**Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT)**

**May 2-3, 2024**

**4100 Troup Highway**

**Conference Room 4**

**Tyler, TX 75703**

**In person and via Zoom**

**Zoom Recording:**

Day 1:  [https://youtu.be/2gBu73hmTvE](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2F2gBu73hmTvE&data=05%7C02%7Clisa.godwin%40twc.texas.gov%7C9b80a0a2fcdc4106f81808dc7513fe1f%7Cfe7d3f4f241b4af184aa32c57fe9db03%7C0%7C0%7C638513975942783343%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=w9RiMFoDu%2BJfSrkQ6krWTjHbRZASPcf7X47rrxyGhyQ%3D&reserved=0)

Day 2: [https://youtu.be/8dKwQHbxD\_0](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2F8dKwQHbxD_0&data=05%7C02%7Clisa.godwin%40twc.texas.gov%7C9b80a0a2fcdc4106f81808dc7513fe1f%7Cfe7d3f4f241b4af184aa32c57fe9db03%7C0%7C0%7C638513975942795881%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=agck7XKp1MqbP26YoFRAj8%2FfXtpluMN3atmjxOSk8eM%3D&reserved=0)

**Council Members Present**

Gennadiy Goldenshteyn, Chair, Dallas

Peggy Schmidt, Vice Chair, Lucas

Mark Baird, San Angelo (Virtual)

Glenda Born, Austin Virtual

Jennifer Clouse, Temple (Virtual)

Cheryl A Fuller, Austin

Norine Gill, Taylor Lake Village

Michele Harper, San Marcos (Virtual)

Michele Norris, LaPorte (Virtual)

Joe Powell, Irving Virtual

Emily Robinson, Pflugerville (Virtual)

Daniel Solcher, Allen

Karen Stanfill, Houston

Patrick Sturdivant, San Antonio (Virtual)

**Council Members Absent**

Lisa Cowart, Sour Lake

Kiffany Jefferson, Rowlett

Jordan Smelley, Burleson

**TWC Employees Attendance as Panelist:**

Commissioner Alberto Trevino, Commissioner Joe Esparza, Ed Serna, Dennis Kutach, Malcolm Ifoezeh, Doug Shryock, Carolyn Garrett, Angelia Snow, Cheryl Newton, Jennifer McCurley, Brandi Clark, Steve Lynch, Harold Whitfield, Karen Givens, Donna Dounley, Justin Collier, Kel Cates, Alicia Milliard, Jacki Everhart-Thompson, Christina Ward, Lisa Godwin, Daniel Prado, Sara Weems, Shelly Caillouet, Jamie Haywood, Tammy Martin, Scott McCune, Melinda Paninski, Geoffrey Miller, Christopher Speckhard, Christi Lerche, Cindy Geisman, Angela McCoy, Angela Young, Belinda Valero, Debbie Lambright, Harold Whitfield, Heather Cooke, Jonas Schwartz, Jordan Locke, Karen Givens, Kristin Johnson, Meagan McAdams, Mike Vinson, Pam King, Teryl Lynn,

**TWC Employees Attendance non-Panelist: 37**

**Public Attendance: 124**

**Welcome**

* The meeting was called to order at noon by Gennadiy Goldenshteyn, Chair.
* Welcome and opening comments.

**Joe Esparza, TWC Commissioner Representing Employers**

* Addressed the council

**Edward Serna, TWC Executive Director**

* Addressed the council

**TWC VR Budget, Cheryl Fuller VR Director**

* TWC VR Budget Update PowerPoint was distributed with full details.
* State Fiscal Year (SFY or FY) 2024 Status
	+ FY 2024 Budget, as of March 31, 2024, Total $341,078,218
		- Salaries & Wages (includes Employee Benefits) $114,680,381
		- Travel $2,543,781
		- Operating Expenses $12,529,643
		- Client Services $211,324,413
	+ 1st and 2nd Second Quarter Budget and Expenditure Report (by Division, Region, and Service Type) as of February 29, 2024, Total $300,250,217
	+ 3rd an 4th Quarter Client Services Distribution Plan=$40M
* FY 2025 Funding
* FY 2026-FY2027 Legislative Appropriations Request LAR
	+ Process and Status
	+ VRD Initial Client Services Projections

