

Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council (ORC) Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

The Executive Committee Meeting took place on Thursday, January 21, 2020, at 9 am, via Zoom.

Attendees: Lori Chesnut, Tim Yeahquo, Shelley Gladden, Melinda Fruendt, Tracy Brigham, Mark Kinnison, Linda Jaco, and Carolina Colclasure.

Discussion Items

Council Vacancies for FFY2021

The ORC Program Manager (PM) reached out to the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and informed them that Vikki Walls had not attended any ORC Quarterly Meetings or committee meetings during 2020. The SILC Executive Director and the new Chair, Dr. Lewis, are aware of the situation and will inform the ORC PM when a replacement is selected.

The ORC PM will reach out to Chris Bruehl at the Governor's office to inform him about the situation.

Oklahoma Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (OKTVR) Update

Several Oklahoma Tribes are working on their Section 121 grants this year. All grants were extended for one more year in 2020, so there will be more Tribes competing in 2021 with less funding available.

OKTVR held its Conference in September 2020. It was a virtual event; there were over 50 participants, including Tribal Members and state representatives.

The OKTVR has not met since; a Zoom Meeting will be announced soon.

DRS Executive Team Update

Melinda Fruendt – Executive Director

Director Fruendt complimented the ORC Annual Report layout and the timely delivery of the report to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the Governor's office.

People with Disabilities Awareness Day (PWDAD) will take place on March 9th. Jody Harlan, with the DRS Communications Team, is in charge of all the preparations and will coordinate the event.

There will be no in-person activities at the Capitol due to COVID; therefore, the PWDAD will be a virtual social media event.

Although there won't be any in-person activities, it is important to celebrate this day because of its meaning and what it represents for those with disabilities statewide. DRS will have an award ceremony during the March Commission Meeting on March 8. The award recipients will join via Zoom certificates will be mailed.

The DRS Communication Team will reach out to ORC to inform the Policy and Legislative (P&L) Committee on how they can best contribute to PWDAD.

Director Fruendt mentioned that she talked to Jody about asking ORC to put together a training to help clients with online etiquette, including the Do's and Don'ts of Social Media used to communicate with Legislators and also what to watch out for when looking for a job.

DRS had a virtual budget meeting on 1/19/21. The Legislators only had one question for DRS; DRS will update the Council on this matter later on.

Secretary Budd created a new Committee that includes all the agency directors and cabinet secretaries under him to work jointly in workforce development. The Committee's name is One Workforce Oklahoma; its focus will be workforce development from early childhood through adulthood. The Committee broke up into seven subcommittees; Director Fruendt is the Chair of the Special Populations Committee. More information will be shared with the Council once the committees start to work.

Tracy Brigham – Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI)

The renovation of the reception area in the Library for the Blind has been completed; the work continues to free up space in the back of the Library to possibly move one of the offices currently located in Shepherd Mall to the Library.

SBVI continues to work with clients virtually and continues to support them in every way possible.

Mark Kinnison – Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

VR is also looking to move two offices; one is the Tulsa location with fifty employees that must be moved by June 30 because the building where they're located is being bought for renovation to become a VA Hospital. The other

location is Shepherd Mall that that houses several DRS units. These employees will move in late March or April to the Capital Freights Building that is owned by the state.

The Career Planning Center is also getting new carpet; once this work is completed the South Oklahoma City office will move there.

DRS released 310 clients of the waiting list this month; it is expected that this number will continue to increase because VR is currently behind compared with last year.

VR continues to meet monthly with the state's Developmental Disability partner agency. They have expressed concern about clients that are on the waitlist. DRS gave them an update yesterday regarding plans underway for making progress.

Strategic Plan Review

The Committee reviewed the strategic plan, and objective 3.1 and activity 3.8 have been met. Objective 3.2 and activities 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 are ongoing and on target to be completed by September 30.

Time and location for the next meeting/discussion

ORC Quarterly Meeting – Thursday, February 18 – 9:30 am via Zoom

Executive Committee Meeting – Thursday, March 18 – 9:00 am via Zoom