Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
State Rehabilitation Council Retreat
November 9, 2026
Final Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Brandy Schantz, Chris Martin, Ryan Haywood, Beth Klein, Heidi Lawyer, Frederick Foard (electronically), Ryan Mauzy, Lillian Garland, Patricia Morgan, Lee Talley, Yohance Goodrich (ex-officio), and Commissioner Nedra Moncrief-Craig (ex-officio).

Members Absent: Marco Callender, Travis Staton, Becky Alwood,

Others Present: Catherine Harrison, DARS; Brett Tavel, DARS; Lisa Robertson, DARS; David Leon, DARS, Julie Jacobs, DARS, Donna Bonessi, DARS, Alison Shaner, WWRC, Matt Doum, DARS, Dale Batten, DARS, Carrie Humphrey, ASL Interpreter; Elizabeth Leitch, ASL Interpreter.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m.

Introduction of Members: Schantz called the meeting to order. All members and others present introduced themselves. A quorum of voting members was established.

Approval of Electronic Participation: Foard was recognized as participating remotely under the SRC's Electronic Participation Policy. His participation was approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Meeting agenda: No changes. Agenda approved by unanimous consensus.

Approval of meeting minutes: No changes. Minutes approved by unanimous consensus.

Matters of Public Comment: There were no public comments received.

DRS Report Evaluating the Effectiveness of FFY 2026 VR Program Performance

Doum provided a presentation on performance measures for FFY 2026**.** The full presentation is included with the meeting materials.

DRS Response to 2025 SRC Recommendations
Deputy Commissioner Dale Batten introduced members of her team to provide updates on the PY 2025 Recommendations which are enclosed in the meeting materials.

Julie Jacobs provided updates on recommendations #1, 3, and 9.

David Leon provided updates on recommendations #2, 5, and 6.

Alison Shaner provided updates on recommendation #7.

Donna Bonessi provided updates on recommendations #4 and 8.

Commissioner's Remarks
Commissioner Moncrief-Craig welcomed members to the retreat. She highlighted the importance of DARS securing external grant funding opportunities, mentioning a specific focus on healthcare employment opportunities for clients. The importance of internships was highlighted for all ages, including adults. DARS plans on launching opportunities for paid work experiences paying between $18-23 per hour, with expected 12-week durations during the spring of 2027. She updated the SRC on the Caregivers Summit taking place on 11/13/2027 and additional opportunities to engage with aging side of the division through the "Aging Well" listening sessions taking place across the Commonwealth.

Development of 2026 SRC Recommendations
Schantz guided the SRC through the discussions of 2026 SRC Recommendations. Several previous recommendations were revisited and refined from their 2025 iterations and new recommendations were proposed. DARS staff will prepare draft recommendations based on the Council feedback and provide those to members at the 11/10/2026 SRC Business Meeting. The 2026 SRC Recommendations are scheduled to be finalized during the 11/10/2026 SRC Meeting.

Matters of Public Comment: There were no public comments received.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:28 p.m.

Meeting Handouts:
1. Proposed Meeting Agenda
2. 2025 SRC Recommendations
3. PowerPoint Presentation: Vocational Rehabilitation Program Performance Federal Fiscal Year 2026