**VR Division Report, Cheryl Fuller, VR Director**

* General Updates
* Update on Combined State Plan Goals, Strategies, and Projects
	+ Program year 2023 July 1-June 30, new program year will begin July 1, 2024
	+ Goals that are approved in the current plan
	+ 100 Total projects and activities, 50 complete, 25 in progress, 22 ongoing and 5 in queue
	+ Six VR Goals in the Combined State Plan
		- Improve provider recruitment, retention, and support.
			* (star) Ensure payment rates are competitive and equitable. Progress since February Comprehensive Rate Review Completed. Implementation planning underway. Hospital Services rate review in queue.
		- Streamline VR policy, process, and procedure and improve workflow processes and tools to facilitate timely service delivery.
			* (star) Streamline or redesign policy, procedure, forms, and approval processes to improve ease of navigation/application for VR staff.
			* Progress since February ongoing. Since February 2021, VRD has reduced 112 pages of forms. Planning underway for launch of redesigned VRSM and policy management software.
			* (star) Improve workflow processes and business systems to improve timeliness, efficiency, and consistency of VR service provision. Progress since February rollout of SARA/Outlook calendars sync; Preparation of ODIN rollout, video conf. system. Evaluation of AI use cases.
		- Recruit and retain VR staff. Tammy Martin
			* (star)Identify and implement strategies to improve staff recruitment and retention, employee engagement (EE). Progress since February, ongoing in person and video messages; Collaboration with TWC HR to pilot a Snap Hiring Event
			* (star) Redesign training and resources for new counselors. Redesign training and resources for new rehabilitation assistants (RAs). (Online library in 3.2 also available to Ras.) Progress since February, one project completed. New project launched May 2024.
			* Establish management development training, specific to VR program management, for new current, and aspiring VR managers. (LEAD and Pathways). Progress since February, Cohort 2 graduations in March. Cohort #3 participants named. Classes begin June 2024.
		- Improve and develop additional user-friendly resources to maximize customer choice.
			* (star) Update training, tool, and policy related to work incentive programs and benefits counseling and provide user-friendly resources and/or fact sheets to help customers make decisions. Progress since February, updating policy for fee-for-service benefits counseling. To be published in July 2024.
		- Improve VR staff knowledge and system capacity to enhance service delivery to customers.
			* (star) Provide training, tools, and resources to assist staff with implementing process improvement. Progress since February launched vendor payment pilot with six management units.
			* (3 star) Provide additional training and resources for VR staff to strengthen and increase expertise and specialization in serving customers with specific and multiple disabilities. Progress since February, peer specialist training and endorsement project; employment first collaboration; customized employment services development.
		- Increase and enhance partnerships with employers to 1) understand employer needs, and 2) build awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.
			* Implement and expand employer partnerships that increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through training and work-based learning opportunities for students and adults with disabilities. Progress since February, processing SEAL 2024 student referrals; planning underway for three new Project SEARCH sites.
* Update on Success Measures, Geoffrey Miller, Director of Analytics ad Evaluation(A&E)
	+ Goal One: Recruit and Retain Providers, Statewide service provider activity rates, Q1 2023 compared to Q1 2024 there was a slowdown. There are more available providers but less active providers. Similar results for contracted providers.
	+ Goal Two: Streamline or redesign policy, processes, procedures. Statewide median days from initial contact to participation, increase in the median days. This will need further research. The statewide participation creation rate is remaining stable.
	+ Goal Three: Recruit and retain VR Staff, Turnover Rate and percent OVRCs, turnover rate is slightly down. At end of Q2 2024 VRD had 57% of counselors identified as qualified VR counselors (QVRCs) and 365 of 633 counselor positions filled.
	+ Goal Four: Improve Customer Informed Choice, SSI/SSDI participants receiving benefits counseling. Improvement, the percent of customers with benefits counseling on their IPE went from 69.2% on March 2, 2023, to 90% on March 14, 2024. How satisfied are you with the information you receive about VR services that may help you achieve your career goals? This is slightly down for BVI and stable for overall.
	+ Goal Five: Improve staff knowledge and system capacity, How satisfied are you with the support you receive from VR staff? This is fairly consistent. How satisfied are you with amount of time it takes for VR staff to respond to your emails, calls or other contacts? This has a slight decrease. Statewide participant engagement rate there is a similar decline.
	+ Goal Six: Increase and enhance partnerships with employers, Work-based learning opportunities, this are down and are in line with provider and precipitate rate.

