

CAC MINUTES
Friday, January 8, 2021
10:00 a.m. Conference Call

Welcome & Introductions: Bob Mecca, LIFT opened the meeting. Also, in attendance were Chris Palmer, OVR; Carma Horner, Pitt Bradford; Andrew Pennington, CAP; Diana Kreydt, PSU DuBois; and Marsha Dippold, Dickinson. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Skype meeting was held.

Review of Minutes: No questions or changes.

OVR Updates

Chris Palmer, OVR informed that all DuBois OVR staff are still available to serve customers and employers during ongoing telework. The physical office building is still closed to the public. OVR expects to function this way possibly until June. The DLI webpage Disability Services and OA webpage have the most up to date information.

We had a 5th wave of names released this week from the OOS waitlist. This wave ensures everyone found eligible up through January 4th should be able to be served. The list included a handful of SD cases that are moving forward. Andrew Pennington of CAP asked how many people are coming off DuBois DO waitlist. Chris will look at it and provide that information to him. Andrew felt it was great news that everyone determined eligible by 1/4/21 has been included. Chris Palmer noted that the wait list is still in place at this time.

Workforce Development Board is working on a public comment on the workforce plan Wednesday and Thursday of next week. Information was sent out to the CAC on 1/8/21.

There are no staffing updates to report currently.

OVR will be moving towards Microsoft Teams from Skype. Zoom is a possibility that is being looked at depending on accessibility.

Agency Updates

Bob Mecca of LIFT stated that LIFT is still working remotely and seeing consumers via zoom when possible. They used grants to gain equipment for staff to get set up to work virtually successfully. They can provide a number of services including AT with no contact deliveries.

SWAG (Statewide Advocacy Group), which LIFT is a part of, is planning to set up a virtual IL conference for people with disabilities. Any of the other CAC members' customers are welcome to attend. This is planned to be held sometime during August or September of 2021; the exact date is not available yet. Carma Horner, UPB, asked Bob to share the information when it becomes available. It was questioned whether it will remain available even if things get better with Covid. Bob believes it will remain virtual as it is stated in one of the grants. Andrew Pennington, CAP, asked if SWAG is solely an IL group. Bob indicated that all ILs are part of it, and that Lehigh Valley IL has been subcontracted to do this and they are working with all the other ILs to make it a statewide effort.

Diana Kreydt, PSU DuBois stated that they are also virtual and will start the semester January 19th a week late. They will be virtual until February 15th as of this point. All students will have to be tested and then can come back to school. On campus date may be a little later but will be back before the end of the semester. She has been meeting with some students virtually; some students are not doing that. PSU is giving the students the option of an I grade. It does not affect their GPA but can affect funding.

Carma Horner of UPB stated that their staff is working from home. Faculty can choose in person or virtually (Pitt Flex); if they are in person, they must do a virtual lesson as well. Classes start January 19th. They are looking at possibly delaying the return of students. Like PSU, they also have an option to withdraw from classes if they didn't do well. Some students struggle with the virtual environment. Carma would like VRCs to know if students are working virtually, they may need extra help whether it is tutoring, working with professors or with Disability Services on campus. Chris Palmer will share this information with VRC staff.

Carma noted that Pitt is just doing random testing and not requiring a negative test from everyone; however, out of state students will be required to have one prior to returning under the Governor's guidance.

Diana Kreydt, PSU, noted that kids would say they had Covid and not attend classes and didn't have to prove testing results. Carma agreed that it was frustrating for faculty at Pitt as well.

Andrew Pennington of CAP updated that CAP is still operating virtually. They are seeing a lot of people come to CAP for advocacy help with coming off the waitlist. They have all the equipment they need to be fully functioning at this point.

Chris Palmer shared that the state has a hot line number for information to help with isolation due to Covid. That information will be sent out to CAC members following the meeting.

Aimee Adamski, OVR shared information received from **Mark Morelli of PA Link** who was unable to attend today. The Pa Link is currently putting together a plan to distribute the ACL Grant money they were awarded. Food order & delivery, isolation, etc. are just some of the activities the Pa Link is doing. The Link is also working with Tech Owl and Temple University to enhance the assistive technology programs across the state. PCC Training is another area they are diving into.

Andrew Pennington asked if Mob Mecca, LIFT, has seen an uptick in certain types of technology with the pandemic. Bob has seen somewhat of an increase. AT is LIFT's biggest service that they provide – especially in seniors. Andrew noted that he has given several referrals to LIFT as far as AT and has also seen an increase from his point of view. Chris Palmer indicated that technology is helpful for seniors not only to help combat isolation during the pandemic but can also assist with telehealth appointments. Marsha Dippold, Dickinson, discussed that for individuals who struggle with the technology, they could actually set it up for a more experienced family member to work as an administrator so that they are able to access the computer remotely to help with tech issues. Andrew informed that TeamViewer is the best software for remote access, and it is very simple to use.

Marsha Dippold, Dickinson Inc updated that they are doing in person job coaching. Trying to do as much of the other things remotely as possible such as resumes and business outreach. Perspective employers are not as engaged remotely – especially CBWA sites. They have a couple staff shortages due to staff promotions. It takes a couple months of training for new staff before they are ready to go out.

Upcoming Events

Bob Mecca mentioned the virtual Independent Living conference around the end of August or beginning of September.

Chris Palmer reminded of the webinars and public comment information that she will have Aimee send out later today.

Andrew Pennington noted that CAP is involved with several virtual transition fairs across the state. It is nice to be able to attend and talk to students, parents, etc., all at once. Information is sent by each vendor and provider. Speeches are done and posted on website for all to access with live presentations on the day of the conference. People are available for 45 minutes to an hour where anyone can engage whatever vendor they want.

Chris Palmer asked that everyone keep in mind that we are always looking to get other members for the CAC especially people with disabilities or family members. If anyone knows of an individual they feel would be a good addition, let Chris or Bob Mecca know and they will reach out to see if they would like to attend a meeting. Chris and Bob can then determine if they are appropriate to join the CAC. Also, if there is someone you would like to have present to the CAC, let Chris or Bob know; it is important that we hear from others.

Next Meeting

Next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 9th at 10:00 a.m. It will most likely be an online virtual format. Invitation will be sent to CAC members prior to the meeting.