

**MINUTES FROM 1/20/16 MEETING OF
JOHNSTOWN DISTRICT OFFICE CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

JOHNSTOWN 01/20/16 CAC MEETING MINUTES

Attendance: Tammy Burke, Bob Shutte, Bridget Kirsch, Josh Yoder, Denny Hutchison, Christopher Roken

Minutes from the last meeting were reviewed and approved as submitted.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS)

Tammy highlighted that OVR staff is charged with spending 15% of the operating budget on Pre-Employment Transition Services for students still in high school ages 14 – 21.

PETS Provider Agreements – ADA Chris Roken is taking the lead on this initiative. The agreement is being sent out to different providers. Chris shared a copy with all committee members. OVR Johnstown District Office is assigned an individual PETS budget to spend on students for FFY 2016: \$399,348.03. The Provider Agreement is being sent out to all of the support employment vendors and CILs that serve our local office area. The agreement will offer individual and group services. Group services will include independent living skills, self-advocacy training, work readiness training. Individual services will be for students primarily in a plan status and will include job shadowing and paid work-based learning experience (WBLE). Non job coaching providers can submit a narrative to address their availability, work plan, personnel qualifications and performance for consideration as well. Chris asked if anyone knows of an entity that would be interested, please let him know.

PETS Implementation Plan – Each district office was charged with developing a plan, which was due November 25, 2015. Each office had to assign 20% of their direct service staff time to required, authorized or PETS coordination as outlined in the Rehab Act. Direct service staff in our office include 25 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs), one Early Reach Coordinator, and one Business Service Representative. Three of the VRC's are dedicated to Transition Counselor duties. Therefore, the Transition Counselors are tasked with spending 90% of their time towards PETS services. The Early Reach Coordinator is tasked at 90% of her time on PETS activities as she is expected to conduct outreach with students starting age 14. The Business

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Services Representative is tasked with spending 25% of time on PETS activities. The District Office has a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff number of 5.4 that must be assigned to PETS. Our office is exceeding that with a Total FTE of 7.05. As Chris mentioned, about \$400,000 is to be spent on the PETS population and our office has \$256,000 remaining to obligate at this time.

The PETS Plan will also entail collaboration, which includes Provider Agreements, Business Services Representation in schools, initiating a Project SEARCH program, continuation of Project Promoting Academic Success (PAS), collaboration with HGAC, etc. Regarding Project SEARCH, IU28 submitted for the Innovation and Expansion Grant monies and was not selected. The IU is looking for other funds to help get a Project SEARCH started. Our office and HGAC will have upcoming meetings on how to collaborate on PETS activities.

Regarding the PAS Program, our office is piloting a new curriculum for the program. As a reminder, Penn Highlands Community College, Westmoreland County Community College and Allegheny College of Maryland are the post-secondary schools involved with this program.

Budget Impasse – Governor Wolf signed a partial budget, which resulted in a \$5 million dollar increase in state funding from last year. This allows OVR to access an estimated \$18.5 million in additional federal funds. Travel restrictions are still in place.

Job Driven – VR Technical Assistance Center (JD-VRTAC) – JD-VRTAC is a new initiative with a focus on improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. OVR has opted to work on a two-part project. The first part is integrating labor market information into the VR process. A survey will be sent to field staff to ascertain their knowledge of labor market information and training will be developed from those results. The second part is increasing work-based learning opportunities for the PETS population through employer engagement. OVR will solicit input from the business community and then develop an accessible training curriculum that will be piloted with members of the Business Services Teams in the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh District Offices. The pilot will assess the effectiveness and impact of having a team member dedicated to the PETS population. The pilot

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training is scheduled in 2/2016 and will be expanded statewide if proven effective.

WIO Combined State Plan – PA has elected to submit a Combined State Plan, which includes the six core programs (Adult Program, Dislocated Worker, Youth Program, Adult Ed and Family Literacy Act Program, Wagner-Peyser Program, and VR) plus one additional program such as TANF, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Jobs for Veterans State Grants, Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program, etc. The plan must be submitted for review by March 3, 2016. It will become effective July 1, 2016. Both Secretaries of the federal Depts. of Labor & Education will review and approve plan within 90 days of receipt. The plan is currently posted for public comment until 2/1/16 and comments can be submitted to a resource account RA-LI-PAWDB@pa.gov

Local Office Update – We have eight vacancies (1 BSR, 7 VRCs). Two new VRC employees started on January 11, 2016. Another VRC employee will be starting on March 7, 2016. Caseloads were recently realigned effective 1/4/16 based on census data and the initiation of three new Transition Counselor positions in the office to serve students in Indiana and Cambria Counties.

Member Updates -

Josh Yoder – CamTran approval for six new compressed natural gas buses in the rural division. Three more are being ordered for the urban division and then six more in the Ebensburg office.

Bridget Kirsch – Bridget is working with Transition Counselor Nicole Lodge with transition and possibly initiating a Project SEARCH in Cambria County.

Future Activities – Tammy will keep members informed of PETS and changes with the State Plan.

Next Meeting - April 20, 2016 from 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., in the HGAC Seminar Theater.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.