**VR Performance Update, Christopher Speckhard, Manager VRGIS Team, Information, Innovation, and Insight (I|3) Division**

* SFY Q2 2024 State Measure Results. VR is meeting the goal for participants 67,400. Average cost, VR is spending more in the last rolling 12 quarters compared to year end target. Employed or enrolled Q2 post exit exceed target by at lease 5%. Employed or enrolled Q2-Q4 post exit just above target. Credential rate exceeding preference. MSG rate (YTD) this is under the target however this is not a rolling quarter so it should raise to target.
* Strong growth in VR participants
	+ The rolling four quarter (R4Q) period corresponds to March 1, 2023, to February 29, 2024
	+ The number of participants this R4Q increased by 3.9% to 67,394 compared to 64,863 for program year (PY) 2022 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023).
	+ The statewide success rate of 52.6% for this R4Q was slightly lower than 53.1% for PY 2022.
* Q2 Post-Exit Employed/Enrolled Rate and Median Earnings Increase
	+ The R4Q for these post exit measures is January 1, 2022, to December 30, 2022.
	+ The Q2 post-exit employment rate continues to recover, from 55.7% in the pandemic year to PY19 (July 2019-June 2020) to 61.2% this R4Q. The disability types with the highest increases were legally blind and physical.
	+ Median earnings grew by over $570 to $6,930 in R4Q compared to $6,359 in PY21. Median Earnings for individuals with Auditory & Communication and Physical disabilities had the highest relative increase.
* Q2-Q4 Post Exit Employed/Enrolled: Further signs of post-pandemic recovery
	+ The Q2-Q4 Post Exit Employed/Enrolled rate indicates how many individuals employed in Q2 after exit are still employed in Q4 after exit.
	+ The R4Q period for this measure is July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022
	+ This employment retention measure continues to hold stable at 87.8% statewide, indicating a solid recovery from the pandemic level of 82.5% for CY 19 exiters.
	+ Individuals with Auditory and Communication and Other Visual disabilities saw slight improvement in the Post-Exit Q2-Q4 Employment Rate for this R4Q.
* TBI, Stroke and SCI Comparison
	+ Participants counts increased most for individuals with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI), while individuals with Stroke/Acquired Brain Injury saw the highest increase in success rate.
	+ Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) exiters have higher Q2 Post-Exit employment rates. However, SCI exiters have higher median earnings in comparison.
	+ Q2-Q4 post exit rates were highest for individuals with SCI at around 91%.
* Chairman Goldenshteyn asked if VR has a way to compare earning before injury? Answer is there is no what to verify accuracy, so this is not tracked.
* Karen Stanfill asked in future meeting allow questions during the presentation.
* Questions about the decline in performance of legally blind since 2015 and have not improved. Mrs. Fuller commented that before the decline homemaker and unpaid worker were allowed as successful employment outcomes. She will work with Geffery and Christopher to look further into this decline. Noting that it is difficult to compare pre-WIOA to post WIOA outcomes for blind services. Chairman suggested to look at other states to see if they are experiencing the same trends. Lighthouse for the Blind is another factor.

**Council Business**

* Approve February Minutes
	+ Motion to approve February Minutes as amended. Motion made by Karen Stanfill, seconded by Peggy Schmidt, voted, and approved unanimously.
* RCT Budget Report Lisa Godwin
	+ Travel $30,122.02 Balance
	+ Other Expenses $34,280.65
* Emily Heise, announcement RCT Election Nominations due COB June 21. All members are eligible for nomination other that TWC employees and RCT members terming out. The nomination roster will be emailed on July 1 all RCT members. The Election will be held at August meeting.
* Next Quarterly Meeting, August 1-2, 2024, TWC Commissioner Hearing Room, Austin.
* November 7-8 meeting in Dallas Fort Worth Area.

**Public Comment**

* Kizzey Collins
* Katina Murphy

**Recess for the day**

**Resume Friday May 3, 2024, 9:00am**

**Alberto Treviño III, Commissioner Representing Labor**

* Addressed the council

**Overview VRD Region 4 and Introductions**

**Dennis Kutach, Regional Director, Malcolm Ifoezeh, Deputy Regional Director, (PP4) Doug Shryock, Director of Workforce and Economic Development, Carolyn Garrett, Area Operations Manager, Angelia Snow, Executive Director Career Team, Cheryl Newton, Deputy Director Career Team, Region 4 VR Staff in Attendance**

