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Director



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION
Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.



Dena Schmidt
Administrator

Draft Minutes

Name of Organization: Nevada Commission on Services for Persons with Disabilities (CSPD)

Date and Time of Meeting: August 12, 2021
9:00 a.m.

This meeting is open to the public and will be held at the following location:

Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
Aging and Disability Services Division
3416 Goni Road Suite D-132, Carson City, NV 89706

And via video-conference at:

The public may also observe this meeting and provide public comment on Zoom.

To Join the Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 929 904 1434

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Meeting Materials Available: [Home \(nv.gov\)](#)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Diane Thorkildson, Chair

Members Present: Char Frost, Stacy Alaribe, Pam Berek, Regina Daniel, Kimberly Glass, Ophelia Simmons-Urquhart,

Members Excused Absent: Diane Thorkildson, Erik Jimenez,

Members Unexcused Absent: Mechelle Merrill, Cimi Neal, Ophelia Simmons

Guests: Ace Patrick, Jeff Duncan, Jodi Tyson, Lisa Segler, Sheena Skelton, Dawn Lyons, Catherine Chavez, Sheena Childers, Cheryl Dinnell, Dora Martinez, Michael McMahon, Cindi Swanson

CART Provider: Becky Van Auken

Staff: Wendy Thornley

2. Public Comment (No action may be taken upon a matter raised under public comment period unless the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an action item. Public comment at the beginning and end of the agenda may be limited to three minutes per person at the discretion of the chairperson. Members of the public may comment on matters not appearing on this agenda or may offer comment on specific agenda items. Comments may be discussed by the Board, but no action may be taken. The matter may be placed on a future agenda for action)

Cindi Swanson: There are a few things she is thinking about regarding the 700 Hour group and how people can become knowledgeable of that.

Does the State of Nevada have a Work Incentive Planning Administration (WIPA)?

It concerns her when people say individuals will lose Social Security.

She has been asking for public benefits training since she moved to Nevada a year ago.

She has applied to be on this commission because she thinks it's a fabulous commission.

She feels that operations in Nevada are lacking.

If there's a parent whose child is 19 and that child is unaware of a program like the 700-hour program, there's an issue of finding resources.

She has gone to many trainings, to learn about working without losing benefits.

She is blind, and has a 34-year-old son with Down's Syndrome. He has worked and it is Supplemental Security Income (SSI), not Social Security.

They understood the incentives and Social Security does want them to work, and there are multiple safety nets.

She is very cautious about a body saying she might risk losing it, but there's such a huge body of information for people to understand to maintain those benefits.

Cheryl Dinnell: She is the Executive Director for the Nevada Lifespan Respite Care Coalition, and their coalition is transitioning into a public body like the CSPD.

They will be working on issues surrounding care giving and caregiver supports such as respite. Respite is the number one request caregivers make for themselves.

Many individuals with disabilities or special healthcare needs, have a primary caregiver to support them, most often without any compensation or pay.

The Pandemic has shown that these caregivers are essential support that has long been taken for granted, but they were the ones left standing alone when other supports and services were shuttered during the COVID pandemic.

The demands and pressures they experienced sometimes brought them to breaking points, and that creates two vulnerable persons. While CSPD is advocating for people with

disabilities, Nevada Lifespan Respite Coalition will be advocating for those important caregivers and their lives.

It is very probable they will be working with the CSPD on common issues. The Coalition is becoming aware of the priorities of the CSPD. The Coalition would like to combine efforts with the CSPD regarding supports for caregivers and influence the long-term supports that people with disabilities rely on.

She provided her contact information, cdinnell.contractor@adsd.nv.gov and the coalition website, NVCaregivingRelief.org they also have an introductory video to send out to better acquaint them to the public.

Char Frost: Perhaps the Coalition could be put on a future agenda to get more information. She is a caregiver and a big fan of respite and so are many of her cohorts. She thanked them for the information.

Dora Martinez: She wanted to advise Voc Rehab and others to make sure that materials are accessible.

