

# ***THE PENNSYLVANIA REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBER HANDBOOK***

Welcome to the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council. This handbook has been provided to help you understand the Council, its duties and responsibilities, and your role as a member. The Council is an independent citizens group, which reviews and advises the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) on policy and services. OVR works with people with severe disabilities to help them prepare for, obtain or keep suitable competitive employment.

Authorized by the 1998 Amendments to the federal Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA 2014. Council membership must include a wide array of representation; e.g., consumers, providers, advocates, parents and guardians, businesses, etc. A majority of members must be persons with disabilities. Nominations are reviewed by the membership and forwarded to the Governor, who makes all appointments.

Currently the Council meets four times each year, usually in the Harrisburg area. Meetings generally begin at 9:30 a.m. and end by 3:30 p.m. Reimbursement is available for meals and travel. Members may also be reimbursed for overnight accommodations and attendant care, when necessary. Council members can expect to spend approximately four to eight hours each month, excluding travel time, on Council business.

Staff support to the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council is provided through a contract from OVR to United Cerebral Palsy of Central PA, Camp Hill, PA. Any questions you have after reading the enclosed material may be directed to:

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Council is to inform and advise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Legislature, and the Governor on the diverse issues affecting employment of people with disabilities.

# Rehabilitation Council Standard of Expectations

Revised: March 2016

## Active Participation:

In order to fulfill its federal requirements, the Rehabilitation Council must have active participation by its members. Active participation is defined as:

- Attend the four (4) scheduled full Council meetings in any fiscal year. Severe weather and personal emergencies are understandable exceptions.
- Participate on at least one standing committee or ad-hoc committee during the fiscal year.
- Respond to action items during or between Council meetings. Examples may include, but are not limited to:
  - Review of support documents for meeting action items.
  - Review and return of surveys, draft documents, etc. when requested.
- Attend Office of Vocational Rehabilitation public meetings, State Board meetings, Consumer Advisory Committee meetings, etc. when feasible.

## Represent the Rehabilitation Council in Meetings and Work Groups:

Although members represent diverse constituencies and points of view, it is important for the Rehabilitation Council to speak as a single entity in meetings and work groups. The Council recognizes that individuals may also wish to convey additional opinions or information during discussions. In order to assure consistency without restricting member's actions, the following guidelines were adopted on April 14, 1999:

If a Rehabilitation Council member is serving on a rehabilitation related work group, committee or is giving testimony as a **designated and official spokesperson of Council**, the following guidelines will apply:

- The Council member shall state that s/he is representing the Rehabilitation Council.
- The Council member shall state the Council's official position on the subject being discussed if one exists or is known. If the Council's official position is unknown or has not been developed, the Council representative shall indicate that s/he will request the Council's office to forward the position or ask the Council to review the subject and render an official position if one is needed.
- The Council member may have a different, personal opinion on the subject being discussed. If this is so, the Council member should state that it is a personal opinion and not the official position of PA Rehabilitation Council.

- The Council member shall not commit financial support and/or other resources of the Council to any non-RC committee, workgroup, function, etc., without the previous authorization of the PA Rehabilitation Council.
- In order to receive reimbursement for expenses incurred while acting as a designated Council spokesperson, the member shall follow established procedures for obtaining reimbursement.

These objectives are meant solely to improve and expedite the accomplishments of the Rehabilitation Council, so as to better the lives of persons with disabilities. Your cooperation and time are appreciated.

**Please Note: Individuals appointed to the Council by the Governor are considered Public Officials and are required to complete a Financial Interest Statement annually that is submitted to the State Ethics Commission and the Secretary of Administration.**

## **Annual Statements of Financial Interest**

**Revised: May 2004**

**All members of the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council** are required to annually file a statement of Financial Interests with the State Ethics Commission by May 1<sup>st</sup> for the preceding year.

You can access a statement of financial interest form on their website. Save the link on your computer to file next year.

The link to the form is:

<http://www.ethics.state.pa.us/ethics/cwp/view.asp?a=4&Q=91269>

If you print out the form, fill it out and **Mail the Completed Form to:**

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
State Ethics Commission  
309 Finance Building  
PO Box 11470  
Harrisburg, PA 17108-1470

If you have any questions you can contact the State Ethics Commission at 1-800-932-0936 or call the PaRC office at 717-975-2004, if you need assistance.

**Please provide PaRC support staff with a copy.**

# **EFFECTIVE MEMBERS = EFFECTIVE MEETINGS**

## **Every Council member is responsible for good meetings**

The key to a successful Full Council meeting is to keep things running smoothly so that the Council can make effective decisions. The primary responsibility for this task falls on the chairperson. Individual council members also have a number of duties to perform if meetings are to be as productive as possible.

Sound preparation is the most important thing a Council member can do to make meetings more effective. If each member does his or her homework ahead of time, meetings will be short and almost always productive. Review your packets or email prior to the meeting being called to order. Be prepared for discussions related to the material in the packet or email. Submit items for inclusion on the agenda in advance.

Attendance at meetings is also an important Council member responsibility. When the team is short one or more members, there is danger that all sides of the issues will not be explored and all interests will not be represented.

Full Council meetings are not informal discussion groups. The Council develops and follows an agenda for each meeting. The agenda includes a number of features: A description of each item to be discussed, an indication of whether the item is for discussion only or if it will require a vote, and an estimated time limit for discussion.

## **The Full Council Meeting**

As a Council member, you need to acquire a basic understanding of parliamentary procedure. This will enable you to do your part in moving meetings along quickly and efficiently.

