

Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council

Policy and Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 17th, 2017

9:30 – 11:30 am

Present: Renee Sansom, Jean Jones, Wade Walters, William Ginn, Katie Woodward, Bill Dunham and Carolina Colclasure

P&L Report / Discussion

- There has been no progress with the Interface with the State Treasurer's Office from the visit on November, 2016 regarding Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE Act). All the information has been given but we have not received a response from them. They are waiting on budget decisions to determine if there will be any money available to proactively move forward with this new legislation for individuals with developmental delays.
- Disability Awareness Day comments and suggestions:
 - The council members think that it will be helpful to have a script or some kind of guide for the people that have to meet with the Legislators because sometimes is hard even for the people that have done it in the past to get their point across.
 - Also it would be good to have an informational session before Disability Awareness Day to give them more information on what the Agency's message should be.
 - Have a few clients (success stories) come and share their stories with the Legislators and help our representatives get the point across. Its better when they have a client tell their story because it gives the Legislators an idea of all the services DRS is providing the clients and the importance of them.
 - Get a summary or feedback from the Legislator leaders on how the visits went, what was the feel of the members they spoke to, or if they get any questions they think we need to follow up on.
 - Send thank you notes to the Legislator's offices and members that welcomed our clients and Legislator leaders.
 - Provide a little Bio or personal information about the Legislator you are going to visit with so that the clients and Legislator Leaders have additional information and maybe they can relate to them easier.
- Update on Success Stories: FY 16 stories are all uploaded to the website now. The website has an interactive map which shows the stories by county. We have 11 stories for FY 17 completed by March 11th and there are many more that we can work on, we just need to get in touch with the clients. This has proven to be a challenge because most of them don't get back to us, but we will keep working on it.
- Jean Jones went over the Legislative Update sent on 4/11/17. Midway through the session, the focus is:
 - HB 2230: This bill would exempt county jail commissaries from the state law which gives licensed blind managers priority to operate vending facilities in state and county facilities. The bill passed the House 53-37. It passed the Senate General Government Committee 5-4, and next goes before the full Senate. The indication is that this bill is still considered "a work in progress."
 - HB-1861: This bill requires DRS to contract out its independent living services for older blind individuals. The bill requires DRS to direct Older Blind federal grant funds along

with state match funds to private, nonprofit agencies accredited by the National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision (NAC). This bill was approved by the House Appropriations Committee on a 19-6 vote, but was not taken up by the full House. It is inactive for the rest of this year, but can be revived next year, if desired.

- SB-733: This bill allows DRS to contract out all or a portion of its independent living services for older blind individuals. Although the bill has much of the same language contained in HB-1861, it makes the contracting out of Older Blind services optional rather than mandatory. SB-733 passed the Senate and is now in the House Appropriations Committee.
- SB-80: The bill allows DRS to transfer funds as necessary between its disbursing funds for efficient operations. The bill places certain budgetary provisions in law so they no longer have to be re-enacted each year in a budget limits bill. SB-80 has cleared the Senate and will be heard in the House Appropriations Committee on April 10.
- OSB and OSD HB-1188: The bill permits teachers hired at OSB or OSD to bring with them up to 60 days of unused sick leave accrued in their previous teaching jobs. (Note: This is seen as an incentive for recruiting teachers for these two rural and specialized schools.) The bill has passed both House and Senate and is ready to go to the Governor.
- Revenue: there is no resolution on revenue yet. There are several tax credits they are looking at but nothing has been finalized yet. On the House side they have talked about a 14% cut in State Agencies and programs but this has not been decided yet.
- H.R. 620: 620 is a bill to amend the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to promote compliance through education, to clarify the requirements for demand letters, to provide for a notice and cure period before the commencement of a private civil action, and for other purposes.
- Strategic Plan Update:
 - Objective 1.1: Ongoing
 - Objective 1.2: Ongoing
 - Objective 1.3: Ongoing
 - Objective 1.4: Met
 - Activity 1: Ongoing
 - Activity 2: Met.
 - Activity 3: Met.
 - Activity 4: Met.
 - Activity 5: Met.
 - Activity 6: Met
 - Activity 7: Met
 - Activity 8: Met.
 - Activity 9: Pending
- From now on the Committee meetings dates will be set by Renee Sansom and she will email them to the participants with the time and place. For 2018 in November when the calendar is created all the dates will be included and the members will have them in advance.
- Renee asked the Committee their thoughts on the 2018 Candidate Forum. Most of the Committee agreed that is very informative but the cost of it (in labor and money) could be a factor to cancel it next year. This subject will be included in the next meeting to be discussed and decided on.
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