She has shared resources with Voc Rehab to make their postings accessible.

The 700-hour program and Opportunity Village may be an option for others, but not most.

Referring people who are high-functioning to Opportunity Village is not a very smart thing to do, when they get to retired age, they cannot get pension or retirement benefits.

Some of the 700-hour program people who are blind, come to those programs and some have university degrees and some diplomas, and are told that Voc Rehab cannot accommodate them and that they are better off doing other things rather than what they went to get their degree for.

Some counselors at Voc Rehab push their perspective on persons coming for help.

The consumers are the experts of their disability and their abilities, they know what they need.

They do not need Vocational Rehabilitation's expertise on what they are capable of.

So that's just some advice, please, future reference, make all advertisement accessible because it's the law.

Regina Daniel: Just an observation. Sometimes we have to be careful that we don't look at certain things through our individual tunnel vision.

Certainly individuals that are higher functioning or who have control over their lives, they have different needs.

When people go to agencies, whether it's Voc Rehab or 700 Hour Program, Opportunity Village is an extended program, not a governmental agency, we have to make sure that we don't box out those individuals who do need those services and do need that guidance.

Many loved ones for those of us that are caretakers, we know that they can't make some of those decisions.

There are many that don't know what they want and don't know what they need.

And that's why there are different agencies so that there's a variety of options.

So it's not at one fits all or one thing is for everyone, but we just have to be careful that we don't single out agencies, organizations, that do help individuals.

They just may need a different type of help.

We want to expand it so that everyone who needs something has an opportunity to get it.

Just an observation.

Char Frost: I don't think that was the intent, I just want to put that on the record.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 13, 2021 **(For Possible Action)**

Diane Thorkildson, Chair

Regina Daniel motioned to approve the draft minutes. Pam Berek seconded. Members voted and the motion passed.

4. Nominations and Elections of Chair and Vice-Chair **(For Possible Action)**

Diane Thorkildson, Chair

Regina Daniel motioned to retain the current vicechair (Char Frost), and to have the Chair elected at the next meeting. Pam Berek seconded. Members voted; the motion carried. The election of the Chair will be tabled till the next meeting.

5. Presentation, Discussion and Make Possible Recommendations Regarding Three Square's strategic initiative related to serving people with disabilities who are also affected by food insecurity. **(For Possible Action)**.

Jodi Tyson, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives

Lisa Segler, Director of Strategic Initiatives

Sheena Skelton, Registered Dietician

Tabled

6. Discussion and Make Recommendations Regarding the Nevada Vocational Rehabilitation 700-Hour Program and How CSPD Can Support and Promote the Program. **(For Possible Action)**

Diane Thorkildson, Chair

Sheena Childers came on behalf of Mechelle Merrill, to answer questions.

Char Frost: She is assuming that the reason there have only been four total hires in 2021 and only 42 in 2020 was due to COVID.

Sheena Childers: That is correct.

Pam Berek: What is the 700 Hour program doing right now to alert the disability community about what they have to offer?

Sheena Childers: They have been working internally on a 700-hour workshop. This is something that they want to offer monthly to current VR clients, letting them know about the full-time employment opportunities through the 700-Hour Program.

They have not been necessarily marketing to the disability community at large, however, they have been putting some things in the works to get the word out to all their current clients about these opportunities with the state.

Regina Daniel: The last time marketing was done where was it done?

Sheena Childers: In years past, their employer engagement team run by Kim Pearson, their business development manager, has gone out to local employers telling them about the different programs. Within their program, they have done quite a bit with marketing this opportunity to current clients.

They do have counselors who meet monthly with their internal job development team, who is the team that does the skills-based qualifications to get entry into the 700-Hour Program, or list

and so they have been doing a lot of collaboration just making sure that their current Voc Rehab counselors know about these opportunities as well and can be setting up their clients for entry if that makes sense.

They have not done a lot of marketing to the outside or larger community at large, the disability community.

Regina Daniel: It appears that there has been a very limited pool of individuals who either have received help or received information regarding assistance.