At the beginning of each meeting, the chairperson will ask the Council to formally approve the agenda. When the Council votes to approve an agenda, members are agreeing to discuss only those issues listed on the agenda in the time frames specified.

If you want to include some item on the agenda, you need to make your request well in advance of the meeting. Requesting that an issue be placed on the agenda at the last minute is not a wise practice. The rest of the Council simply will not be ready to discuss it in an informed manner. Bringing up important issues at the last minute doesn't enhance good decision-making.

The chairperson must make sure that all issues which need to be discussed are on the agenda and give members adequate time for debate. Members must work to keep the discussion moving to a decision--after all, that's the reason the issue is on the agenda.

### **Minutes of the meeting**

At each meeting, you will be asked to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. This seemingly routine portion of the meeting should not be taken lightly. Minutes, when approved by a formal vote of the Council, are the official and legal record of what happened at the meeting. Every member has the right to ask the Council to correct errors in the minutes before voting to accept them.

Individual members, however, do not have the right to demand that an explanation of how they voted or their opinions on an issue be recorded in the minutes.

### **Reports to the Full Council**

During the meeting, members will likely consider reports from committees and staff. These provide background information and important details to help the Council deal with specific issues on the meeting agenda.

### **Making Motions**

The proper way for members to bring business before the Council at a meeting is by making a motion. This is a formal request or proposal for action made before an issue is discussed.

To make a motion, address the chairperson and state, "I move that..." and give the action you wish the Council to take. Most motions require that another member support the request for action by seconding the motion. To do this, the member simply says, "I second the motion." Once seconded and restated by the chairperson, the motion is discussed.

By requiring a motion on an issue, the board discusses only those items on the agenda and stays on track. During discussion, the chairperson can insist that members limit their comments to the motion on the table.

Motions usually come from two major sources--committee reports and administrator recommendation--but members may make motions at any time in accordance with your parliamentary guide.

### **Voting**

Once the motion has been discussed thoroughly, the chairperson will call for members to vote on the motion.

**Voting is mandatory unless there is a conflict of interest.**

Once the vote is taken, the chairperson will declare that the motion passes or fails and move on to the next item on the agenda.

## MEETING PARTICIPATION CHECKLIST

### As a Council member, I will...

Attend all meetings and arrive on time.

Make an effort to prepare for meetings by reading the agenda and support materials.

Take part in all discussions on issues that come before the Council for action.

Keep my discussion focused on the issue at hand and limit my comments to a reasonable time.

Understand the basics of parliamentary procedure as well as state open-meeting laws.

Listen to the comments of other Council members.

Work towards team consensus on issues.

Focus on the ultimate mission of the Council rather than any special interest group.

## Meal Reimbursement Policies

**PLEASE NOTE: Meal per diem rates can change annually.**

### **RECEIPTS REQUIRED**

Explanation of meal reimbursement policies:

Currently for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, meal per diem rates for Harrisburg are \$14.00 for breakfast, \$16.00 for lunch, and \$26.00 for dinner per day. You are only eligible for the full daily per diem if you are on the road for 24 hours and no meals are provided.

You can only claim actual meal costs. **Receipts must accompany reimbursement requests** and reimbursement is limited to the particular meal per diem in question. For example, if your dinner cost \$35.00 your reimbursement would be limited to \$26.00. If your dinner only came to \$20.00, you would be reimbursed \$20.00.

You cannot skip a reimbursable meal and add the allowance to the next meal. For example, if you skip breakfast your lunch reimbursement will still only be \$16.00.

**Please note:** alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.

**If you charge your meal to a room that is being directly billed to the Council we will treat it as a receipt, since the hotel provides a copy of the full charges. Do not claim the meal on your worksheet. Also, if you exceed the per diem, the overage will be deducted from another area of your reimbursement claim.**

Higher per diems may be available for high cost areas such as Washington D.C. Staff provides the information to members who are traveling into those areas. There are also additional guidelines for travelers who are on the road more than 24 hours. Staff will consult with members who may be eligible for the additional allowances.

The Commonwealth establishes all policies and per diems for travel. UCP is required by its contract to follow them. UCP does not have the authority to grant exceptions to the Commonwealth's policies.

We hope this explanation is helpful. Staff is always available to answer questions and provide assistance in completing the reimbursement forms.

## **Travel Expenses / Miscellaneous Expenses Reimbursement Policies**

**PLEASE NOTE: Mileage reimbursement rates and miscellaneous expense rates can change annually.**

**ONLY Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council members may be reimbursed for their expenses.**

The Support Project is required by its contract with OVR to follow Commonwealth Guidelines and Labor & Industry procedures for travel expense reimbursements.

### **Travel**

Presently, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania mileage reimbursement rate is \$.545 cents per mile. Airfare, Rail, Bus, and other public transportation are reimbursable to members at cost. Except for mileage, receipts must accompany reimbursement requests.

### **Overnight and Parking Accommodations**

Members' overnight accommodations are directly billed to UCP Central PA. Additionally, when meetings are held outside of Harrisburg, staff has made arrangements with other hotel locations for direct billing. Parking expenses are included in overnight accommodations and therefore reimbursable. Participants of regular Council meetings can obtain parking from the hotel. Room Service charges are reimbursable within the subsistence guidelines. **Incidental charges, such as telephone charges, movie rental charges, etc., are the responsibility of individual members.** The hotel should bill you at checkout for incidentals, otherwise you will receive a bill in the mail. Overnight accommodations provided by another hotel are reimbursable within the previously stated guidelines, receipts must accompany reimbursement request.

