

## **NORRISTOWN 09/16/16 AGENDA**

### **CAC meeting agenda – September 19<sup>th</sup> at 6pm**

1. Margaret McKenna – Client Assistance Program (CAP) overview
2. Review CAC Handbook and State Plan section regarding CACs
3. Review the PaRC letter to Executive Director
4. Discuss goals for the year

July 22, 2016

Dear Mr. DeNotaris,

As you know, the PA Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) has for many years been working on ways to support and strengthen the local OVR Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs) across the state through quarterly calls with our Executive committee and developing a section of our website for a resource area for CAC members. In the current PaRC State Plan attachment, the PaRC recommended that OVR take a more active role in the guidance and development of the CACs. A copy of that section of the state plan attachment with OVR's comments is included with this letter.

The PaRC feels strongly that the CACs need OVR's support to flourish.

The PaRC views the local CACs as an important pool of knowledgeable individuals to recruit from to the state advisory council (PaRC).

In this letter, the feedback from the CAC chairs regarding their particular CAC's challenges and needs as well as suggestions regarding supports needed from OVR is included below:

**Give the CACs a more substantive strategic vision.** Inform CACs what OVR's main strategic goals are so the CACs can focus their efforts in those areas. Important for the CACs to be on the same page with OVR.

**Provide a basic structure for the CACs** to include basic guidelines for holding meetings, activities that OVR would like to have the CACs be involved in, provide CAC Handbooks, encourage support from Central office as well as the District Administrators and local OVR staff.

Questions have come up about CACs having Facebook pages, blogs, etc. OVR providing guidance in these areas upfront would save everyone time and effort.

**Connect the CACs better to those who receive services in that district.** Though the CACs are supposed to receive feedback from and represent the voice of district OVR customers, there is no strong mechanism within each district to connect the CAC members to (non-CAC member) OVR customers. One CAC proposed an online survey to collect feedback from OVR customers in the district office. This suggestion was rejected by OVR administrators. It is suggested that the PaRC and OVR work to identify a mechanism for better connecting the CAC members to local OVR customers.

**Help the CACs find new members (Recruitment).** Recruiting new members to the CACs seems to be a universal problem for all of the CACs. It was suggested that OVR ask all its counselors to identify good potential CAC members and ask them to consider joining a CAC.

**Encourage senior OVR staff to more strongly engage the CACs.** For example, one of the CACs created three short educational videos for new VR applicants. Unfortunately, this project has been put on hold due to senior OVR staff not having time to discuss with the CAC, what needs to be done to complete the project.

**Provide more data to the CACs from OVR** (i.e. not just number of closures, but those receiving restorative services, those receiving training, those receiving assistance in other areas; and then translate that to positive outcomes, so many receiving degrees, so many finding competitive employment, etc.). Sort of like a fact sheet, which would help inform the CAC and allow them to be more informed in their provision of feedback.

**Involve the CACs in OVR activities that members can volunteer.** The other opportunity that has worked well is the CAC being a part of OVR activities, and volunteering at those activities. It has helped to give more of

a presence to the CAC to the customers as well as a conduit for relaying information and informed feedback.

The PaRC is proposing and asking for your support of a focus group meeting with the CAC Chairs, OVR staff and the PaRC this fall in Harrisburg to develop a plan of action to support and strengthen the local CACs and further develop the ideas in this letter.

We have heard mixed responses as to whether or not the PaRC can fund the travel costs for the CAC Chairs to attend this meeting; **a definitive answer is needed before we can proceed.**

Your assistance and support is greatly appreciated. We look forward to hearing back from you on the items presented in this letter.

Sincerely,

The PaRC Executive Committee