidates. Interviews are held in 20-minute increments through individual Microsoft Teams meetings. At least five employers are participating in each area. Events were held on July 29 for the Athens area and August 5 for the Dayton area. Hiring events are scheduled for Akron on August 12, Youngstown on August 19, and Lima on August 26.

Ms. Ballinger reported EIS hosted a web-based training for employers, titled “Supporting Employees with Disabilities During COVID-19” on June 18. A total of 154 people attended the training. In recognition of the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, OOD hosted “Disability Etiquette” training on July 16. A total of 557 people attended the training. Ms. Ballinger stated the next training, titled “Inclusive Hiring: Applicants with Disabilities,” will take place on August 20 at 10:00 a.m. This training will focus on best practices to foster a hiring process that is accessible and inclusive for candidates with disabilities. It will also include discussion on the recruitment phase, pre-employment interviewing and testing, and the onboarding process, including common reasonable accommodations. There are currently 155 people scheduled to attend the training.

OOD Council Meeting Minutes Page 4 August 12, 2020

Lastly, Ms. Ballinger reported to help inform recommendations to be included in the 2021 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, OOD will be conducting a survey of potential VR participants and recent VR participants whose cases were closed without an employment outcome. OOD Council members are invited to review the outline to provide feedback and input on the process.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Update

BVR Deputy Director Susan Pugh reported on the Federal Fiscal Year 2020 performance for the Vocational Rehabilitation program. Due to COVID-19, performance is down slightly as compared to last year at the same time. Average wage and hours worked both have increased.

Ms. Pugh reported as an alternative to VR’s in-person Participant Focus Groups, VR staff are checking in by phone to program participants to get feedback about their experience with remote service delivery. VR is convening a group of field staff to gather their perspectives and will be surveying our provider community to get their input as well. This will give us comprehensive feedback that can guide our future direction.

Ms. Pugh reported OOD implemented flexibilities in the delivery of services to students with disabilities this summer. Summer Youth Foundations is designed to be a flexible model, allowing for in-person work experience, where appropriate, and supplementing with remote delivery of additional VR services such as self-advocacy training and career exploration where needed.

In addition, Ms. Pugh reported this year, OOD partnered with the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council and local Centers for Independent Living to regionalize Ohio’s Youth Leadership Forum. Five sites are meeting virtually this summer to help approximately 70 students with disabilities develop their leadership and advocacy skills (Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Canton and Toledo). A variety of state and local leaders have been able to join (e.g. Director Miller, Secretary of State Frank LaRose, city council members, disability advocates, etc.). Feedback from all involved has been very positive.

Also, Ms. Pugh reported OOD's Division of Legal Services has continued to process formal appeals through a combination of remote and in person hearings where needed.  The use of remote hearings reduces travel for the appellant and for VR staff and we are incorporating the availability of remote hearings into our policies and procedures so that these efficiencies can continue even after the global pandemic subsides

Ms. Pugh reported Administrative Rules 3304-62-2 and 3304-1-08 have been filed with Joint Committee on Agency Rule (JCARR) are open to feedback for council members.

OOD Council Meeting Minutes Page 5 August 12, 2020

Ms. Pugh state the Combined State Plan was officially approved. There were a series of tweaks with the Rehabilitation Service Administration. The Plan began on July 1, 2020. The federal government will post Plans on-line in the future.

Finally, Ms. Pugh stated the topic for the upcoming Participant Focus Groups is Informed Choice and asked Council members for their suggestions. Council member Smith stated he wants to revisit the current policy and asked Ms. Pugh to send the OOD current policy to see where we are now and how to improve it. Ms. Pugh stated these policies are on the OOD website, and she will send the link.

Council member McKay stated transition aged youth - a lot of youth don’t know what questions to ask. For example, what does informed choice mean, what type of information should they be thinking about, what services does OOD provide, etc. Ms. McKay stated she will look at the policy and provide further comments. She further stated if services are denied they don’t know the reason. Ms. Pugh responded, the Consumer Advisory Council at one point developed a guide for participants and gave a lot of suggestions on how to do that.

