

Puerto Rico's State Rehabilitation Council



Annual Report **Fiscal Year 2018-2019**

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Message from the President

During Fiscal Year 2018-2019, the Puerto Rico State Rehabilitation Council (PRSRC) developed a Work Plan aimed at fulfilling the roles and duties delegated by Federal law. With the purpose of optimizing the performance of our functions as advisors to the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration (VRA) and taking into account the input of the sectors represented, the Council members and administrative staff of the PRSRC have sought to strengthen our communication with officers of said agency (VRA) as well as with officers of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

In this report we detail the most relevant achievements obtained as a result of the aforementioned effort, which will serve as the basis for the work we plan to carry out in the next fiscal year for the benefit of people with disabilities who participate in rehabilitation services in Puerto Rico.



Yessica M. Guardiola Marrero, Esq.

Message from the Executive Director

I feel very honored to represent the Puerto Rico State Rehabilitation Council (PRSRC) in my new role as Executive Director; and proud to work with professionals so passionate about people with disabilities. Grateful also for the opportunity to contribute with my experience and academic background in this important endeavor of identifying the needs of the population with disabilities and advising the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration to ensure the effectiveness of the services provided to said population.

During this year, the Council has done an excellent job to achieve compliance with the goals established in the Annual Work Plan. Seeing the achievements of this past year, I am proud to report an increase in collaboration with the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration.

As Executive Director, my goal is for the Council to comply with all mandates assigned to us by law and encourage the continuation of the teamwork that has been carried out until today.


Sharon Ortiz Cardona, PhD/CPL

ACTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Name of Council Member	Sector Represented	CFR Section	Date of Appointment	Expiration Date of Appointment	Individual with Disability	
					Yes	No
Arleen Valcárcel Delgado	Certified VR Counselor (ex officio)	361.17(b)(1)(iv)	March/01 2018	February/28 2021	X	-
Carlos Molina Roman	Representative of Parents or Family Members, Intercessors, Tutors or Authorized Representative of Individuals with Disabilities	361.17(b)(1)(vii)(B)	Sept/22 2016	Sept/22 2019	X	-
Celia M. Pagán Torres	Representative of Advocators of Individuals with Physical, Cognitive, Sensory and Mental Disabilities	361.17(b)(1)(vii)(A)	January/31 2018	January/30 2021	X	-
Felipe Olmeda	Representative of the Department of Education, Special Education Secretariat	361.17(b)(1)(x)	May/22 2017	--	-	X
Gamaliel Bermudez Ruiz	Representative of Business, Industry, Labor	361.17(b)(1)(vi)	June/13 2018	January/30 2021	X	-
Grissel Ortiz Arroyo	Representative of the Client Assistance Program	361.17(b)(1)(iii)	January/26 2017	--	X	-
Gumersindo López Rodríguez	Representative of Business, Industry, Labor	361.17(b)(1)(vi)	January/31 2018	January/30 2021	-	X
Iris Rivera López	Representative of a Parent Training Center	361.17(b)(1)(ii)	June/27 2011	--	-	X
Israel Vélez	Representative of the Workforce Development Administration	361.17(b)(1)(xi)	May/01 2017	--	-	X
Jhomas Cintrón Horta	Representative of Recipients of Services Offered by the VRA	361.17(b)(1)(viii)	December 11/2018	December 10/2021	X	-
José A. Pargas Ojeda	Representative of Business, Industry, Labor	361.17(b)(1)(vi)	January/31 2018	January/30 2021	X	-
Luis Salazar Geigel	Representative of Parents or Family Members, Intercessors, Tutors or Authorized Representative of Individuals with Disabilities	361.17(b)(1)(v)	September 23/2016	September 22/2019	X	-

Name of Council Member	Sector Represented	CFR Section	Date of Appointment	Expiration Date of Appointment	Individual with Disability	
					Yes	No
María del C. Rodríguez Morales	Representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council	361.17(b)(1)(i)	August/29 2019	---	X	-
Viviana Torres Dávila	Representative of the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration (VRA)	361.17(b)(1)(xii)	April/21 2016	--	-	X
Yessica M. Guardiola Marrero	Representative of Business, Industry, Labor	361.17(b)(1)(vi)	December 11/2018	December 10/2021	X	-

