

**Governor’s Council on Disability
Quarterly Council Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2021**

Council Members Present/Participating:

Joan Bergstrom, Chuck Comstock, Wayne Crawford, Betty Davidson, Ronald Hack, Rosemary Hendon, Katie Jones, Kim Lackey, Elijah Mayfield, Susan Orton, Traci Ritter, Andrew Sartorius, Lesia Shelton, James Trout, Robert Wallace

Council Members Absent/Not Participating:

Chip Hailey

Department Liaisons:

Anita Baker	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation DESE
Morgan Corder	Attorney General’s Office – AGO
Natalie Hewitt	Attorney General’s Office – AGO
Cathy Lucia	Missouri Department of Conservation - MDC
Katy Plaster	Department of Natural Resources - DNR
Shomari Rozier	Department of Health and Senior Services – DHSS/DSDS

Staff: Claudia Browner, Laura Mueth, Rachel Rackers, Jessica Zimmer

Guests: David Baker, Olivia Apollo, Luke Barber, Tami Brown, Aaron Martin, Christy Miller, DeAnna Noriega, Rebeca Swank

Vice Chair Ron Hack called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Roll call was taken. There was a quorum for the meeting with 15 of the Council members in attendance. The meeting was held by WebEx.

Approval of agenda: The agenda was unanimously approved by the Council.

Approval of meeting minutes: The Council members unanimously approved the meeting minutes for February 19, 2021. The approved minutes will be posted on the GCD website.

Public Comment: Prior to the Council meeting, Claudia had sent the Council members a request for a letter of support from UMKC-IHD for a CDC grant application. Christy Miller, UMKC-IHD, joined the meeting to answer questions about the grant application. The Council discussed and asked questions about the grant and its funding. The Council unanimously voted to approve the letter of support.

Council Updates:

Yvonne Wright resigned from her position as Council Chair effective April 14, 2021. The GCD team will be meeting with Yvonne on May 14 to present her with a recognition plaque for her service on behalf of the Council.

Chip Hailey has been reappointed for another term on the council until October 1, 2023.

Deanna Noriega resigned her Council membership effective April 16, 2021. The Council thanked her for her years of service with the council since 2009 and recognized her with a plaque.

Introduction of new Council members:

The Council welcomed the two newly appointed members, Traci Ritter and Wayne Crawford. Traci works with local disability advocacy groups and was recently appointed to the Cape Girardeau County SB 40 board.

As the director of the Missouri Inclusive Housing Development Corporation, Wayne works to help remove housing obstacles and develop housing opportunities for people with disabilities.

GCD Awards Presentation:

Claudia presented the awards to the 2020 Inclusion and Youth Leadership Award winners and honorable mentions. The Inclusion Award and one Honorable Mention are presented annually to recognize private and public employers, individuals, and organizations that have successfully included people with disabilities in education, employment, housing, leisure activities, universal design and website accessibility.

The Inclusion Award winner is the St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station. The aquarium is fully accessible and inclusive with universal design throughout. A variety of accommodations can be viewed on their website and requested prior to visiting the aquarium. The aquarium makes efforts to make job opportunities available to people with all abilities by embracing inclusive employment practices and hiring individuals with disabilities. Rachel and Claudia visited the aquarium on Wednesday. Executive Director Tami Brown accepted the award.

The Honorable Mention is Job One in Independence. Job One offers community based day services, work experience programs for high school students, and employee advocacy. They provide education to employers about the benefits of hiring neuro-diverse individuals. Aaron Martin, CEO, and Rebeca Swank accepted the award.

The Youth Leadership Award recognizes outstanding Missouri youth who have demonstrated exemplary leadership by making a difference in their communities.

The Youth Leadership Award winner is Luke Barber. Luke is a passionate leader on the education and promotion of rights of persons with disabilities. He is a graduate of the DD Council's Partners in Policymaking program. Luke serves on the St. Louis County Commission on Disabilities and regularly connects with legislators to advocate for the disability community.

The Honorable Mention is Olivia Apollo. She is a leader in her community at Webster University where she participates in the Access U career development program for students with disabilities and advocates for accessibility on campus. As a camp counselor for Dream Big, a career exploration camp for youth with disabilities, she had an incredible impact on the participants by empowering them to feel more confident and applying their self-advocacy skills.

The Council congratulated all winners. GCD will post photos of the award winners on the GCD website and social media accounts.

Reports from GCD Team: The report was sent to the Council via email prior to the meeting. Team members provided highlights of their reports.

Claudia:

- Serves on the Missouri Advisory Committee on Equitable COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution and participates in weekly meetings
- Claudia was appointed to the UMSL SUCCEED Advisory Board. The board's first meeting was held April 22.
- Serves on the Equity Advisory Committee (DHEWD). This new committee was formed to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in higher education. The first committee meeting was held April 6.
- Provided outreach through GCD resource magnets. Delivered magnets to all legislators and elected officials in the capitol in April.
- Budget update – On March 2, all restricted funds were released for the remainder of FY21. As of April 26, we have spent/encumbered 29% of our E&E budget. FY22 budget – The House and Senate have made no changes to our budget request.

