

Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council Policy and Legislative (P&L) Committee Meeting Minutes

The Committee met on Thursday, June 17, 2021, at 10:45 am, via Zoom.

Participants: Tim Yeahquo, Kevin Nelson, William Ginn, Tonya Garman, Linda Jaco, and Carolina Colclasure.

Discussion Items

Legislative Report – Kevin Nelson

The Governor and the Legislature came to an agreement and announced the upcoming budget. In the general sense, it was an increase from last year's budget, which was depressed due to COVID. There was an overall increase of 7.26%. It was focused on a couple of areas. First and foremost, education, which makes up more than half of the budget at a 5.72% increase.

Second, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority for Medicaid expansion got another \$195,000 or almost a 20% increase in their budget to that purpose.

The remaining increases went greatly to tags relief, something which DRS certainly supported, which was the restoration of the refundability of the earned income tax credit.

On the human services side, the budget was fairly conservative. DRS's budget was flat. The Office of Disability Concerns got an 8.58% increase.

The main focus legislatively this year was redistricting. The Senate and the House passed their respective redistricting bills, but in an unusual circumstance, they were not able to get all of the information that they needed from the federal authorities regarding districts. They will likely come back in September or October of this year to deal with the Federal Census information that is not yet available to determine the congressional side.

As far as the watchlist bills go, the main one that most state employees were focused on was House Bill 1146. It will change the nature of the merit system, and it will be implemented in 2022.

Lastly, a bill passed this legislative session that will create a Joint Rules Committee made up of both the House and Senate members that will engage the Senate and the way houses engage now in reviewing the rules.

Coordination with other Councils

The ORC Program Manager (PM) attended the Oklahoma Behavioral Health Advisory Council on June 9. The meeting was informative, however, this Council

doesn't have Committees or objectives and activities they work on during the year.

Tonya Garman volunteered to attend the following meeting and will report back to the P&L Committee if there is important information. The ORC PM will attend when Tonya is not able to and will report back.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

William Ginn will continue to attend the SILC meetings and report on behalf of the Council, and then report back to the P&L Committee as well.

The SILC meeting took place on April 30th ; the next one will be in July.

Workforce Update

Workforce is getting ready to have their conference this fall. It will take place on November 3-5.

They will also launch the catalog of coursework available to all Workforce employees so they can have various course offerings to work toward the certification process they have to achieve. Once achieved, they have to renew it every other year.

DRS 2022 Policy Changes

Tonya Garman reported to the Committee that the DRS Policy Committee has been meeting monthly; they are creating a list of the policies that will be worked on for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022.

Once the DRS Policy Committee agrees to the changes, Tonya will schedule a meeting for ORC, SILC, and other DRS partners to review the new policies. The partners are welcome to provide feedback then, and ORC will use the information provided during the meeting to create the annual support letter.

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Conference

Lori Chesnut, Jeff Newton, Shelley Gladden, Tim Yeahquo, Linda Jaco and Carolina Colclasure attended the CSAVR Spring Conference that took place on April 13 - 15 via Zoom.

Advocacy Training

The training was successfully recorded on May 17. It will be posted on ORC's website, and a follow-up session will be scheduled in October during the Oklahoma Transition Institute (OTI). The ORC PM will follow up with Sanho-Steele-Louchart and will keep the Committee updated.

Time and location for the next meeting

ORC Quarterly Meeting – Thursday, August 19 – 9:30 am at DRS State Office and via Zoom.

Strategic Planning Meeting – Thursday, September 9 – 9:30 am via Zoom.