

**Governor’s Council on Disability
Quarterly Council Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2021**

Council Members Present/Participating:

Joan Bergstrom, Chuck Comstock, Betty Davidson, Chip Hailey, Katie Jones, Kim Lackey, Elijah Mayfield, Susan Orton, Andrew Sartorius, Lesia Shelton, Opeoluwa Sotonwa, James Trout, Robert Wallace

Council Members Absent/Not Participating:

Ronald Hack, Rosemary Hendon, DeAnna Noriega, Yvonne Wright

Department Liaisons:

Shawn Brice	Department of Social Services – DSS/MFP
Morgan Corder	Attorney General’s Office – AGO
Jennifer Hentges	Missouri Department of Agriculture – MDA
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
Joyce Wilson	Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – DESE/MSD

Staff: Claudia Browner, Laura Mueth, Rachel Rackers

Guests: Gary Antal, Fred Hicks, Rob Honan, Sheli Reynolds
ASL interpreters AJ Housewright and Shelly Jones

Katie Jones, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:03 am. Roll call was taken by Claudia. There was a quorum for the meeting with 13 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 November 13, 2020. The approved minutes will be posted on the GCD website.

Public Comment: Gary Antal with the Department of Veterans Affairs attended to provide his contact information and speak about the workforce readiness and employment program for veterans. For assistance with veterans’ issues, he can be reached at gary.antal@va.gov or (314) 253-4391.

Council Chair report: Yvonne Wright was unable to attend the meeting due to a schedule conflict. Vice Chair Katie Jones chaired the meeting.

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

Claudia:

- Claudia announced that Opeoluwa (Ope) Sotonwa has resigned his Council member position due to moving out of state and presented him with a recognition plaque for his contributions to the Council from 2018 – 2021. The Council members joined her in congratulating Ope on his new job and thanked him for his work on the Council.
- Claudia has contacted the Boards and Commissions Office about the five current Council vacancies. Director

Kyle Aubuchon indicated that new Council member appointments are planned for April.

- GCD staff member Jessica Zimmer is currently on maternity leave. Her duties have been divided among the other team members.
- Laura and Claudia attended the Missouri Advisory Committee on Equitable COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution on February 18. The committee meets weekly.
- She participated in the Engaging in Public Policy event hosted by the Missouri DD Council on February 11, which discussed ways to stay engaged in legislative advocacy during the pandemic.
- Claudia took on the site coordinator role for GCD for state employee COVID-19 testing and attended the monthly site coordinator meetings. GCD's first voluntary test took place this week.
- **2020 GCD Awards:** The deadline for submitting nominations for the annual Inclusion and Youth Leadership Awards was February 15. Claudia asked for volunteers to review and rank the award nominations in both categories to determine the winners of the 2020 awards. Volunteer judges are: Kim Lackey, Cathy Lucia, Sue Orton, and Andrew Sartorius.
- Budget update – For FY21, GCD has spent about 13% of its expense and equipment budget to date. The House and Senate held the budget hearings for the FY22 budget requests on February 1 and 2.

Laura:

- Laura participated in several webinars and trainings that are listed in the team report.
- She presented on disability etiquette and awareness at the new employee orientation for VR employees in January.
- To date, Laura has conducted two virtual Legislative Education Project (LEP) Q&A sessions to The Whole Person (January 26) and Starkloff Disability Institute's DREAM BIG (February 17). Groups can schedule these programs through April.
- She provided an article about legislative advocacy during the pandemic for, and participated in the Engaging in Public Policy event on February 11.
- Wayne Crawford, executive director for MO Housing, asked Laura to serve on the Money Follows the Person housing group he chairs. Shomari thanked her for serving on the committee.
- Laura has communicated with several legislators about using person first language in their bills. Chip Hailey conducted a survey of individuals regarding the term "visually impaired" versus "low vision". The majority responded that "visually impaired" is appropriate.

Rachel:

- Rachel continues to participate with the National YLF Association's monthly meetings.
- She attended the Partners in Education (PIE) conference in February.
- The IT project to create a web application for the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) program has been completed.
- The 2021 MO-YLF had to be canceled due to ongoing concerns with the pandemic.
- The Regional Leadership Forum (RLF) will be held virtually on March 13 and 20, 2021. More than 30 students are confirmed to participate in the event, where they will hear from employers, mentors, alumni, and keynote speakers about the importance of goal setting, self-advocacy, independent living, and leadership.

Report from State Liaisons:

Morgan Corder and Natalie Hewitt (AGO) – The AGO staff has participated in Relay Missouri Training to be able to assist all callers. The consumer protection office provides a Consumer Protection Hotline to report scams and fraud, and can be reached at 800-392-8222. Educational presentations on existing scams can be scheduled by contacting Natalie.