The information about collaboration and preparation seemed to be all internal but it doesn't seem to be getting out to the community that Vocational Rehabilitation is actually serving. Is there any way the CSPD could get a report of some of the past successes to see whether this is effective or not, because right now it doesn't seem like a program is very effective statewide.

Sheena Childers: Yes, they have some data in the report that they could provide to the Commission on the progress of 700-hour placements.

Pam Berek: Could you explain more details about what the 700-Hour Program is, as opposed to other Voc Rehab programs that are out there. She is new to this, has a 19-year-old son, and is curious.

Sheena Childers: The 700-Hour Program is different from the other VR services in that 700 hours is really specific to state employment.

It is a law that gives retention to persons with disabilities, who have been certified identified by a VR counselor, to bypass some of the hiring or pre-hiring processes to get into state employment.

The 700 Hours functions as an on the job training or assessment for a period of about 17 and a half weeks where the state employer can try out that person with a disability in that job.

If they do well, the incentive is then to hire them permanently and that 11-month probation continues, and so it's a way of getting clients into state employment.

The 700-hour law helps to almost mandate that through the program.

It's a good program for individuals with disabilities that are looking for state employment, full time, decently paying full benefit jobs.

Pam Berek: Is it something where you have a specific list of jobs that are available or do you kind of create a job for the person who is applying?

Sheena Childers: Their clients that they certify for 700-hour jobs, they are all existing jobs within state government.

Unfortunately, there is not a lot of "job carving", it was kind of in the box.

The client must be willing to work full time because in state government, there's not a lot of part time positions.

The individual might need to consider giving up Social Security benefits.

There is not a lot of flexibility with state government.

They have helped individuals with disabilities get ADA reasonable accommodations while on the job, but in terms of less than full time hours, they have not seen a lot of that.

She thinks the reason that they have not had a lot of success in the program is that it might not be a great fit for a lot of clients that have different needs or that need some job carving.

Pam Berek: She can imagine that would be very difficult for most people with disabilities and agrees that that's probably a reason why it hasn't been as successful as they would like. Is there any chance of that changing, making opportunities for people that are wanting to do part time, since full time is a difficult thing for a lot of people as well as giving up their Social Security benefits. That would be a roadblock in promoting a program like this in her opinion.

Sheena Childers: Yes, those have been some of their challenges.

They have made some inroads with different state agencies, because a lot of it is based on employers getting the experience of having a person with a disability in a job.

Maybe incentivizing them to take a chance and push the rules to carve jobs to allow part time, but it would be a challenge to change state government in those ways.

She would say it is based on having some success with the folks that they do place in those jobs with those agencies for them to want to continue to hire individuals with disabilities and to perhaps take a chance with doing job carving, reduced hours, job sharing or some of those other kind of non-traditional methods for employment.

Regina Daniel: She is concerned, it seems that the pool of individuals that could be helped by the 700 Hour Program is very limited, and it almost appears as if they are not already connected, where would they start?

The second question is, what safeguard is there that if someone gives up their Social Security, that they're going to be able to get it back if that job last six months and then it disappears?

Sheena Childers: In answer to the first question, if an individual who is interested in the 700-Hour Program would approach VR, they do not have to be a client to be certified to be included on a list. Vocational Rehabilitation would take them through the internal process for skills qualification and identifying what job in state government they would like to try.

They do not have to apply for the jobs. The benefit of the 700-Hour Program, is that they are not part of the competitive application process. The individuals are bypassing that.

Once VR certifies that they can do, for instance, an Administrative Assistant III (AA III) job, they are put on that list statewide and any time one of those AA III jobs becomes available in the state, the agency pulls that list of Vocational Rehabilitation's qualified individuals with disabilities and the agencies are to make appointments to those jobs based on Vocational Rehabilitation's list.

A client would still need to approach VR in order to get to the 700-Hour Program.

Social Security has their own work incentives.

