

**Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services
State Rehabilitation Full Council**

**Meeting Minutes June 8, 2010
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

Department of Labor and Training ~ 1151 Pontiac Avenue ~ Cranston, RI 02920

Present from Council: Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Rocco Bruno, Stephen Brunero, Wheeler Clemmons, Kelley Conti, Cynthia M. Cote, Domenic DiOrio, Paul Harden, Margaret Hoye, Anne LeClerc, Sandy Lupovitz, Jeffrey Machado, Lucille Massimino, Vincent Rossi, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Juan Troncoso, Mary E. Wambach

Present from the VR Agency: Laurie DiOrio, Monica Dzialo, Ronald Racine, Roberta Greene-Whittemore

1. Call to Order - Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M. Introductions of membership and guests followed. Quorum was met.

2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda – There were none.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion

J. Machado made a motion seconded by D. DiOrio and unanimously approved, to accept the minutes from the May 11, 2010 meeting with the removal of Jane Slade and Catherine Sansonetti from attendees.

4. Chair's Report - Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett

- State Plan - Our State Plan Committee, representing the Council, has presented comments on the Annual Update of the State Plan to the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS). Our comments are attached to the minutes.
- Training Program for New Council Members - Over the summer we are looking to reassess and set a remodeled training program in place for the fall. We will do this at an Executive Committee level.
- Fiscal Climate - We will continue to identify strategies as we move forward with guidance from ORS. And if there is anything we can do from our role, we will move as quickly as we can.

5. Guest Speaker Program - Monica Dzialo, Workforce Development Supervisor for ORS

People with disabilities are an untapped source of talented, reliable and hard-working employees. Hundreds of Rhode Island businesses have enriched their workforces by hiring people with disabilities. We work closely with private-sector businesses, business groups like the Business Advisory Council and industry organizations like the Business Leadership Network (BLN) to understand and address their current and future workforce needs.

Some of the Recruitment and Retention benefits for employers are pre-screened candidates, workforce diversity, financial incentives, tax credits, on-the-job training, consultation as needed, recruitment at a reduced expense, site accessibility, ADA information and tax credits. Additionally the services provide assessment of current employees who are experiencing difficulty on the job, job analysis to maximize job performance and identify essential job duties and responsibilities, training for management and supervisory personnel, follow-up to ensure employer satisfaction. Our Employment Specialists are available to provide the employers with an all-inclusive package of job related services that will result in having access to a pool of pre-screened qualified job-ready applicants.

We have several new initiatives going on, one is our in-house Job Developers who have been with us for four (4) months and have a eighteen (18%) percent success rate with forty (40) people working in good paying jobs at an averaging earning of thirteen (13) dollars per hour plus benefits. In today's job market the average income is around ten (10) or eleven (11) dollars per hour.

We work with each job seeker to identify their strengths that qualify them for a particular job. Some of our services are job placement, job readiness training, support, including interviewing workshops and technical assistance. Our consulting services offer assistance in identifying essential job duties and responsibilities, workplace accommodation, assistive technology, information about childcare and transportation resources, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) information.

Some of our programs our, Employee Assistance Program, Opportunities plus Training Program, Clean Sweep Custodial Training Program, Temp to Hire Program. There are cost benefits to our programs; there is no out-of-pocket expense to an employer or to the consumer for our services.

Questions - How are clients connected to you for work?

Primarily they need to be ready for work, and then we put out job announcements to the agencies. Alternatively, our Job Developers will work with them once their Counselor makes a referral if they are not quite ready. Many jobs are out there in Rhode Island, but many are out of state. For instance, the federal government is hiring all over the country, so people need to be willing to relocate.

Question - Can you share a little more about your relationship with employers and the BLN that you facilitate for employers in the State, as well as the role of ORS with employers from that perspective?

They have been good, if I need help with a job applicant, I can call them and see what the employer's thoughts are regarding the individual. When we call an employer it is to find out what that employer needs from that person for appropriateness, as well as what is positive about the employer. We used to ask employers to come and give applicants a ten-minute mock interview but we have changed this to spend more time teaching interview learning and how to fill out job applications, especially the behavioral part of job applications.

Question – The Council does not have a clear understanding of BLN. Is the BLN just used as a resource?

No, I sit on it and when we have in-house services coming up, I send them out to businesses to invite them. The BLN is educational; they bring workshops to the business community to educate them regarding employing individuals with disabilities. Or to prevent working situations that may cause employees to be injured or disabled. An example of this is the ergonomics seminar that Blue Cross is doing this week.

Question - How is the Business Advisory Council different from the BLN?

They are more guidance to show me the trends and changes in the community and changing philosophies of the hiring workforce. How things are changing in the hiring environment.

Question - Can you think of a way this Council can contact EDC?

P. Harden - We are happy to make this committee aware of any job openings that we are aware of. We have a whole section on our website for job incentives. The challenge for us is keeping our website current. We have tried to consolidate job-posting boards run by different entities so we have made an effort to drive everyone to DLT's job-posting site.

Action – Put a link up to ORS on the EDC webpage. (Done.)

D. DiOrio - The Council is looking at strategies to help in a more specific way. Is there anything you might want to recommend that we can promote? Is there anything that might be of service to you?