### **Advances**

Requests for advances should be rare and limited to times in which costs to attend a full council meeting would create a hardship to the member. Only mileage and tolls can be advanced and must be approved by the Executive Committee. Members should discuss advances with the Project Director. All requests for advances must be submitted to the office in writing and include the specific costs for mileage and tolls, that need to be covered by the advance.

### **Written Reports**

A written report to the council is required for any conference that a member attends, that they are seeking reimbursement of their costs. If staff is in attendance at the conference, members are not required to give a written report. The written report should accompany the reimbursement forms. Handwritten notes are acceptable or members can request a report form from the office for this purpose.

### **Miscellaneous Expenses**

Miscellaneous expenses such as attendant/driver/reader services and tolls are reimbursable at cost or as follows: attendant services are reimbursable at cost or at a maximum of \$10.35/hr. for 14 hours in a 24-hour period; and driver and reader services are reimbursable at cost or at a maximum of \$10.35/hr. Drivers and readers are reimbursed for actual reading and driving times only. If attendant/reader hours are to be reimbursed for actual meeting hours, the attendant/reader must be in the meeting room and available to assist the member. All receipts must accompany the signed Travel Expense Voucher and worksheet in order for the request to be processed for payment. This includes copies of signed timesheets for the attendant/driver/reader.

### **Important**

Reimbursements must be completed and turned into the office within two weeks of the meeting/conference.

All reimbursements must be submitted to the office by September 1<sup>st</sup> for the prior fiscal year or they can not be processed.

Please contact the office with any questions.

# Requests for Training / Conference / Meetings

Revised: February 2000

## **POLICY:**

Training, Conference and member reimbursement funds designated in the Rehabilitation Council Resource Plan may only be used by Council members and must be directly related to written goals and objectives of the Full Council or a specific committee.

## **PURPOSE:**

To assure a uniform application, approval and documentation process for the use of Rehabilitation Council funds to support member participation in conferences, training opportunities, meetings, and workgroups related to the Council's goals and objectives.

## **PROCEDURE:**

To assure consistency of the request with Council Goals and Objectives, the member requesting support must secure the authorization of the appropriate Committee Chair or of the Executive Committee prior to submitting Request forms to the Support Project office. The committee chair must notify staff of the contact and his/her decision if the committee chairperson is the individual making the request, at least one Council officer must make the approval. **No person may grant approval to himself/herself.**

Representation of the Council in work groups, other committee or council, and meetings with legislators or government officials, requires designation by the Full Council or the appropriate Committee in an open meeting. If an opportunity presents itself between meetings, approval of the Committee Chair is required.

**Simple notification of Support Project staff is not sufficient.**

Requests for Council support of training or conference participation are to be submitted to the Support Project office far enough in advance to allow for the approval process. If Support staff will be sending registration fees in advance, a minimum of three weeks is needed. Extra lead-time will also be needed if staff will be asked to assist with arrangements.

**TO ASSURE COMPLIANCE WITH VARIOUS AUDIT REQUIREMENTS**, all requests for support of training or conference participation must be made in writing and must include:

A completed request form. The form includes room to estimate the costs of an attendant, driver, or other assistant when necessary.

A copy of the announcement brochure, showing registration costs.

Hotel information, if an overnight stay of one or more nights is needed.

Other supporting documentation, as applicable, that links the event to a council goal or objective.

Staff may approve requests that total \$250 or less. Requests over \$250 require approval of the Executive Committee.

The Council reserves the right to place a cap on requests or to ask that other organizations share costs as circumstances warrant.

**NOTES:** *Staff will complete the form as a reasonable accommodation for members unable to complete it independently. All other members are expected to complete the form themselves. Support staff will assure that all members are supplied with forms.*

As required in the OVR contract, all reimbursements will be governed by State guidelines for allowable expenses. The Travel Expense forms and receipts must accompany reimbursement requests.

Funds will be available on a "first come, first served" basis. The Executive Committee may make a modification to this practice in any year where certain committees or individuals make a disproportionate number of requests.

Members who represent the Rehabilitation Council at meetings, events, etc. are expected to provide a report to the Full Council or designated committee. This may be an oral report at a meeting or a short report (one or two paragraphs) submitted to the staff for distribution in the weekly update. If support staff also attended the event, they will assist with the report. The Council reserves the right to reconsider the requests of a member that habitually fails to meet this requirement.

Reimbursement requests and reports, when applicable, are due within 30 calendar days of the event. Requests that exceed the 30-day time frame will require approval of the Executive Committee prior to processing by staff.

# Documentation of Conference or Meeting Participation

Revised: November 2015

**PURPOSE:** This procedure serves to:

- Facilitate timely distribution of information to Council members.
- Provide a uniform reporting structure.
- Provide documentation for Fiscal and Program audits.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### Council Member Responsibilities:

1. Members who represent the Council in a meeting, conference call, or conference *without support staff* will use the standardized form to submit a report to the Council. This task is the council member's responsibility and constitutes verification that he/she attended the event. The report must be submitted regardless of any other materials that will be forwarded to the project office by any other entity.
2. The report is due within 30 calendar days of the event. Reimbursement requests will not be processed until the report is submitted, except as directed by the Executive Committee.
3. Members may submit the report by mail, fax, email or telephone. If the report is phoned in, staff will use the form to record the information.
4. Members are expected to provide copies of agendas, rosters, minutes and handouts to the staff, unless arrangements have been made for the event facilitator to send duplicate materials directly to the office. The participant may send the originals for staff to copy and return or they may send copies.
5. Mailing and copying costs are reimbursable but the member must provide a receipt.