Depending on where they are at in their trial work period, an individual may be able to reply or get reinstated for the disability benefits should the 700-hour program position not work out.

It's reinstatement into those benefits.

She is not an expert in Social Security so she did not want to go too far into that, but the other safeguard is that the Voc Rehab counselor is still there to provide mentorship, guidance, and support through that process as well.

They would work with their Voc Rehab counselor to determine the next best action, do they go back on the list and try another 700-hour position or do they maybe try something else that would be a better fit for them.

Regina Daniel: How long will this program be funded if it continues to be unsuccessful against other programs?

Sheena Childers: Because the 700-Hour Program is a state law, it will continue as long as the law is enacted and current.

It will be a tool in their toolbox of things that they can offer to persons with disabilities seeking employment, but it won't be the only thing that they offer.

It's going to be based on what that individual wants in terms of employment pursuit.

But the program will continue, they hope that they will be able to get more people to be involved in the program and they can have more persons with disabilities in state government jobs, but as long as that law is around, they will continue to offer it to their clients.

Stacy Alaribe: For the majority of the 700 Hour Program, is it aimed towards individuals that are graduates? Are there enough jobs for them?

Sheena Childers: There are in state government, all sorts of jobs and there are jobs that require some college-level education.

The state has a long list of jobs, and so, yes, VR would look at individual interests and things that the candidate would bring to employment and they would match them with a job in state government that would be available that the applicant could get into the 700-Hour Program if that makes sense.

Pam Berek: So, say somebody applies and they get a position, and it doesn't work out. They've lost their Social Security benefits.

They go back on the list and are waiting for another position to open.

In the interim what are their income options?

Sheena Childers: They have a lot of clients in that situation that have tried work and for one reason or another it didn't work out, and so they've lost their Social Security benefits along the way.

So now they are back to just job searching. Vocational Rehabilitation doesn't offer any income replacement as a program. That's not in the scope of what they are able to do.

However, they are able to help someone look for immediate employment, and they call that survival employment.

They can make job leads, job matching, go into overdrive with clients that need work immediately. That is something that they do very often in conjunction with their other workforce development partners like JobConnect and the One Stop.

Based on the individual's needs, VR might also make information and referrals to other nonprofit agencies in the community that might be able to offer some income replacement if that's available and they are eligible for that.

Char Frost: This is across the spectrum of disabilities?

This program is available to returning veterans who have become disabled in the course of their duties and includes individuals who become disabled as adults, right?

So it's not just disabilities that are developmental and from birth on, it's the entire spectrum?

Sheena Childers: Yes, this program serves all persons with disabilities regardless of severity, nature, or group.

Regina Daniel: Are you going to provide a list of those individuals that have been served by the 700 Hour Program?

Sheena Childers: She can't provide a list because that is confidential information, but they could provide ongoing and updated perhaps quarterly, numbers of how the program is doing.

Regina Daniel: That sounds reasonable.

Actually, that will give a guideline of, are the same people being hired, how long are they being employed for, and what's the job retention for those individuals served.

Because these would be good selling points to get that messaging out.

We want to celebrate the success stories.

Char Frost: For the Commission and for the public listening, there was a PowerPoint included on the website in the meeting materials.

One of them is a PowerPoint from the 700 Hour Program and it appears that over the four years that the program has been implemented, that roughly half of the people who entered the program were changed to at least probationary status.

Is there any way to get an update on how many of those individuals made it past probationary status?

Sheena Childers: Yes. That is information that they maintain, and she should be able to provide numbers on that.

Char Frost: Is probationary status for a year?

Sheena Childers: 11 months.

Char Frost: Do the 700 hours count towards that probationary period?

Sheena Childers: Yes

7. Updates Regarding Disability Related Bills Passed During the Legislative Session.

Erik Jimenez, Senior Deputy, Office of the Nevada State Treasurer

Tabled

8. Update, Discussion and Make Possible Recommendations Regarding Division of Child and Family Services' (DCFS) Olmstead Plan and On-Going Department of Justice (DOJ)

Investigation. **(For Possible Action)**

Diane Thorkildson, Chair

Char Frost: She recently attended the Department of Justice community conversation that was open to the public so that the public could get their questions answered regarding this investigation. It is ongoing. There is no end date.