M. Dzialo - Let me think on this and get back to you.

L. Massimino - At an Executive Leadership Committee meeting we talked about getting Latino Broadcasters to help us with outreach, and we were told to work with you. Do we want to seek employers, employees, or both?

M. Dzialo - ORS has several people working for us who are fluent in Spanish but currently we are not broadcasting to the Latino community via radio.

D. DiOrio - We would like to make a public service announcement.

S. Brunero –This is a great idea to get the word out about our services. Either the SRC or ORS could do this.

Action – J. Troncoso and M. Dzialo will connect on this. (A meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, July 14, 2010 at 11:00 AM The meeting will be with ORS staff persons, and members of the Nominations and Leadership committee to discuss public relations to the Latino community.)

Dr. K. McCarthy-Barnett – We really appreciate Monica taking the time to come today. The Council was having some difficulty understanding the role of ORS with the business community. It was great to know what you are doing with clients and employers.

S. Brunero - If you have any questions on this we do have a lot of information on the site, including some of the programs we offer. You can always contact Monica Dzialo anytime and she will help you.

6. Office of Rehabilitation Services Director's Report - Stephen Brunero

- Annual Update for State Plan - The Public Hearing on the State Plan was held and Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett and Catherine Sansonetti gave testimony. The Hearing was very helpful and well attended and the input was lively with participation from the diverse entities.
- State Budget - Rhode Island has a six hundred (600) million dollar deficit going into 2011. Our Capital Projects Budget for the vendor stands has been cut in half to seventy five (75) thousand dollars. We are working on establishing new vending stands at the new registry and the new computer center on Jefferson Boulevard. The reality is, what we actually do because of the cuts is far short of what we had planned to do.
- Order of Selection - ORS has lost positions due to retirements, budget constraints, and workforce reductions. Therefore, in order to continue to provide high quality employment outcomes as of June 1, 2010, individuals with the most significant disabilities will be given priority and others will be on a waiting list. We are hopeful that this will be temporary and our team is working hard to educate our staff, and the vendor community to lesson the impact.
- Relocation Plan for ORS - We do not know if this will happen, as time goes on it is less likely it will. Our lease is up in less than a year and we are proactively looking to do an RFP to stay in Providence. We want to stay here for a number of reasons, primarily accessibility; we are centrally located near Kennedy Plaza. Secondarily, a lot of our structure in the building is set up for high speed CAT 5 wiring, and Video Relay Service (VRS) for our deaf staff to communicate as well as other things we have done to make this building accessible. I put together a document sighting all the reasons we should not be split up and moved out. We feel a move to Cranston would probably mean the end of ORS, as we know it.

In terms of funding, it is going to be a tough road ahead. We had been one (1) of only three (3) states in the past six (6) years to meet all our Standards and Performance Indicators but now we are in a position that we do not have the financial or personnel capacity to serve the number of people coming to us for assistance.

- Personnel - We still have openings but most positions are filled.
- Rehabilitation Services Administration - The RSA may come to visit us in June of next year.
- ORS Liaisons - We may select new Liaisons to sit on the SRC sub-committees. We will do this in consultation with the Executive Committee.

7. Committee Reports

Transportation - A. LeClerc

1. On June 25, 2010, we will have a transportation consortium meeting to discuss developing an advocacy piece for agencies to have a common platform for transportation choices.
2. The human service transportation study that RIPTA and DHS are doing should be done around July, which means the hard data. The rest of it, the recommendations and steps, will be done by the end of the summer. This committee can add something to that.
3. We heard back from Salve Regina University and they have someone who is interesting in working with us, as a senior project or internship, to work on our research compilations.
4. Money has been awarded to RIPTA to get accessible cabs for the State.

Follow-up - Update the Chair and Nancy Baker on the consortium meeting.

Employment - J. Slade

1. Employment membership; one of our issues is that we have thirteen (13) on our committee but only a few are showing up to the meetings.

Action - Contact Nancy Baker and let her know if you want to be on this committee.

2. Develop tasks to support the goals of the State Plan. We will look at a few of the goals and then develop tasks to support the Plan at our committee level.

Follow-up with the Chair and Nancy Baker

Nominating and Leadership Development - D. DiOrio

1. This year there is one (1) person concluding their second term, and eight (8) eligible for a second term. We want to keep a priority goal to recruit new members for next year. I want to encourage you to make nomination for membership.

We are flexible on the recruitment document; you can send them in at any time. The process is to submit the person you have contacted and then we will follow through with our committee. Send all recommendations to Nancy Baker.

2. In June, we will develop a promotional tool to encourage membership from the Latino community.

3. Lastly, we have come to an agreement that the Chair will work with the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee on retention, for those being absent. I feel we should do something about that. They are holding us up in numbers for our quorum.

Follow-up - The Chair will meet with Reps. from Nominating Committee this summer to look at retention.

State Plan, Policy & Quality Assurance - C. Sansonetti

1. We have completed our work for the year and have commented on the annual update of the State Plan.

2. We will meet as a group at least once during the summer.

8. Public Comments - There were none.

9. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy L. Baker

Nancy L. Baker, Staff
State Rehabilitation Council