### ***NOTE:***

*When both a Council member and staff participate in the event, they will collaborate on the content of the report and staff will produce the report.*

### Staff Responsibilities:

1. Assure that members have a supply of forms, as needed.
2. Receive, date stamp, copy, distribute and file reports from members.
3. Complete the Office Use Only section, as needed.
4. File enclosures and distribute as requested.
5. Bring matters related to compliance with, or recommendations for revision of, the policy to the Executive Committee.

## **Election / Voting Process As of July 11, 2002**

Staff will pass out to the Council members a packet of different colored cards. Each of the packets of cards will be numbered 1 through 8 with each color. The color will designate which office the member will be voting on, example: Blue is the assigned color for the office of Vice Chairperson. Each candidate will be assigned a number within that color. So an example would be, John Doe has decided to run for Vice Chairperson; he is a blue card number 1.

The ballot will have the colors assigned to each of the open positions. A list of the candidates with their assigned number will follow.

The cards used for the voting process have been created so that all members are able to vote via secret ballot. The cards are numbered so to distinguish the office that the member is voting for and the numbers are assigned to designate the candidate. The cards are in Braille and large print so that all members are able to access the cards.

For the actual vote, the members will choose their candidate and designate their vote by submitting their card(s) to the voting box.

See By-Laws for additional information.

## **PaRC Recruitment Procedures**

**Revised: March 2016**

1. PaRC staff will maintain a list of categories that are required under the Rehabilitation Act. Those categories will be posted on the PaRC website as the Chart of Representation.
2. In the event of a vacancy in any category, or in the event that a vacancy will be created by the upcoming expiration of a given member's term or a member's resignation, the category vacancy will be:
  - a. posted on the PaRC website
  - b. disseminated to the full council membership
  - c. disseminated to OVR and its bureaus and related stakeholder groups
  - d. disseminated to all OVR/BBVS district offices and HGA
  - e. disseminated to all Centers for Independent Living
  - f. disseminated to all Consumer Advisory Committees (CAC)s
  - g. Members will actively recruit to fill their own category

3. Applications for PaRC membership will be posted on the PaRC website, included in the PaRC annual report, made available to those agencies listed in point 2 above, and provided to any interested individual who contacts the PaRC office and requests an application.

4. Applications will be received by the PaRC office and held on file yearly to fill vacant categories as needed.

5. It is the responsibility of the PaRC staff to monitor the Council Membership for vacancies and upcoming vacancies that will be created by member term expiration or resignation. The PaRC staff will inform the Executive Committee of these vacancies as they occur.

6. The identification of a vacancy or upcoming vacancy (defined as any vacancy to occur within the next 6 months) shall activate the **ad hoc recruitment committee**. It is the responsibility of this ad hoc committee to meet and review all active application materials which fit a category where a vacancy or potential vacancy exists.

Applicants in the "pool" will be re-contacted by staff, to determine current interest, and to verify that the information on their original appointment form (i.e. resume, telephone contact, email address, etc.) is still correct. If applicant indicates they are no longer interested in being appointed, their name will be removed from the "pool". They would need to reapply for future consideration for appointment to the council.

The ad hoc committee has the discretion to determine that an application is not consistent with a particular category vacancy, and therefore should not be considered further as it relates to that vacancy.

7. The Ad hoc recruitment committee shall consist of the PaRC Executive Committee and two other council members who volunteer to serve in this capacity.

8. Upon receipt of an applicant's application form and resume, staff will send a follow up letter thanking the applicant for their interest in wanting to serve on the Council.

It is the staff's responsibility to gather all needed information from the interested applicant:

- a. Application Form
- b. Resume
- c. Reference letters (preferably 2)
- d. Applicant's Social Security Number (Governor's office requires this.)
- e. A detailed letter from the applicant explaining how they feel qualified to fill an existing opening on the Council.
- f. The 6 questions Questionnaire (usually filled out via telephone.)
- g. And any other information requested by the Ad-Hoc Recruitment Committee.

9. Upon completion and documentation of the telephone contact by staff, these results will be reviewed with the ad hoc recruitment committee.
10. Following review of these materials, it is the responsibility of the ad hoc recruitment committee to forward to the executive committee, the application materials of those applicants it recommends. The number of recommendations forwarded to the executive committee shall not exceed three (3) for any one vacancy. Recommendation will be based upon a simple majority vote of a quorum of the members of the ad hoc committee. The Executive committee will forward the recommendations to the Full Council.
11. Applicants who are forwarded to the Full Council for consideration will receive a letter which informs them of this decision, and invites them to attend a Full Council meeting. The letter will also inform the applicant that this invitation in no way guarantees that the individual will become a council member, and that applicants must pay their own expenses related to attending a PaRC meeting.
12. Those applicants forwarded to the full council membership for consideration will be voted on by the full council membership.
13. When there is more than one applicant being voted on, the applicant with the most votes from the Full Council membership will have their name and application materials forward to the designated state unit (OVR) along with a request that this individual's name be provided to the Governor's Office for appointment. In the event, there is only one applicant being considered for a vacancy, the individual must receive a majority vote by the Full Council membership in order for their name and application materials to be forwarded to OVR and subsequently the Governor's office.
14. Staff will notify the individual of this action in writing, also stating that the final appointment decision rests with the Governor's office and is not the responsibility of the PaRC.

## **Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council By-Laws**

### Article I. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council.

### Article II. Mission

The mission of the Council is to inform and advise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Legislature, and the Governor on the diverse issues affecting employment of people with disabilities.