Council member Moore stated about deaf individuals – OOD should provide ASL videos explaining informed choice because to have captions I can read that, but for members of the deaf or hard of hearing, they can’t understand that and having information in their native language would be helpful. Ms. Pugh responded, yes, we could identify tools for people to use. A video would be amazing to help them understand how to use those tools.

BSVI Deputy Director Greg Dormer reported during reporting period June 30, 2019 through June 30, 2020, eligibility decisions increased by 0%, plans written increased by 3%, the combined eligible and served decreased by 1%, rehabilitations increased by 0.8%, the average wage increased by 11%, and the average hours increased by 1.7%.

Mr. Dormer reported BSVI and the Provider Management and Contracts Unit have worked together with Helen Keller National Center to review and approve their Comprehensive Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the M-Power programs for support by OOD. This brings a new level of service options to Ohio’s deafblind population.

Mr. Dormer stated the comprehensive vocational rehabilitation program is for adult consumers 18 years of age and older who have a combined vision and hearing loss and want to gain independence and employability skills. The program provides individualized training that is tailored to meet the unique cultural and communication

needs of each student. HKNC’s person-centered training approach includes five major areas: orientation and mobility, technology, independent living, communication, and vocational exploration and training.

The OOD Council Meeting Minutes Page 6 August 12, 2020

Mr. Dormer stated the M-power program is a two-week summer program for young adults, ages 16 to 23. This training is conducted by a team of experts – including deaf-blind facilitators and mentors. The program is designed to assist young adults who are deaf-blind to explore their vocational and educational interests and encourages them to take a more active role in planning their future. This program has integrated activities that promote self-determination and self- advocacy skills.

In addition, Mr. Dormer further reported the Personal Care Assistance program has developed and implemented a policy and procedure package that went in to effect program has previously had no policy and procedures to govern the program, relying on the Ohio Administrative Code to provide program guidance.

Mr. Dormer reported BSVI staff (Katie Frederick and Sarah Kelly) presented at the State of Ohio Office of Disability Inclusion ADA symposium on August 6 on accessibility in the workplace for employers related to blindness and low vision. Katie Scheetz and Jessica Folsom presented to the OOD transition community of practice on sensory impairments to better prepare staff working with transition students to work with students with sensory impairments. Mr. Dormer will be participating in an interview with VoiceCorps on August 20.

Finally, Mr. Dormer reported the ILOB program re-opened the option for in-person services, with an emphasis on remote/virtual services remaining as the preferred option whenever possible. Feedback has been positive, and providers are working in partnership with the VRC’s and the consumers to ensure the safety of our consumers and our providers.

Council member Smith thanked BSVI Director Dormer and OOD for not forgetting about the deafblind population.

Chairs Comments

Dr. Peters reminded everyone that sign language interpreters were being provided at today’s OOD Council meeting and she thanked everyone for their patience.

Dr. Peters stated OOD Council member David Baker has resigned. Mr. Baker took a position with the Reynoldsburg City Schools Board of Education.

Dr. Peters stated OOD has not heard from the Governor’s Office about OOD Council members who applied to renew their membership on the Council.

Lastly, Dr. Peters reminded the public to submit written comments to Ms. Marchi.

The OOD Council Meeting Minutes Page 7 August 12, 2020

Council Members Discussion/Comments

Council member Smith asked if the subcommittees are meeting due to COVID-19. He also asked about extending the full Council meetings by one hour. Chair Peters responded that last year the Council was exceeding the time. The Council agreed to extend the meeting by one hour from 10:00 - 12:00 to 10:00 – 1:00. She stated the Council receives meeting materials before the meeting so members should be able to jot down questions, etc. before the meeting.

Council member McKay stated the VR Policy subcommittee needs to set a date for their next meeting. The Policy subcommittee to meet in January or April. VR Policy subcommittee co-chairs are to make the determination on a meeting date.

Dr. Peters stated the Annual Report subcommittee meets prior to the November Council meeting to discuss the items for the Annual Report letter. The Annual Report subcommittee members to report out at the full Council meeting with a draft Annual Report.

Ms. Peters further stated Council member Morris is chair of the WIOA Subcommittee and he will need to follow-up with subcommittee members to identify a date and work with Deputy Director Pugh and Ms. Marchi.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Adjourn

Council member Gerhardt moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council member Moore. Motion carried.