Executive Committee 2018-2019
(from October 2018 to September 2019)

<u>Carlos Molina Román</u>	President
<u>Luis Salazar Géigel</u>	Vice President
<u>Grissel Ortiz Arroyo</u>	Treasurer
<u>Viviana Torres Dávila</u>	Secretary

Administrative Staff

<u>Sharon Ortiz Cardona</u>	Executive Director
<u>Luis Orlando Pietri</u>	Accountant
<u>María Laura Cabrera</u>	Administrative Assistant



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2018-2019

VISION

Within the range and diversity of sectors represented, the Council will seek to guarantee the excellence of the services provided by the VRA, in order to integrate its consumers into the workforce.

MISSION

Review, analyze and advise the Designated State Unit
(Vocational Rehabilitation Administration)
in the fulfillment and performance of its responsibilities.

VALUES

We, the Council members, believe that people with disabilities should
and can:

- ✓ Develop their full potential;
- ✓ Be participating members of the community, assuming a valuable function with the same rights and responsibilities of other citizens;
and
- ✓ Be integrated into the work, social and economic effort.

FUNCTIONS

The Council will carry out the following functions in compliance with the provisions of Title I of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended, (P.L. 93-112) and the mandate to coordinate with the State Workforce Investment Board:

- ✓ Review, analyze and advise the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration in the performance of its functions and responsibilities.
- ✓ Ensure the effectiveness of services provided to people with disabilities who are eligible.
- ✓ Collaborate with the VRA in the development of goals and priorities in accordance with section 101(a)(15)(c) of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended.
- ✓ Identify the needs of people with disabilities.
- ✓ Organize and carry out orientation activities for people with disabilities.
- ✓ Encourage collaboration with other state bodies/agencies and interested sectors.
- ✓ Analyze the satisfaction of consumers/participants of the VRA regarding:
 - The services provided by the VRA with funds of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended.

- The vocational rehabilitation services offered by public and private entities.
- The employability of eligible people with disabilities who receive services, including the availability of health and other benefits in employment.
- Draft an annual report to be sent to the Governor, to the Designated State Unit (VRA), and to the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on the status of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Have said report available in different alternate formats for the public at large.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019

COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL –

- We started the fiscal year with 15 members on the Council; one (1) appointment was replaced during the year, and two (2) Council members left due to the termination of their appointments after fulfilling and concluding two full terms (6 years).
- During the fiscal year and as part of the main functions of the Council, six (6) ordinary meetings and two (2) extraordinary meetings were held on the following dates:

Ordinary Meetings:

- ✓ November 14 of 2018
- ✓ January 8 of 2019
- ✓ March 12 of 2019
- ✓ May 14 of 2019
- ✓ July 9 of 2019
- ✓ September 10 of 2019

Extraordinary Meetings:

- ✓ May 10 of 2019 – The Council members were officially summoned to the training activity carried out by the Council for the Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs).

- ✓ June 26 of 2019 – The Council members were summoned to attend Mr. Terry Martin and Mr. Bryan Miller of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), during their visit to our facilities.
- With the aim of organizing and being assertive in the efforts of the Council, we have the following working committees:
 - Executive Committee;
 - Finance Committee;
 - Committee of Educational and Dissemination Activities; and
 - Legislation and Public Policy Committee.

The following are some of the efforts and achievements of the working committees:

Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee held four (4) meetings during the year with the purpose of discussing administrative matters and achieving compliance with the established goals.

- ✓ August 6 of 2019 – Meeting to work on the projections to end the fiscal year and drafting the 2019-2020 Work Plan.
- ✓ August 13 of 2019 – Meeting to work on the answers to the questions of the questionnaire sent by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) through the National Coalition of State

Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRCs). The purpose of this questionnaire was to know our needs as a Council.