### Article III. Definitions

- (A) "Council" shall mean the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council.
- (B) "Act" shall mean the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.
- (C) "OVR" shall mean the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- (D) "Fiscal Year" shall mean the federal fiscal year, October 1 through September 30.
- (E) "Officers" shall mean the Chair, Vice-Chair and Member-at-Large.
- (F) "Executive Committee" shall mean the Officers, Immediate Past -Chair, and Chairs of Standing Committees.
- (G) "Committee Chair" shall mean the Chairperson selected by standing Committee members to lead the committee during the fiscal year.
- (H) "State" shall mean the state of Pennsylvania.
- (I) "State Agency" shall mean the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- (J) "State Workforce Development Board" shall mean a State Workforce Development Board established under section 111 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 as amended by WIOA of 2014
- (K) "Designated State unit" shall mean the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- (L) "State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation" shall mean the board that is mandated by State law to be the policy making body that shapes and is responsible for the overall success of the vocational rehabilitation program in Pennsylvania.
- (M) "Support Project" shall mean the organization with which OVR contracts for provision of support services to the Council.
- (N) "Support Project Staff" shall mean employees assigned by the Contracting organization to provide the contracted services.

## Article IV: Functions of The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council

### Section I:

(A) The Council shall function as a partner with the State Workforce Development Board, Pennsylvania State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Governor in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA of 2014. The scope of the Council's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- matters of general policy development
- implementation
- administration of the OVR State Plan as well as the efforts of any other state unit or contracted program which addresses the vocational training and employment needs of persons with disabilities.

(B) The Council shall have the powers and responsibilities granted to it by S105 of the act as amended by WIOA of 2014 and any other responsibilities that it might from time to time accept.

## Article V: OFFICERS

Officers shall preside according to established policies, standards, procedures and guidelines.

### Section I Duties

(A)Chair: The Chair shall preside at all Council meetings, may sign or authorize all letters, reports, and other communications of the Council, and generally be responsible for directing and coordinating the affairs of the Council. The Chair shall also serve as the principal point of contact between the Council and the Support Project as well as between the various Committees of the Council.

(B)Vice-Chair: The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair as point of contact in coordinating the activities of the Council and shall have additional duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the Chair and/or the Council. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall substitute for and have all the powers and duties of the Chair.

(C)Member-at-Large: The Member-at-Large shall work with the Chair to coordinate development and management of the Council's annual Resource Plan with Support Project staff, and shall present a financial report at Council meetings. In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Member-at-Large shall substitute for and have all the powers and duties of the Chair.

## Section II Nomination of Officers

(A) At the May meeting the Chair will request a minimum of three (3) volunteers from the Council to serve on an Ad-Hoc Nomination Committee to establish a slate of officers for election. The nominating committee will designate a committee chair. In the absence of volunteers for the Nomination Committee, the Council may designate the Executive Committee to fill this function. All members will be informed of the duties, responsibilities, and limitations of officers, and requested to indicate their interest in being nominated for a particular office and fulfilling all of the obligations of that office, if elected. Allowing sufficient time for a response from members, the Nomination Committee will close the nominations, seek approval of the slate by the Executive Committee, and present the slate to the membership no less than 2 weeks prior to the August Council meeting.

(B) All members who express interest will be placed on the slate by the committee, provided they are in compliance with these by-laws and can meet the term commitments of the office they seek.

## Section III Election of Officers

(A) The Council shall annually elect a Chair, Vice-Chair and Member-at-Large. The outgoing Chair will remain on the Executive Committee as Past Chair, but will not be considered an Officer of the Council.

(B) The election shall take place at the last regularly scheduled meeting of the current fiscal year. Terms will begin effective October 1 of each year.

(C) Election: Votes for the election will be cast by secret ballot at the meeting. Proxy votes will not be accepted. The outgoing Chair and at least 2 volunteers from the Council who are not on the slate will count votes and announce the results at the meeting.

## Section IV Terms of Officers

(A) The Officers shall serve terms of one year or until each successor has been elected by the Council.

(B) A member shall be ineligible to serve more than 3 terms total as an Officer.

## Section V Removal of an Officer

(A) An Officer may be deposed from office for just cause

(B) Discussion of motions to censure or remove an officer shall take place in Executive

(C) Session – that is all non-members will be asked to leave the room.

(D) Censure or removal of an Officer requires a two-thirds majority vote of the Council members present at a regularly scheduled Full Council meeting. The vote shall be by secret ballot and shall take place in Executive Session

## Section VI Filling a Vacancy of an Officer

- (A) A vacancy in the Vice-Chair's office will be filled by the Member-at-Large.
- (B) A vacancy in the Member-at-Large's office shall be filled by a vote of Council members at the next regularly scheduled Full Council meeting following the existence of the vacancy. In such a case a nominating committee will be reconvened using the process described in this Article, Section II (a) prior to the election.
- (C) A member elected to fill a vacancy shall serve only the unexpired term of the member who is replaced. Time spent filling an unexpired term shall not count toward the term limitations set forth in Section IV, (b) above.

## Article VI: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Section I Composition

(A) The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the Officers, as described in Article V, the Past Chair, and Chairs of Standing Committees. Chairs of Ad-Hoc Committees shall not be members of the Executive Committee.

(B) Individual members may only occupy one seat on the Executive Committee.

(C) If the total membership of the PA-RC falls below the total minimum required number of members, the PA-RC may vote to waive the requirement in section (b) above, by a simple majority vote at a regularly scheduled Full Council meeting.

