

## **Kansas Rehabilitation Services**

### **State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation & Supported Employment Services FFY 2011-2013**

#### **Attachment 4.2(c) Input of State Rehabilitation Council**

In matters of program administration and planning, Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) has a strong commitment to seeking the advice of consumers of vocational rehabilitation services, service providers, family members, advocates, employers and others interested in disability issues. Comprised of representatives of these stakeholder groups, the State Rehabilitation Council makes a major contribution to KRS through advice provided during regular business meetings, State Plan work sessions, Policy Committee meetings, and other activities the members determine to be appropriate.

The State Plan and attachments are developed in cooperation with the Council.

#### **Input provided by the Council and KRS response**

***Council comment – Members expressed interest in reinvigorating its policy and membership committees.***

KRS is fully supportive of this goal. At its March 9, 2012 meeting, members expressed interest in serving on the committees. At the request of the Chairperson, time will be set aside on all future Council agendas to allow the committees to meet and report. KRS will arrange conference calls, special meetings and/or webinars to assist the committees in conducting their work.

***Council comment – Members requested that additional information about independent living be provided at meetings to assist the members in their statutory responsibilities to coordinate and collaborate with the Statewide Independent Living Council of Kansas (SILCK) and the centers for independent living.***

KRS will include information about its work with independent living as a regular agenda item. In addition, both the agency and the Council will encourage regular participation by the member appointed to represent the SILCK.

***Council comment – Creating high expectations for employment among transition youth with disabilities and the public education system that supports them***

Council members continued to stress the importance of having an expectation for employment and/or post-secondary education leading to career opportunities for students with disabilities. The Council also expressed the importance of conveying information about disability heritage and a sense of disability pride. The Council's noted its support for KRS goals and priorities in this area, and requested that the agency focus attention on developing informational materials to support these concepts.

KRS response: KRS concurs with the importance of communicating with youth with disabilities, their parents, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), and local education authorities to encourage early discussions about the expectation of employment, employment as the avenue to self-sufficiency, the disability rights movement and disability pride. Within available staff and resources, KRS will develop such informational materials. The importance outreach, information and training has also been addressed in the October 2010 update of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Kansas State Department of Education.

***Council comment – Mileage reimbursement rate for consumers***

The Council expressed interest in raising the mileage reimbursement rate paid to consumers.

KRS response: This request was put on hold in light of budget constraints. Council members noted that the agency's response was reasonable given the economic environment. This issue will be revisited in CY 2012, including discussions with the policy committee.

***Council comment – Recruiting for Council membership***

The Council reiterated the importance of all members and KRS recruiting nominees for the Council to broaden the diversity of its membership, to encourage representation from youth with disabilities and to increase the number of business/industry representatives.

KRS response: KRS supports these efforts and will continue its own

recruiting efforts in addition to providing support to Council members actively engaged in recruiting nominees.

***Council comment – Policies related to transition planning and economic need***

Several years ago the Council researched and recommended proposed policy changes.

- Related to transition planning, the recommendations encouraged KRS to accept applications from transition youth 24 months or four semesters prior to exit from high school. The current standard is 18 months or three semesters.
- Related to economic need, the Council recommended indexing the monthly income exemption to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level and exempting individuals receiving TANF, food stamps, GA, Medicaid or Working Healthy benefits from economic need. In addition, considering the additional disability-related expenses borne by consumers and their families, the Council recommended that KRS pay for at least 10% of the cost of services for any eligible consumer.

Although these changes were not pursued due to economic concerns, the Council requested that KRS bring these issues to the forefront for further consideration.

KRS response: KRS will complete an updated fiscal impact analysis in FFY 2011 and review that information with the Council for further discussion or recommendations. These issues will be revisited in CY 2012, including discussions with the policy committee.

**Recommendations from the Annual Report**

The Council used its FFY 2011 Annual Report and correspondence to the Governor to review the positive impact of KRS services for people with disabilities and to feature the views of consumers about the value of employment in their lives. In this report, the Council also expressed its enthusiastic support for the KRS Goals and Priorities, as identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1).

**Review and analysis of consumer satisfaction**

Stakeholder meetings and consumer satisfaction surveys were not conducted due to budget constraints. The Council expressed their perspective on the importance and value of these activities, and encouraged implementation to the extent possible within existing resources.