

**CAC MINUTES**  
**Friday, January 10, 2020**  
**10:00 a.m. OVR DuBois District Office**

Welcome & Introductions: Bob Mecca, LIFT opened the meeting. Also in attendance were Mark Morelli, PA Link; Ryan Gill, CIU #10; Diana Kreydt, PSU DuBois; Chris Palmer, OVR; Tammy Burke, OVR; and Missy Franklin, OVR. Call in participants included Andrew Pennington, CAP; Jess Dineen, OVR; and Kelly King, PEAL Center.

Review of Minutes: No questions or changes.

**CAC Review**

Chris Palmer gave a review of the Citizen's Advisory Committee. At the last meeting, we talked about doing an update and encouraging participation. Some of the topics the CAC has discussed since the last review in 2016 included: accessibility both in Career Links and the DuBois downtown sidewalk project; a potential CAC newsletter discussion which resulted in exchanging of information without a newsletter; volunteering; transportation (meeting was held at the Area Transportation Authority); Advocacy; OVR changes in staff to include Early Reach Coordinators and Business Services Representatives as well as new and changed services such as Pre Employment Transition Services, Supported Employment and Order of Selection changes.

Chris noted that the Assistive Technology event at Penn State DuBois and the public meetings have had CAC member participation. CAC feedback has been very valuable and appreciated. Bob Mecca of LIFT is the DuBois District Office's CAC chair and leads the meetings. OVR has always provided the clerical support for the meetings.

There is a CAC handbook (last revised in 2013) which covers the purpose and makeup of the CAC as well as suggested activities. OVR's mission is to "assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities secure and maintain employment and independence." The primary purpose of the CAC is to provide relevant, region-specific input to the district office so that opportunities to achieve its mission are maximized – input such as what individuals and employers locally need, assessing the quality of customer service, input on proposed policy changes and new programs, and help developing positive relationships between OVR and stakeholders.

According to the handbook, the makeup of the CAC should be representative of all stakeholders and include individuals such as: people with disabilities (current or former customers), family members of people with disabilities, local employers or organizations representing local employers, local disability advocacy organizations, higher education, secondary education (including IUs), post-secondary training and technical schools, and OVR service providers. Our CAC does cover many of these categories; however, Chris Palmer feels that building our team with more diversity needs worked on and asked for any suggestions. ARC and UCP were both suggestions mentioned by the CAC. We can plan for presentations for local employers and conduct public awareness activities to share information as well.

Information from CAC meetings is reported to Central Office and goes to PA Rehab Council. We do maintain the minutes. What the members want on the agenda is important. CAC can invite legislators; however, OVR does have specific protocol with that. If the CAC is going to do events, OVR has certain protocol as far as releases for photos, etc.

Mark Morelli suggested maybe looking at Workforce Solutions (our local Workforce Development board) as a service provider. Jess Dineen indicated that Futures may be a good provider to reach out to – as a PETS/SE provider as well as networking with parents. Bob Mecca suggested maybe looking at foundation directors – people who provide funding opportunities – even if it is just for a discussion/presentation.

Bob indicated that it would be good to see more diverse topics on the agenda from the members. Anyone is welcome to add a topic for the agenda and shouldn't hesitate to submit them. Ryan Gill added that if it is a bigger presentation, you may want to get it on the agenda more formally, but also, anything can be done informally in the open forum as well. Chris reminded that the CAC is a way to voice concerns for the community.

Ryan Gill discussed that his primary work initiative with the IU10 is secondary transition. He works to support the transition efforts of schools in Center, Clinton and Clearfield counties. They support the local taskforce. There is a state taskforce that meets 5x/year out of Harrisburg to make sure all students with disabilities are getting education. The IU is tasked with supporting the local taskforce which should be chaired by a parent. Ryan has been working to get a local taskforce going that will be for all three of the counties IU10 serves. Maggie Bishop of Centre County is taking on the effort to be chairperson and is currently working on a Facebook page for the local taskforce. This may be an opportunity for this group to get more parents involved through this, and Ryan would like to see the groups aligned. Chris suggested Ryan invite Maggie to one of our meetings. Ryan added that anything that is parent education focused he has an email list to get that information out. After the state taskforce meeting, they continue to meet locally to discuss. The next meetings are scheduled for 3/18/20 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. with the first 2 hours being the state meeting. Locally the meeting will be held at the West Decatur Office. The 5/13/20 meeting will be held at the Center County Office. Taskforce information will be attached to the minutes. The local taskforce website can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/LTF10>.

Kelly King indicated that she could send out an email blast talking about ways transition age youth families can get involved. Chris Palmer indicated that this may be a good way to extend information about the taskforces and the CACs. If someone responds, then forward that information to Bob Mecca, chair. Kelly asked if there was information regarding all CACs across the state. Chris indicated that the OVR CAC schedules for the year get posted with PA Rehab Council. Chris will provide that information to Kelly. Chris mentioned that emails can be sent out such as “Do you know that IU10 has a taskforce? Do you know that OVR has a Citizen’s Advisory Council?” People in her email blast that may be interested in information should contact Kelly and then Kelly should bring that information to the CAC.

Kelly asked if there were other things that families can be involved in as we should be promoting family involvement. Mark Morelli stated that there is a Collaborative Board meeting coming up in DuBois on Friday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 at Community Care Behavioral Health. The board is made up of a diverse group of service agencies. Kelly asked Mark to send that information to her so she can look at other similar opportunities across the state.