* Regional introduction by Malcolm Ifoezeh.
* Dennis Kutach
	+ Region 4 East Texas is the smallest region
	+ Weekly partnership meetings are held with board members and providers.
	+ The Power of Collaboration with Workforce
	+ Four management office, 39 counties
	+ VR Field Staff, 70 VR Counselors, 36 Rehabilitation Assistants, 14 Other Support Staff, 11 Unit Management
	+ 8327 Total Customers Served year to date.
* Doug Shryock, Director of Workforce & Economic Development
	+ Spoke about mission and value statement “first class work force and premium work force”. He mentioned that while in the Airforce stationed in Germany, he had an incident and without the services he received from VR he would be sitting home.
* Angelia Snow, WSET Centers Director
* Roses from Tyler are used in the Rose Bowl parade on New Year’s Day. She introduced Cheryl Newton, Deputy Project Manager, Stephen Lynch, Director of Community Affairs and Carolyn Garrett, Area Manager.

**VRD Region 4: Project SEARCH Presentation, Jennifer McCurley, Transition Counselor & Project Search Team**

* Project SEARCH is the most successful program VR has in the state of Texas and is celebrating 10-year anniversary.
* Region 4 works with Tyler ISD and Chapel Hill ISD.
* DJ Warren, Program Manager, and Instructor for Project SEARCH Team
* Is a collaborative partnership using support and resources from education, Vocational Rehabilitation, community rehab providers, intellectual and developmental disabilities services agencies and the intern family and the intern.
* Four of the nine interns attended the RCT meeting in person Abby, Austin, Kevon, and Jaden.
* Introduced: Susan Nabi, Director of Winning Edge Employment Services, Mendy Ritchie, Job Skills Trainer Winning Edge Employment Services, DJ Warren, Project Search Instructor, Tyler ISD, Wendi Tuz, Business Liaison Christus
* Provided the process of Project SEARCH
* 30 sites in Texas, 711 program sites in the U.S. and around the world. Project SEARCH has approximately 43,000 young people with disabilities since 2010.
* Success story of each intern was shared. Those that were present introduced themselves and were available for questions.
* As of 2022-23 year there were six sites in Texas with a 100% hire rate, three sites with 90% hire rate and we were one of those three and tied for 2nd in Texas. Our current team has five years of 100% hire rate.
* VRD Region 4: Region Updates

**VRD Region 4: Region Updates Brandi Clark, VR Manager, MU 4-2, Steve Lynch, Community Affairs Director, Harold Whitfield, VR Manager, MU 4-3, Karen Givens VR Supervisor for Donna Dounley, VR Manager, MU 4-1**

* Brandi introduced her team that was present.
	+ Collaboration & Partnerships, SEAL 78 participants, Project SEARCH, Regional Office Connections, Workforce Wednesdays, Employer Networking, SHN/School Districts.
	+ Monthly meetings with regional staff and community partners to serve blind and visually impaired.
	+ Workforce Wednesdays, one month workforce partners to present to our staff and the other month our staff present to workforce.
* Stephen Lynch, Community Affairs Director
	+ Talked about the collaboration with TWC VR.
* Harold Whitfield, VR Manager MU4-3
	+ Deep East and Southeast
	+ VR Services and Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas Partnership includes:
		- Open Communication, Co-enrollments, cross training, holiday food drive, SEAL 60 participants, paid work experience, youth career expo 3000 students, 100 vendors and about 30 school districts.
	+ Received, VR Integration Awards, 2022 Award 1st place $100,000 NDEAM Event Inclusion Works 2023 Outreach materials, 2023 Award 2nd place $75,000 NDEAM Event Inclusion Works 2024 Summer STEM Camp, and 2024 Pending
* Karen Givens, VR Supervisor MU4-1
	+ Northeast Texas 4-1 Building Bridges – Fostering Inclusion
	+ Project SOAR is a five-week workshop, two nights per week. We’ve partnered with Texarkana Community College to develop a program for transition age students.
	+ College 101 partnered with Texarkana Community College. This is a four-day group training program for students interested in vocational training that will allow opportunities to a competitive world of employment.
	+ NDEAM National Disability Employment Awareness Month. We celebrate customer success stories with VR, community partners, workforce board staff and VR service providers.
	+ Dual Customer/No Wrong Door This form utilized at NE Texas WFC ensures that all customers are enrolled in Work in Texas to promote better opportunities for employment.
	+ SEAL, goal is to place 34 students, currently have 33 registered.

