SC WORKS | BRINGING EMPLOYERS AND JOB SEEKERS TOGETHER
WORKLINK
ANDERSON·OCONEE·PICKENS

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Priority Populations Committee Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2017 @ 3:00pm
SC Works Clemson Comprehensive Center, Large Conference Room

Members Present		
Pat Pruitt, Vice Chair	Susan Stockton	Edgar Brown
Members Absent:		
Chris Sparrow	Lisa Gillespie, Chair	Billy Gibson
Staff Present:		
Jennifer Kelly	Windy Graham	
Guest Present:		
Karen Hamrick	Mary Stevenson	Callie Marsh

I. **Welcome and Introductions**
Vice Chair Pat Pruitt officially called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm welcoming everyone in attendance and announced the meeting being recorded for processing of minutes. Introductions were made of everyone in attendance.

II. **Approval of May 11, 2017 Meeting Minutes**
The minutes from the May 11, 2017 meeting were emailed to committee members and included in the meeting packet. Vice Chair Pruitt called for corrections/amendments to the minutes or a motion to approve.

ACTION TAKEN: Susan Stockton made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Edgar Brown. The motion carried unanimously.

III. **Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc.**
Vice Chair Pruitt asked Windy Graham, staff to the WorkLink WDB, to introduce the guest speaker, Mary Stevenson, from the Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc (P&A). Ms. Stevenson gave committee members a handout of her PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Stevenson explained that P&A was a private, non-profit, federally-mandated agency established in 1977 to protect the rights' of those with disabilities. Each State is required to have an equivalent agency and is kept separate from services provided by other agencies, such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Centers. P&A's mission is "to protect the legal, civil and human rights of people with disabilities by:

- Enabling individuals to advocate for themselves.
- Advocating on their behalf when they have been discriminated against or denied a service to which they are entitle.
- Promoting policies and services which respect their choices."

Ms. Stevenson stated that to be eligible for P&A services an individual must have a disability and must have experienced discrimination due to the disability or denied a service that they are entitled to. Regardless of eligibility, the general public may contact them at any time with questions or to report a possible discrimination.

Ms. Stevenson explained that there are four levels of services available to customers. The first level of service is information and referrals and serves as the first point of contact for most customers. The second level is case representation, which is where P&A gets directly involved, to determine whether or not they can assist a customer based on their situation. In this level of service, details are uncovered regarding the situation of possible decimation as well as to educate and encourage the customer in self-advocacy. If determined and needed, P&A becomes directly involved in advocating on behalf of the customer by attending meetings. At level three, P&A looks to make system changes that will benefit all of those with disabilities. They observe patterns that indicate that there are complaints repeatedly regarding a business, agency, or other facility and will seek to change policy on behalf of those with disabilities with that organization's management group. The fourth level, which is where Ms. Stevenson works, is the Self-Advocacy, Training, Education and Outreach group. They often participate in training local organizations regarding disabilities and attending job fairs to raise awareness.

P&A works in teams organized around these levels of service. The Outreach and Information team works to respond to issues, provides information to the public and customers as needed, makes referrals, conducts intake for the issues team, and conducts outreach. P&A has Spanish-speaking and ASL fluent staff available. The two issues teams are Protection & Independence, which looks specifically at abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other types of investigations on behalf of those with disabilities as well as encouraging independent living. The equal access team ensures that those with disabilities have the same access to services, places, and goods that the general public has access to. They have gotten calls for assistance with advocating on behalf of parents with students with a disability, as well as those that are in the hospital that need an interpreter. Ms. Stevenson states that P&A advocates on behalf of Spanish speakers as well. Occasionally, they receive issues surrounding service animals regarding what a person can be asked in regards to their service animal; typically, these issues can be resolved with education to the organization or facility. P&A also receive questions from employers regarding guidance on what they are required to provide for accommodations. Sometimes employers hesitate to hire those with a disability because they believe the accommodation will be too expense to make. They also assist with college and university accommodations as well as social security overpayments, and services from Vocational Rehabilitation and the Commission of the Blind.

The Governor has recently transferred the Client Assistance Program (CAP) from SC Vocational Rehabilitation to P&A. CAP specifically assists clients of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Independent Living Centers, and the SC Commission for the Blind. The transitions are scheduled to take place at the end of August 2017.

Ms. Stevenson also shared that P&A advocates on behalf of customers to obtain Assistive Technology that is needed through agencies that provide the technology. P&A also has some funding that assists those with a Traumatic Brain Injury, although strokes do not qualify under this heading.

IV. WorkLink's Data

Vice Chair Pruitt asked Ms. Graham to give an overview of the WorkLink data given in the committee packet. Ms. Graham referred the committee to the WIOA Targeted Population Summary seen on page 4. Ms. Graham stated that this was a summary for the entire program year (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017), and shows the individuals served through the SC Works system based on various demographics and barriers to employment, specifically those with a disability. Ms. Graham noted that there were 11 individuals using our services last year that disclosed that they had a disability. Their average wage was $7.25 upon exiting the program.

Ms. Graham also stated that the Community Profile, released by Department of Employment and Workforce on July 20, 2017, could be found in the packet beginning on page 8. This report explains the characteristics of our region and the unemployment rate. Ms. Graham pointed the committee to the commuting region on pages 20 and 21, as well the educational attainment of our region on page 35.

V. Other Business

a. Informal Assessment of the SC Works Clemson Center

Ms. Graham stated that WorkLink will be audited by the State in the near future. Therefore, Ms. Graham has requested walk-thru of the Center by various agencies to determine the adequacy of the access available to those with disabilities as well as the general public. The committee conducted an informal review of the Clemson SC Works Center.

Ms. Stevenson stated that one change she could recommend would be for those that are deaf that their interpreter sits with their backs to the glass to assist with confidentiality. Mr. Brown stated that exit signs should have horns and lights to assist those with disabilities in locating exits.

b. Proposed meeting dates for 2018

Ms. Graham proposed that meeting dates remain on the second Thursday of every other month, January, March, May, August and October. The group informally agreed. Ms. Graham stated that the Board will vote officially on these dates at the September or November Board meeting.

c. **Member Attendance**

Vice Chair Pruitt stated that attendance has not been as consistent as it should be and strongly encouraged all members to attend the scheduled meetings. Vice Chair Pruitt requested that the committee members look for appropriate ad hoc members to join the Priority Populations Committee.

d. **Introduction of Benefits for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers**

Mr. Edgar Brown passed around IBEW LU 379 CE-CW booklets. Mr. Brown gave an in-depth overview of the benefits available to individuals that become members of the electricians union, including insurance and apprenticeship opportunities.

VI. Adjourn

Vice Chair Pruitt called to adjourn the meeting at 4:06pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Jennifer Kelly