



Connecticut Aging and Disability Services



Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

State Rehabilitation Council Minutes

Teams Meeting – June 25, 2025

1p.m.- 3:30p.m

Welcome and introductions – Chairperson, Kate T – Beth Reel, Kate Travis, Contessa Big-Crow Jenkins, Jill Larmett, Tom Cosker, Carissa Decelles, Tara Baldwin, Andrea Richardson, Brian Smith, Fred Brisbois, Joe Wendover, Stephanie Trelli, Beth Reel, Lara Luna
SRC Liaison – Kerri Fradette

Approved absence – Dave Doukas, Linda Rammler

Review/approve minutes- approved

Budget – Treasurer, Carissa D – no budget change

Client Assistance Program Updates – Tom C: RSA/BRS he was contacted and interviewed by Joe Doney today and gave information. Slow trickle of consumers coming forward, only 3 since the last report out. CAP is trying to come up with strategies to promote services and spread the word. Different ideas on how to market this information with BRS at BRS staff meetings. North/South/West Regional meetings. Also do a meet and greet with consumers.

SRC recommendations for CAP to present and attend regional BRS staff meetings and make references to new/senior counselors.

BRS Updates – BRS Director, David Doukas – excused absence (**Kerri & Kate**)

- Review BRS Dashboard Data (See attached) – Reviewed the counselors case loads and all the data on the dashboard report. Time of eligibility has gone down and time to planning. This was mentioned that are going well to RSA monitoring team.
- Staff Updates – Lisa Hatz, New Bureau Chief,
- RSA Monitoring – Kate T and Tom C have been contacted by RSA and invited to in person in September. Shared a lot of information with RSA and transparent.

SRC Discussion (All):



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- **Federal Impact** – state of federal budget and vital services, SRC members tend to speak on this, we do have talking points that were sent out and mentioned reaching out to legislators and education elected officials on these very vital services of the VR program. Joe W. impacts the private sector, scrambling to change titles from DEI, affecting many people in different capacities. Very unfortunate at this time as an SRC and employment of individuals with disabilities. Fred B –we can't lobby politicians, but what about ARC services and what can they do to for us? We could partner with them for support, but we are tied to the state organization and mandated members in their work, APSE does a lot of advocating as well. Putting together a letter on behalf of the SRC and educating the elected officials. Concerns about others are aware of the impact. We are not allowed to lobby but educate and inform. Here is the potential. Beth R: on the chopping block for funding, but they can educate, politicians really do need to hear from those whose funding is potentially cut. Impact of what will happen if we lose VR funding? Educate and inform is the best way to reach people. Significant impact with VR being cut and then the trickle-down effect from loss of funding.
- As a state employee we have to walk the line, we can share information and educate. Brian S. creative writing way. Impact of VR client interaction – Steph T. we get a lot of uncomfortable with conversations and tools are needed for staff on how to address this. It becomes very difficult on how and what to say. Some of this is completely out of our control and it can become a very uncomfortable situation to be in not able to voice how you are feeling because, heightened stress level and how do we message this to our consumers without increasing the fear factor. May get worse before it gets better. Trying to make sure there is appropriate communication for staff via consumers. **Recommended:** Scripted communication for staff around everything happening.
- **Consumer satisfaction survey** discussed how to proceed and what questions should be utilized without going down a rabbit hole. **Approved:** Decided to go with 7 questions from Univ of Washington. Voted on using the following Univ WA questions –
 - My counselor does a good job keeping in touch with me (phone calls, emails, meetings).
 - My counselor understands what is important to me.
 - My counselor understands how my disability affects me.
 - My counselor cares about my input.
 - BRS moves quickly enough for me.
 - Overall, I am satisfied with BRS.
 - If the answer was "not satisfy" there will be a follow-up open end to ask about the reasons
 - Final comments: anything the customers want to share with BRS
- **September Retreat Planning** – September 17, 2025 retreat, date moved to Thursday September 25, 2025. Jill L offered to save space for the retreat– 61 Weston Street, Hartford, CT - American Job Center. From 9-12. Agenda to be sent soon.



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APSE Conference October 1, 2025 – Sheraton-Hartford South, 9-3p.m. SRC approved to spend \$1500. – Contessa, Tom, Jill and Brian are interested in attending conference. There are 2 more spots left for the event. Email Kerri and Kate if you are interested in attending.

Committee Updates:

Legislation and Policy- no updates

Membership – new referral

Program Review – no updates

Public Comment - All

**Next Meeting: September 25, 2025 in person SRC Retreat 9-12p.m.
AJC 61 Weston Street, Hartford, CT**