(D) In the event that a Standing Committee elects co-chairs, they shall share one seat and share one vote on the Executive Committee.

### Section II Duties

(A) The Executive Committee establishes the agenda for each Full Council meeting, reviews and authorizes correspondence and reports, provides input into the performance reviews of staff, and generally directs and coordinates the activities of the Council. As needed, the Executive Committee will review material considered controversial, as to if and how, it should be disseminated. The procedure for dissemination of information in the council's procedure manual should be followed by staff. The Executive committee will monitor member resignations and term expirations to assure that the composition of the PaRC is maintained as stated in the Act. Recruitment Procedures have been developed to establish a method for filling vacancies on the Council. The Recruitment Procedures are part of the Member's Manual and are located under Procedures. When vacancies occur or are anticipated, the Executive committee will establish an ad hoc recruitment committee to assure the composition of the Council. This ad hoc committee will be made up of the executive committee members and two other members of the Council.

(B) The Past Chair serves as a mentor to the Chair. He/She shall also have other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the Chair and/or the Council. In the absence of all the officers, the Past-Chair shall substitute for and have all the powers and duties of the Chair.

## Article VII: STANDING COMMITTEES

### Section I Formation

- (A) The Council shall identify and define standing committees annually, based on the goals and objectives in the annual strategic plan as adopted at no later than the final Full Council meeting of the current fiscal year. A listing of the standing committees (PaRC Standing Committee Overview) will be inserted into the member's manual annually and distributed to all members.
- (B) Standing Committees will elect Chairs at a regularly scheduled committee meeting by September 30 of the current fiscal year. Terms will begin on October 1 each year.
- (C) The Chair of the Council is an ex-officio (i.e. non-voting) member of all committees.
- (D) Generally, Council officers cannot serve as a committee chair, however the Executive committee has the option based on the needs of the Council at the time, to allow the Vice Chair and Member at Large to serve as committee chairs.
- (E) Committee chairs can only chair one committee.
- (F) The Chair or Council shall establish such Ad-Hoc committees as shall from time to time be necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Council.
- (G) Committees must have a quorum (51%) of members on conference calls in order to conduct business and to vote.

## Article VIII: MEMBERSHIP

### Section I Nominations, Qualifications, Appointments and Terms

- (A) Membership on, and the composition of, the Council shall be through appointment by the Governor and shall be consistent with the terms of S105 of the Act as amended by WIOA of 2014.
- (B) As stated in the Act as amended by WIOA of 2014, a majority of Council members shall be persons who are individuals with disabilities and not employed by the designated State unit.

(C) A member can serve two three year terms, if willing and if reappointed by the Governor, except that:

(1) a member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which a predecessor was appointed, shall be appointed for the remainder of such term, thereby maintaining the original intent of staggered terms. This means that a member appointed to finish out the term of their predecessor is not eligible to serve out two three year terms for a total of six years. The member would serve the number of years left in their predecessor's term plus one additional three year term.

(2) No member of the Council, other than a representative of the client assistance program, may serve more than two consecutive full terms.

(D) Composition and Appointment Composition - The Council shall be composed of:

At least one representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705, which representative may be the chairperson or other designee of the Council;

At least one representative of a parent training and information center established pursuant to section 682 (a) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431(c)(9));

At least one representative of the client assistance program established under section 112;

At least one vocational rehabilitation counselor, with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation programs, who shall serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of Council, if an employee of the designated State agency;

At least one representative of community rehabilitation program service providers;

Four representatives of business, industry, and labor;

Two representatives of disability advocacy groups representing a cross section of – individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities; and parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities, who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable, due to their disabilities to represent themselves;

Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services.

Ex Officio Member - The Director of the designated State unit shall be an ex-officio member of the Council.

At least one representative of the State educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, who are eligible to receive services under Subchapter I of Title 29 and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

At least one representative of the State Workforce Development Board.

(E) The Council Support Project office will maintain a list of persons interested in being appointed to the Council. A duplicate list will be maintained by OVR Central Office. Individuals may be placed on the list by their own request or they may be nominated by organizations or individuals. An individual seeking to join the council will be given the opportunity to speak at a Full Council meeting. To ensure consistency, each nomination packet will include a letter of interest and a current resume or vitae. Additionally, two written letters of recommendation will be requested. Packets will be reviewed by the Recruitment Committee (within a ninety day time period). Individuals recommended by the Recruitment Committee will be sent forward to the Executive committee and finally the Full Council for approval for nomination to the Governor. Support project staff will submit approved packets to OVR. OVR will provide a copy of approved packet(s) to the Governor's Office. Also, see Recruitment Procedures located in the member's manual.

## Section II Responsibilities

(A) Council members shall serve without compensation; however members will be reimbursed for all expenses associated with attending Council meetings and performing Council duties, in accordance with applicable federal and state policies.

(B) Council members are expected to actively participate in all aspects of the Council's mission, In order to fulfill its federal requirements, by:

- Attending four (4) scheduled full Council meetings in the fiscal year. Audio attendance by speakerphone is permitted only with the prior approval of the executive committee, when needed for a quorum for essential voting, if a member has a medical condition that will not allow them to travel to the meetings. Arrangements should be made for this accommodation with the project staff. Severe weather and personal emergencies are understandable exceptions.
- *Actively* participating on at least one standing committee or ad-hoc committee during the fiscal year. This is a requirement. *Actively* is defined as participating in conference calls and in-between activities such as responding to correspondence. Those members not able to maintain active participation will be asked to resign from the committee.
- Completing the on-line SRC training and submit a copy of the training certificate to the PaRC office by their first full Council meeting. The on-line SRC training series is on the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) website.