**Statewide Job Club, Paid Work Experience, Region 4 Programs Jacki Everhart-Thompson, Business Relations Coordinator Christina Ward, Business Relations Coordinator**

* Mail role is to work with businesses to educate them on VR and how we can assist their business if they give our individuals an opportunity to work for them.
* Statewide Job Club, this is a seven-week virtual program, we talk about talent acquisition, self-advocacy, networking, resume tips, job application, interview, how to keep the job.
* Step Program, skills training to employment project, customers who are job ready but have limited to no experience. 12-week paid work experience. In Tyler we have four cohorts, one successfully hired, total of five participants have gone through the program. VR works with the onsite team to develop a training program and ensure it’s a good fit.

**VRD Region 4: Customer Success Stories**

**Justin Collier, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor**

**Kel Cates, Restoration Specialist and Alicia Milliard, VR Counselor for Blind/Visual Impairments**

* Kel presented his story; included his life pre-diagnosis, to struggles and support after being diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa in his 30’s. Then his successful new career as a roof inspector with the help of his VR Counselor Alicia and John at Priority Roofing and others.
* Justin Collier VR Counselor) presented his story. He acquired a spinal cord injury that resulted in paralysis from the chest down. He had an interaction with VRC Mike Vincent at the intensive care unit that calmed and eased his concerns about his future employment and connected him to Eric Mills VRC. His outcome is being successfully hired at TWC as a VRC. Mike shared his story from the VRC side.

**RSA Monitoring Report, Cindy Geisman**

* RSA monitoring was held August 2023. The draft report was received in February 2024. Findings:
	+ There was one program finding that VR was not making Pre-ETS services available statewide. The base was because VR does not have Pre-ETS customer in all 254 counties in Texas. VR did not agree with finding. VR responded that the statute requires VR to offer Pre‑ETS services statewide. It does not require that we have a Pre‑ETS customer in every jurisdiction in the state. Although that is certainly our goal. VR explained their process of reaching out to Pre-ETS students. RSA rescinded this finding so you will not see it in the final report. VR is taking the recommendation and looking into ways to reach out and serve students in these counties.
	+ There were two fiscal findings that will be in the final report.
		- The first fiscal finding was that VR needs to make changes to the case management system, ReHabWorks, when reassign service authorizations to a Federal award, VR needs to make sure that they are assigning it to the right Federal award based on the awards period of performance. This finding VR self‑identified to RSA on the first day of the monitoring review, and VR has been working to remedy that finding for the last several months.
		- The second fiscal finding was relatively minor, and it had to do with how VR reported administrative costs on one of their financial reports. VR mistakenly included the salaries of direct service staff in the administrative category. This was in part due to some changes that RSA made in the reporting forms and in the instructions in Federal fiscal year '21.

**PCG Rate Study Follow Up/Implementation Plan, Jamie Haywood, Deputy VR Division Director for Program Policy, and Support**

* VR is working with the PCG rate study in coordination with operations team and Scott’s team to build different budget scenarios. These include insuring sustainability. The rate implementation will occur in phases over several years FY25, 26 and 27. This will require extensive work in policy, ReHabWorks, communication with providers and staff. VR is hoping to implement all the rates that were recommended at the end of FY27.