They are still in the process of gathering and examining information, they are still open to take calls from individuals in the communities who have had experiences with the children's mental health system.

If anyone has had experiences with that system and have not yet spoken to the DOJ, the opportunity still exists.

In addition, she thinks it's important to recognize that although the information that went out

was about overutilization of institutional settings, those institutional settings are not limited to out of state.

They are also looking at the fact that many children are placed in long-term residential treatment in-state. They are very interested in community-based services that could perhaps prevent some children from meeting this kind of treatment.

9. Discussion and Make Recommendations Regarding Pending and Possible New Applicants to Fill Current Commission Vacancies **(For Possible Action)**.

Diane Thorkildson, Chair

Char Frost welcomed the new members, Pam Berek and Kimberly Glass. Cindi Swanson introduced herself and stated that she had submitted the online membership application and sent her resume to Wendy. Wendy will follow up on this paperwork.

10. Discussion and Make Possible Determination of Issues and Agenda Items to be Considered or Deliberated at the Next Meeting **(For Possible Action)**

Diane Thorkildson, Chair

Tabled items.

11. Confirm Date for Future Meeting

Diane Thorkildson, Chair

The next meeting date is scheduled for **November 11, 2021, at 9:00 am.**

Because this date falls on the Veteran's Day holiday, the group decided to choose from November 4th or the 18th. Wendy will work with the Chair and Vice Chair regarding the choices and will possibly send out a Doodle poll.

12. Public Comment (May Include General Announcements by Commissioners) (No action may be taken upon a matter raised under public comment period unless the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an action item. Public comment at the beginning and end of the agenda may be limited to three minutes per person at the discretion of the chairperson. Members of the public may comment on matters not appearing on this agenda or may offer comment on specific agenda items. Comments may be discussed by the Board, but no action may be taken. The matter may be placed on a future agenda for action)

Dora Martinez: She addressed Char, they haven't met in-person and likes to hear Char's voice. Char sounds very compassionate and very outgoing and motivated. She thanked Char for all her hard work.

Assembly Bill 121 was passed this last session and that is the civil voting bill for anyone who has a disability in the state of Nevada or military uniformed person. She helped this bill pass. If anybody needs help accessing that and needs some basic technology help, do not hesitate to call (775) 682-9070, that's the Nevada Assistive Technology Resource Center with the University of Nevada.

She is part of a VI user group that uses technology to help them navigate the worldwide web. VR does not have a grievance form and she asks that they please make it available and accessible for people that need to fill that out.

Char Frost: Thanked Dora for working on AB 121.

She believes that moves the issues that the disability community faces forward and being able to vote and make sure that candidates who support disability issues, are voted in.

Of course, it's vital to the work we do and the changes that we're seeking.

13. Adjournment

Diane Thorkildson, Chair

Meeting adjourned at 10:18 am.

NOTE: Agenda items may be taken out of order, combined for consideration, and/ or removed from the agenda at the Chairperson's discretion. The public body may combine two or more agenda items for consideration. The public body may remove an item from the agenda or delay discussion relating to an item on the agenda at any time. The public body may place reasonable restrictions on the time, place, and manner of public comments but may not restrict comments based upon viewpoint.

NOTE: We are pleased to make reasonable accommodations for members of the public who have disabilities and wish to attend the meeting. If special arrangements for the meeting are necessary, please notify Wendy Thornley at (775) 687-0551 as soon as possible in advance of the meeting. If you wish, you may e-mail her at wthornley@adsd.nv.gov. In accordance with NRS 241.020, supporting materials for this meeting are available at: 3416 Goni Rd, D-132, Carson City, NV 89706 or by contacting Wendy Thornley at (775) 687-0551 or by email at wthornley@adsd.nv.gov

Agenda Posted at the Following Locations:

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