- Responding to action items during or between Council meetings. Examples may include, but are not limited to:
  - (1) Review of support documents for meeting action items.
  - (2) Review and return of surveys, draft documents, etc. when requested.
- Attending Office of Vocational Rehabilitation public meetings, Workforce Development Board meetings, Citizen Advisory Committee meetings, etc., each year.

If a Rehabilitation Council member is attending any of these meetings or other related meetings (e.g. legislative contacts), workgroups, or conferences where they officially or de-facto represent the Council:

- The Council member shall state that s/he is representing the Rehabilitation Council.
  - The Council member shall state the Council's official position on the subject being discussed if one exists or is known. If the Council's official position is unknown or has not been developed, the Council representative shall indicate that s/he will request the Council's office to forward the position or ask the Council to review the subject and render an official position if one is needed.
  - The Council member may have a different, personal opinion on the subject being discussed. If this is so, the Council member should state that it is a personal opinion and not the official position of PA Rehabilitation Council.
  - The Council member shall not commit financial support and/or other resources of the Council to any non-RC committee, workgroup, function, etc., without the previous authorization of PA Rehabilitation Council.
  - In order to receive reimbursement for expenses occurred while acting as a designated Council spokesperson, the member shall follow established procedures for obtaining reimbursement which can be found in the member's manual under procedures.
- With regard to PaRC sponsored attendance at conferences and meetings, including full Council meetings, the PaRC member is expected to attend all scheduled activities/meetings, unless ill.
- If ill, they must notify the PaRC office staff, personally or by leaving a message on the office answering machine, and cancel any room/travel arrangements.

- If the member does not attend as scheduled, and does not have a valid reason for their absence, the member will be asked to reimburse the PaRC for the apportioned cost of any scheduled activities/meetings they did not attend. That cost would also include travel, subsistence, and accommodations associated with the event. The Executive Committee would determine the amount of reimbursement and discuss/decide about any future conference participation requests by that member.

**Please Note:** Individuals appointed to the Council by the Governor are considered Public Officials and are required to complete a Financial Interest Statement annually that is submitted to the State Ethics Commission and the Secretary of Administration.

### Section III Resignation

(A) A Council member may resign by sending written notice to the Council Chair in care of the Council Support Project office. Notice will be forwarded to OVR, who will notify the Governor and request a new appointee to fill the vacancy.

(B) Members who were appointed to represent specific organizations cited in the Act as amended by WIOA of 2014 (such as the SILC and State Workforce Development Board) may request reclassification if they cease their relationship with that organization. The request shall be made in writing to the Chair in care of the Support Project. Disposition of the request will follow the process as in letter b of this Article.

### Section IV Transferring a Member to Another Category of Representation

(A) A Council member may request a transfer (if an opening exists) to another category of representation, due to a job change, etc. by sending written notice to the Council Chair in care of the Council Support Project office. Notice of the request will be forwarded to OVR, along with appropriate reappointment paper work. OVR will notify the Governor of the request and forward the appropriate paper work.

### Section V Recommendation to Remove a Member from the Council

(A) The Council may recommend that a member be removed for just cause including, but not limited to, noncompliance with these By-laws. Failure to attend two consecutive full Council meetings without appropriate 48 hour prior notification, or valid notification of illness, is just cause for removal from the Council.

(B) Recommendation for removal of a member requires a two-thirds majority vote of the Council members present at a regularly scheduled Full Council meeting. The vote shall be by secret ballot and shall take place in Executive Session.

(C) After the Council has voted to recommend removal of a member, the Support Project Staff will notify OVR in writing. OVR will assure that the decision is communicated to the Governor's office.

## Article IX: MEETINGS

All meetings will follow Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition Perseus Publishing October 2000.

### Section I Full Council Meetings

(A) In accordance with S105 of the Act as amended by WIOA of 2014, the Council shall meet no fewer than four times per year. The number of regular meetings, above four, to be held in any one year shall be determined by the Council, consistent with applicable OVR policies and resources. The dates of such regular meetings shall be established no later than December 31 of the preceding year, and such dates shall be distributed promptly to all Council members. Any change in the date, time, or location of a meeting must be given special notice. (If a meeting is canceled, due to inclement weather or other emergency, members should follow the cancellation procedure for meetings in the Council Procedure manual). The decision to cancel a meeting is by vote of those officers present at the meeting location or reachable by telephone at the time the decision must be made.

(B) All meetings shall be open to the public, except for Executive Session.

(C) The Chair shall assure that the Executive Committee establishes an agenda and it is distributed two (2) weeks prior to the meeting. Agenda items may be added as New Business at each Council meeting with approval of the majority of Council members present.

(D) If all Officers and the Past Chair are absent from a meeting, members present shall, by majority vote, elect a member to be presiding officer at the meeting.

(E) Minutes of all meetings, and other Council records shall be kept in a secure environment in accordance with OVR requirements. Draft Minutes and related material will be distributed to all Council members within three (3) weeks after a meeting. Minutes shall be available to the public once approved by the Council.

(F) A quorum shall be fifty-one percent of the membership at Full Council meetings. Participation in the meeting via speakerphone is only allowable to make quorum for essential voting such as policies, position papers, etc.

(G) All decisions of the Council shall be made only after an affirmative vote of a majority of members in attendance, unless stated otherwise in these By-laws for special circumstances.

## Section II Special Meetings

(A) Special meetings may be called by the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation or by the Council Chair or by a majority of Council members.