**Committee Reports**

* Policy, Procedure & Personnel Development, Karen Stanfill, Chair
	+ Rachael Anderson presented a demonstration of the new look of the TWC VR Policy Manual. This will be available to staff on May 31 and go live July 1. It will be available on the TWC VR website.
	+ TWC VR vacancy report, there are 68 current vacancies. This is down from last quarter.
	+ There were two hearing decisions to review this meeting. We noted one reported the IPE was not signed by the client/mother but was in the file signed by the client. This is a concern and one that Ap is already discussing with VR.
	+ We reviewed the Strategic Plan and reminded us of these goals and progress.
	+ We discussed the concern with the lack of providers in the state. Ms. Haywood shared that she is on a Team to look at how to increase providers for clients in these areas that have limited options. They expect to be ready to move on it in about 6 months.
	+ We have a goal to see if a digital campaign may help spread word about VR to help with recruiting. Ms. Haywood suggested we get with Cheryl Fuller to help see what is going on and how this goal may fit into the steps already under way.
* Education and Membership, Emily Robinson, Chair
	+ Legislative Update SB55 requires TEA to conduct a study to determine best practices for assisting students with autism spectrum disorder who are enrolled at institutions of higher education. They have held two meetings one on January 24th and one on February 23rd. Included a presentation on Aggie Achieve. The subject of this study has not yet been discussed. HB1 rider 34 has to do with VR reporting requirements. Talked about Combined State Plan (CSP) process. Rider 49 apprenticeship and internship opportunities for people with disabilities. VR is drafting a report and should be available by October 1. HB0728 relating to the statewide interagency services coordinating council. The council has been developed and have held their first meeting. Next meeting is set for June 5, 2024.
	+ RCT onboarding new members and mentorship Emily will connect with the committee chair.
	+ Nominations for RCT Chair and Vice Chair, email has been sent for nominations, election will be at the August meeting.
* Customer Satisfaction & Needs Assessment, Peggy Schmidt for Lisa Cowart, Chair
	+ The CSNA report is being written and the council members will have that report for our August meeting. They talked a little bit about the high-level data that they had for experience and postsecondary education to include in that CSNA.
	+ We reviewed the customer satisfaction surveys for both the open and closed cases, and those are the ones done by Westat. This is the second quarter that they had the new questions and the online option available. Overall, for the first two quarters they had a 32% response rate, which is almost 8500 customers, I believe is correct. 25% of those respondents were online and 25% were over the telephone. And the full presentation is in the online binder.
	+ One of our strategic planning goals was to understand a little bit about how the process of any kind of active customer complaints or concerns were tracked through VR. We kind of tied that to the response that we're working on within RCT so that we can send the correct information for people to follow up on if they reach out to us as we continue to get the RCT name out there to help drive traffic to VR services. We will continue to have conversation on this.
* Ad-Hoc Public Engagement Committee, Gennadiy Goldenshteyn
	+ RCT website when live in February as a soft launch. RCT is looking for offline/face to face opportunities to drive public engagement and awareness for VR and RCT. RCT members will attend the TWC Annual Conference in the fall and are looking for other events.
* Ad-Hoc Strategic Planning Peggy Schmidt
	+ A poll was sent to RCT Committee members for dates one and a half days. I will follow up with the results of the poll.

**NCSRC/CSAVR Report Out**

* Gennadiy Goldenshteyn and Lisa Godwin attended the spring conferences April 6-10, 2024, in Bethesda MD.
* RSA and VR voiced concerns of the amount of money being returned to federal government.
* The management groups from states that attended the technical assistance training center that's funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) for quality management, training on the VR budget didn’t return any money.
* Another take‑away from CSAVR is how hard RSA is working to collaborate with their Federal partners, with the other programs, and hoping that they are setting the example that we will all follow.

**Liaison Reports** full reports are included in the RCT meeting binder.

* Client Assistance Program (CAP), Karen Stanfill
	+ Service Animal Policy guidance
	+ Individual Plan for Employment (IPEs) signature and amendments
	+ Talking with VR about funding
	+ Chairman asked about VR budget and results that CAP is seeing
		- There is money, it appears the delay has to do with approval of service authorization before it gets issued. It appears that approval is required from someone other than the counselor. It was confirmed that the management unit must approve as it is one pool of money.
* Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP), Peggy Schmidt
	+ Last call was February 21 with 176 in attendance.
	+ Next call will be June 4.
	+ Provider representatives met last week to discuss training topics for June.
	+ We had conversation about getting SAs, at the provider level it seems to be moving in the right direction.
	+ Andrew will bring back info to discuss.
	+ CSAVR sent out survey for providers to complete. Cheryl will send out to the VR provider list to encourage providers to participate.
* State Independent Living Council (SILC), Patrik Sturdivant
	+ Last meeting on February 27th
	+ Meeting this afternoon to hopefully selecting a new Executive Director for SILC.
	+ Meeting as a board on May 9th, Open Town Hall May 23 Hybrid
* Texas Education Agency (TEA), Emily Robinson
	+ Transition Planning Resources specific for families in English and Spanish these are on our SPEDTex website.
	+ Supplemental Special Education Services (SSES) application is closed for this school year. Application will reopen on February 3, 2025.
	+ Engagement Opportunities We are always looking for ways to connect with our partners in the field! From site visits, to review opportunities, to focus groups, there are numerous ways to connect with TEA and support the field of education. If you are interested in participating in any engagement opportunities, click on the link [Engagement Opportunities Interest Form](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/0821510d23a74c25bf694e2c73127ca6).
* Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC), Michele Harper
	+ Michele was not available for oral report.
* Partners Resource Network (PRN), Lisa Cowart
	+ Lisa was not available for oral report.

**Public Comment**

* Harold Parker
* Barbara Brewer
* Lisa Rodriguez (connection issues, requested comments be submitted writing to be read at next meeting)

**Meeting Adjourned**