Chris reminded all to keep in mind that the CAC committee is member run. If we decide to do a public presentation, it would be done as such and people invited. However, the CAC is not just an open public meeting every quarter. New members are run through Bob Mecca and examined by Chris Palmer. She noted that OVR does have other advertised meetings that are open to the public.

Ryan stated that the taskforce meetings are open meetings.

## LIFT Overview

Bob Mecca passed out brochures and noted that if anyone on the call in line wants the information, to just let him know. St. Marys is one of 17 Centers for Independent Living in the state. They provide services for people with disabilities to live the life they want to live and have a right to live. They cover any area of independent living that a person may need. Some examples would be finances, transportation, and accessibility. They cover a total of 6 counties – Clearfield, Jefferson, Elk, Cameron, McKean and Potter.

LIFT provides information and referral to appropriate agencies and follow up. Their peer mentoring program is 1 on 1 with a person with a disability -- who better to know what a person with a disability would need than a person living an independent lifestyle with a similar disability. They have cross disability peer mentoring as well. LIFT provides advocacy services and can attend student IEPs; they can also teach individuals how to advocate for themselves. They have a lot of assistive technology that can be borrowed.

In Elk County, they have Project Life Saver for people with ID , Alzheimer's or dementia. This is an electronic monitoring for people so if they get lost, the Sherriff and 911 Center work together to help find them. This has saved a lot of lives and has brought the search time down from 9 hours to about ½ hour – saving money and resources as well.

“Within Your Reach” has enabled them to purchase AT equipment and place it in local libraries so it is in reach for people with disabilities. If someone sees something they are interested in, they should contact LIFT.

LIFT can do disability and sensitivity simulations. In the past, they have gone into local high schools with different simulations; they can do that for businesses, groups, schools, etc.

Along with LIFTs main brochure, Bob passed out several brochures for different Tech Owl programs done through Temple University including iCanConnectPA for individuals who have both vision and hearing loss, their Used Equipment Exchange program, their new special phone that has come out as well as PA's Telecommunication Device Distribution Program. (See attached flyers) Their website has a lot of information on it -- check it out at [TechOWLpa.org](http://TechOWLpa.org)

LIFT has a local re-use program where they accept donations of gently used AT equipment and make sure it gets into the hands of people who need it and are not able to acquire it through insurance. Rebecca McKinsey is LIFT's new contact for both Tech Owl and AT information.

Bob stated that he was recently on a statewide call for SWAG (Statewide Advocacy Grant) where Lehigh Valley received a grant and is working with a lot of CILs in the state regarding accessibility and emergency preparedness as well as voting and census. Up to \$21000 in grant dollars can be lost for anyone who is not counted. Chris Palmer added that OVR relies on census data as well. The disability population needs to be counted. Bob added that the census helps get us local funding for individuals with disabilities.

Chris asked Bob what the status is of LIFT's website. Bob indicated that updating it is still on hold. They are still looking at someone to revamp it, however, do not have a lot of funds. In the meantime, please give people the phone number and have them give LIFT a call. They are putting in to hire an intern for the summer who can have the website be their main focus. Diana Kreydt of PSU DuBois asked if it had to be a student with a disability. Bob indicated that it did not have to be, it would be great if it was, but it doesn't have to be. It would be a part time position and LIFT would be reimbursed.

## Agency Updates

**Mark Morelli, PA LINK** informed the CAC about a study being conducted by Penn State Health that young adults with autism disorder can participate in it. It is geared for 18-25 year olds with autism spectrum disorder. (See attachment).

**Ryan Gill, IU10** discussed the transition coordinating counseling meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup> at OVR in DuBois. Agencies and advocates are welcome to attend. Meeting is from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. They offer updates on what is available for students in that transition part of their life.

**Diana Kreydt, PSU DuBois** stated that classes start on Monday. University Park has a new director of disability services – Leah Zimmerman – who is very motivated. She is working on an autism grant right now. At UP they are working on a grant for students with disabilities who come in unprepared for college. It is set up a lot like the PAS grant. They will get special training and presentations for the semester.

**Bob Mecca, LIFT** informed that they are starting to talk behind the scenes regarding their annual youth conference. He is hoping Missy Franklin can be involved. Ryan asked Bob to please send him a flyer when they become available. Bob advised that students from Clearfield or Jefferson are welcome but generally do not attend. If Ryan would like to be part of the committee, he is welcome to. Ryan indicated that he would welcome doing so if he is available.

**Kelly King, PEAL Center** is going to be doing training in Harrisburg at Family and Youth Leadership Conference. Two sessions in early April – leading by convenience, bringing families, professionals and providers together to lead them through the process.

**Next Meeting:** Chris discussed that we have been trying to move the meeting around to various counties. Carma from University Pitt Bradford has extended an invite for the meeting to be held at UPB in April. Bob stated thinking it is good that we move around; it makes it easier for individuals from other areas to attend and feels it is a benefit to everybody. UPB was agreed upon.

**Follow up with Carma Horner, UPB:** Carma confirmed that the CAC is able to meet on Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. (This is one week ahead of our normal schedule due to Good Friday). Meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. in the Osborne Room located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Hanley Library Building. Please note that this is a different meeting room than before. Directions will be emailed out closer to the meeting.