(B) Council members shall be notified of all special meetings at least five business days prior to such meetings.

## Article X: ADOPTING, AMENDING AND REPEALING OF OPERATING PROCEDURES AND BYLAWS

(A) The Operating Procedures and/or Bylaws may be adopted, amended or repealed, if the proposed procedure and/or bylaw is introduced at a regular meeting and has been sent to Council members for their review at least ten days prior to the meeting.

(B) Adopting, Amending or Repealing of the Operating Procedures and/or Bylaws must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership present at a duly called Council meeting.

Rev. 3/16 Approved – by Full Council on March 2, 2016

# **Pennsylvania PaRC Decision Making Matrix**

## **Operating Guidelines:**

New Revisions to Guidelines:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Responsible  
Staff – Consulted

Bylaws Changes:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Responsible  
Staff – Consulted

Existing Guidelines:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Responsible  
Staff – Consulted

## **Support Contract Administration**

PaRC Resource Plan (operating budget):

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation / Consulted  
PaRC Committee(s) – Review & Recommendation / Consulted  
Staff – Responsible

Annual and Interim Changes (greater than 25%):

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation  
PaRC Committee(s) – Review & Recommendation  
Staff – Responsible

Interim Changes (less than 25%):

PaRC Executive Committee – Final Approval  
PaRC Committee(s) – Review & Recommendation  
Staff – Responsible

Maintain Contract with Commonwealth:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval / Responsible  
Staff – Consulted  
Support Project Team – Approval

## **PaRC Administration**

Minutes – Full Council:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
Staff – Informed

Minutes – Committees:

PaRC Full Membership – Informed  
PaRC Committee(s) – Final Approval  
Staff – Informed

Agenda – Full Council:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
Staff – Informed

Agenda – Committees:

PaRC Committee(s) – Final Approval  
Staff – Informed

Support Staff Supervision:

PaRC Executive Committee – Consulted  
Support Project Team – Final Approval

Support Staff Evaluations:

PaRC Full Membership – Informed  
PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation  
PaRC Committee(s) – Consulted  
Support Project Team – Final Approval (UCP)

**PaRC Projects / Activities:**

Annual PaRC Goals / Action Plan:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Approval  
PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible  
Staff – Consulted

Changes in Goals:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Approval  
PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible  
Staff – Consulted

Addition / Deletion of Goals:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation / Approval  
PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible  
Staff – Consulted

Shifts in Priorities of Objectives:

PaRC Executive Committee – Final Approval  
PaRC Committee(s) – Review & Recommendation / Approval  
Staff – Consulted

Annual Report:

- PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval
- PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation / Approval
- PaRC Committee(s) – Review & Recommendation / Approval
- Staff – Responsible

**Mandates:**

Partner with OVR in the completion of the comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment:

- PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval
- PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation
- PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible
- Staff – Consulted

Develop the State Plan:

- PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval
- PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation
- PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible
- Staff – Consulted

Support an Annual Report to the Governor:

- PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval
- Staff – Responsible

Follow state and federal legislation that effects employment for persons with disabilities:

- PaRC Full Membership – Review & Recommendation
- PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation
- PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible

Develop Position Statements:

- PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval
- PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation
- PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible
- Staff - Consulted

Approval & Provide Response Time (2 days or less):

- PaRC Executive Committee – Final Approval
- PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible
- Staff – Consulted

Approve & Response Time 3 – 14 days:

- PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval
- PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation
- PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible
- Staff – Consulted

Approve & Response Time 15 days or more:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation  
PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible  
Staff – Consulted

Customer Satisfaction Survey – Methods / Tools:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation  
PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible  
Staff – Consulted

State Plan Recommendations to OVR:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation  
PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible

**Outreach / Collaboration:**

Website Design / Content:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation  
PaRC Committee(s) – Consulted  
Staff – Responsible

Brochures / PR Materials:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval  
PaRC Executive Committee – Review & Recommendation  
PaRC Committee(s) – Consulted  
Staff – Responsible

**Governor's Disability Agenda:**

PaRC Recommendations:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval / Responsible

Press Releases & Similar Materials:

PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval / Responsible

**Training / Conferences:**

Under \$250:

PaRC Executive Committee – Informed  
PaRC Committee(s) – Review & Recommendation  
Staff – Final Approval / Responsible

Over \$250:

PaRC Executive Committee – Final Approval  
PaRC Committee(s) – Responsible  
Staff – Informed / Consulted

**Governance:**

New Council Appointments / Reappointments:  
PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval / Responsible

Resumes for Candidate" Pool":  
PaRC Committee(s) – Consulted  
Staff – Responsible

Match Vacancies / Needs to Candidates "Pool":  
PaRC Executive Committee – Final Approval  
PaRC Committee(s) – Consulted  
Staff – Consulted

Forward Candidates to OVR:  
Staff – Responsible

**Council Officers / Committee Chairs:**

Develop Nomination Slate:  
PaRC Executive Committee – Final Approval / Responsible  
Staff – Consulted

Election Officers:  
PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval / Responsible

Selection of Committee Chairs:  
PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval / Responsible  
PaRC Executive Committee – Consulted  
PaRC Committee(s) – Consulted

**Roles / Responsibilities / Performance / Concerns / Issues:**

Staff:  
PaRC Executive Committee – Final Approval / Responsible

Committees:  
PaRC Executive Committee – Final Approval / Responsible

OVR:  
PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval / Responsible

Other Sources:  
PaRC Full Membership – Final Approval Responsible