Shomari Rozier (DHSS/DSDS) – Under the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program, there have been 126

transitions in 2020, which is 90% of the projected transitions for the year. The MFP funding should last through 2024 or 2025. Major delays in transitions are due to getting social security checks routed back to the individuals. The level of care transition project will take effect starting in July of 2021. The department will conduct a pilot project for mobile assessments of individuals to increase productivity. There has been a 6% reduction in the reimbursement rate for Consumer Directed Support (CDS) services.

Joyce Wilson (DESE) reported that the number of positive COVID cases in state schools have gone down.

Fred Hicks (DNR) is the ADA Coordinator for the DNR's State Parks Division. He attended the meeting to learn about the Council.

Presentation: Sheli Reynolds, with UMKC-IHD, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), provided a presentation on Charting the LifeCourse, a program assisting individuals with disabilities set and reach goals to live their best lives through integrated services and supports. More information about the program is available at <https://www.lifecoursetools.com/network/chapters/missouri/>

Old Business: The appointment of the Employment Subcommittee chair was postponed until the April Council meeting.

New Business: None

Committee Reports:

Advocacy Committee – Laura sent emails to the house and senate to remind them that GCD is a resource on disability-related information and training. GCD also sent a letter to house speaker Rob Vescovo regarding assignment of a disability committee.

Housing Committee – Sue reported that the St. Louis County Commission on Disabilities has established a task force to draft an ordinance for universal design that would encompass new builds as well as rehabs. Sue participates in meetings of the Missouri Housing Development Commission's (MHDC) housing section of the Disaster Preparedness Group. MHDC has recently launched a website with information for landlords and tenants on the Emergency Rental Arrear Program (ERAP) as well as resources for affordable housing, which can be found at <https://mohousingresources.com>

Healthcare Committee – Ope stated SB 43 would require private insurance companies to cover hearing aids for children. Ope has had conversations with the Governor's Office and the Department of Health and Senior Services to recommend making individuals with disabilities a priority group for COVID vaccinations.

Transportation Committee – Betty reported that the Metro Bi-State Transportation Council met to address issues regarding transportation for individuals with disabilities, specifically those who need transportation to receive COVID vaccines. Klaus Mittelstadt, formerly with the St. Louis Society for the Blind, now works with the Metro Bi-State Transportation Council, and is a great advocate for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Chip stated that Uber and Lyft are offering 10 million free rides for individuals who need transportation to receive their COVID vaccines. More information is available at <https://www.uber.com/newsroom/10-million-rides/>

Council member reports:

Lesia Shelton spoke about employment efforts of Chill-Pak, a Springfield based company that has been employing individuals with disabilities through an initiative called Ability Employment. Lesia also mentioned

Walk for 22, an organization raising awareness about suicides and mental health issues among veterans by organizing events and raising funds for services.

Sue Orton – The St. Louis County Library is expanding the Digital Equity Initiative to help underserved older adults access technology and stay connected to loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting February 10, older adults can apply to receive a GrandPad tablet for one year. Application deadline is February 28, 2021.

Chuck Comstock has been serving as chair of curriculum of the Advisory Board at A.T. Still University in Kirksville with a program to help educate student doctors about how to interact with individuals with disabilities by participating in classes with first and second year student doctors. He is scheduled to participate via zoom in a class for Truman State University. Chuck has adapted his 4WD wheelchair with a blade to plow snow from driveways.

Chip Hailey recently completed a three-day training regarding audio description of National Parks, museums and road maps. The Missouri Council of the Blind (MCB) will have a conference call with legislative advocates on February 25 to discuss legislative priorities. One of their priorities is accessible absentee voting by mail. HB 324 would require making accessible voting equipment available for all elections. MCB is concerned that the bill states that the four Missouri counties with a population of more than 350,000 people would only require one accessible voting machine per municipal polling precinct. Other legislation the MCB is following includes HB117 (blind pension) and HB388 (Department of Revenue mailings). Both would change language about mailing certain items by first class mail instead of certified mail since this may cause a hardship for people who are blind/visually impaired by requiring transportation to the post office to pick up the mail if they are not home at the time of delivery.

Katie Jones stated that her focus is on how the proposed change of the federal minimum wage and possible elimination of 14C would affect employment of people with disabilities.

Kim Lackey stated that the 6% cut to the CDS program is a top priority for Paraquad's advocacy efforts with the legislature at this time.

James Trout participates in the Inclusive Design Alliance for St. Louis County, which is working on editing some of the universal design criteria to make it more easily understood and adopted by code officials, builders, and realtors.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

The next regular Council meeting will be held **Friday, April 30, 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 Claudia Browner
02/23/2021

Approved by Council
4/30/2021