Laura:

- The First Responder Disability Awareness Training (FRDAT) grant from the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council was set to expire in June, but will be extended until September 30 and potentially the end of

December. Laura has met with the FRDAT project director and the director of the DD Council to explore options for sustainability and a new part of the program called the Disability Advisory Panel.

- Laura thanked Morgan Corder (AGO) for his support with a technical assistance email.

Rachel:

- Rachel continues to participate with the National Youth Leadership Forum (AYLF) Association's monthly meetings. The AYLF is planning a national virtual event for students with disabilities.
- Participated in the planning meeting for the Leadership Development Program for deaf/hard of hearing students, planned for the fall of 2021.
- The virtual Regional Leadership Forum (RLF) held on March 13 and 20, 2021 was a great success; 28 students participated and learned from employers, mentors, alumni, and keynote speakers about the importance of goal setting, self-advocacy, independent living, and leadership. The twelve participating Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) alumni shared how MO-YLF has impacted their lives.
- GCD is planning to host the next Virtual Leadership Summit on February 26, 2022.
- Rachel reported that she has contacted WebEx customer support to discuss and recommend accessibility improvements of the WebEx platform.

Jessica:

- Recently returned from maternity leave, and will be working from the office to have a presence in the building and be available to answer phone calls.

Presentation

David Baker with Missouri Assistive Technology (MO-AT) gave a presentation on "Bridging the Digital Divide" for individuals with disabilities.

The presentation shared information about the importance of making technology and websites accessible to all and highlighted the different programs and trainings MO-AT offers. David shared that starting May 12, a broadband benefit will be available to individuals with disabilities to offset costs of broadband access and devices through the end of the pandemic (<https://fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>).

More information about the agency can be found on MO-AT's website at <https://at.mo.gov>

Information Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility Training: <https://at.mo.gov/it-access/ict-training.html>

Missouri Assistive Technology YouTube channel featuring past training videos: [Missouri AT](#)

State Liaisons Reports (reports moved to after the presentation)

Anita Baker (VR) reported that the VR offices will be fully opened effective May 3, 2021. The hours will be Monday to Friday 8:00-4:30. Anita summarized VR's 2021 priorities.

Morgan Corder (AGO) reported that the AGO consulted with Missouri Assistive Technology to assure website accessibility. Attorney General Eric Schmitt is working with autism centers to increase funding for the centers across the state. As part of the state's Bicentennial Celebration, the AGO is presenting the Attorney General Honors Award to recognize outstanding public achievements of Missouri citizens. Nominations can be submitted at <https://ago.mo.gov/about-us/attorney-general-honors>

Shomari Rozier- The Money Follows the Person program has had a slow start in 2021 with only 23 transitions so far due to the pandemic. The Level of Care Transformation Project will go into effect July 30. This is also the date all the frontline employees will return to the field. All Code of State Regulations (CSR) relating to DHSS activities are being updated and revised. There will be a period for formal and informal comments before the end of the year.

Old Business: 2021 Council Committee appointments were discussed.

Employment Subcommittee Chair – Katie Jones volunteered for the position and Ron Hack issued the appointment.

Healthcare Subcommittee Chair – the Council discussed the purpose of this committee. The Council decided to table the appointment of the subcommittee chair until the August meeting.

New Business –

The Executive Committee nominated Ron Hack to be the Interim Chair. Ron Hack accepted the nomination. The Council approved by unanimous vote, Ron abstained from the vote. Claudia will notify Boards and Commissions Director Kyle Aubuchon of Ron being elected Interim Chair.

Betty Davidson was nominated and elected as the programs committee chair.

Council member reports

Betty Davidson is retiring from the Special School District on July 1 and is starting a non-profit organization called Inclusivity Media to represent and feature individuals with disabilities.

Katie Jones reported that the Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshops is in support of the employment first efforts.

Kim Lackey – Paraquad is participating in Missouri Assistive Technology’s robotic pet project to provide interaction for individuals who have been socially isolated during the pandemic. There are still pets available for adoption. Paraquad has received a large donation of jeans that are adaptive with magnets and Velcro in a variety of sizes available for free. They are also offering utility assistance in St. Louis for people with disabilities.

Elijah Mayfield – In March he did a public service announcement with Governor Parson for World Down Syndrome Day, which can found on the Governor’s Social Media Account at <http://facebook.com/GovMikeParson/videos/celebrating-world-down-syndrome-day-in-missouri/278514693949131/>

Also in March he participated in a Facebook live event with the Department of Health and Senior Services to emphasize the importance of individuals with disabilities and their caregivers to receive the COVID -19 vaccine. On April 21, his vaccination story and PSA were featured in the White House Virtual Forum on Breaking Down Barriers for People Who Have Challenges Accessing the COVID-19 Vaccination.

Sue Orton is working with the St. Louis County Commission on Disabilities subcommittee on a draft ordinance on universal design. Sue continues to participate on the disaster taskforce of the MHDC housing committee. The St. Louis County Library has received a grant to issue GrandPad tablets to seniors to stay connected to loved ones during the pandemic.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:14 p.m.

The next regular Council meeting will be held **Friday, August 20, 2021** at 10 AM at the **Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare, CFO Room, 221 Metro Drive, Jefferson City** or by WebEx/conference call.

Minutes by Jessica Zimmer

05/03/2021

Approved by Council 8/20/21