- ✓ August 21 of 2019 – Meeting with our Accountant to work with the budget for Fiscal Year 2019-2020.
- ✓ September 10 of 2019 – Meeting to carry out the performance evaluation of the Executive Director.

Finance Committee:

- ✓ August 21 of 2019 – Meeting, together with the members of the Executive Committee and administrative staff (Executive Director and Accountant), to analyze the budget and prepare the budget request for the new fiscal year.

Legislation and Public Policy Committee:

- ✓ September 10 of 2019 – Meeting to evaluate the following normative communications issued by the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration:
 - NORMATIVE COMMUNICATION 2016-05: TRANSITION SERVICES ACCORDING TO THE *WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)*;
 - NORMATIVE COMMUNICATION 2018-03: CRITERIA FOR RECEIVING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES;

- NORMATIVE COMMUNICATION 2018-05: COLLABORATION AGREEMENT/ REFERRAL FORM FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE ETS) TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES REFERRED BY THE PUERTO RICO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (PRDE) TO THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION (VRA);
- NORMATIVE COMMUNICATION 2018-09: AMENDMENT TO THE SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT DIFFERENCE OF REGISTRATION AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES TO APPLICANTS/CONSUMERS OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION.

Committee of Educational and Dissemination Activities:

Collaboration in various dissemination activities in the community, among which are the following:

- ✓ March 5 of 2019 – Annual Conference of the Information and Parent Training Center of the “Apoyo a Padres de Niños con Impedimentos” (APNI); where one hundred (100) informative Council brochures were distributed.
- ✓ April 9 of 2019 – Event at the Graduate School in Rehabilitation Council of the Catholic University of Ponce; where one hundred (100) informative Council brochures were distributed.
- ✓ September 6 of 2019 – Transition Regional Fair held at the Interamerican University, Arecibo Campus; where three hundred (300) informative Council brochures were distributed to high school students from the northern region of Puerto Rico.

ORIENTATIONS TO THE PRSRC –

With the purpose of raising awareness among Council members on different issues related to the population with disabilities and keeping us updated, the following two educational orientations were carried out:

- ✓ November 14 of 2018 – Mrs. Grissel Ortiz Arroyo, Treasurer of the PRSRC, presented the “Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report” on its function and statistics of Fiscal Year 2018.
- ✓ May 14 of 2019 – Mr. Carlos Molina, President of the PRSRC, provided orientation to Council members on the type of albinism known as Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome (HPS).

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS –

- ✓ May 10 of 2019 – In the Luis Muñoz Marín Foundation, the educational activity “Rights and Responsibilities for Labor Inclusion” was conducted for the staff of the Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs). Fifty-seven (57) people were impacted in this activity; mostly, staff from the CRPs. Officials from the VRA regions and Council members also participated in the activity. The following topics were developed:

- *“Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA) and its Amendments”* by Mrs. Lourdes Guzmán of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC); and
- *“Reasonable Accommodation in Employment for People Diagnosed with Epilepsy, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Depression”* by professors of the Graduate School in Rehabilitation Counseling of the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. The subtopics offered were:
 - *“Epilepsy and Reasonable Accomodation: Implications for the Work Setting”* presented by Lesley Irizarry, PhD;
 - *“Autism Spectrum Disorder: Inclusion in the Work Setting”* presented by Raúl Rivera, PhD; and
 - *“Major Depression Disorder and its Impact on the Workplace”* presented by Lorena Vázquez, PhD.

MEETINGS WITH THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION –

Recognizing that the role of the Puerto Rico State Rehabilitation Council is to be the voice of consumers and that in order to comply with this, we must work hand in hand with the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration; this year, efforts were taken to coordinate meetings with the Administrator of the agency (VRA) and her support staff to let them know how we felt as Council and make plans for a better teamwork.

As part of the aforementioned initiative, three (3) meetings were held with the Administrator (VRA). The first meeting was held on June 13 of 2019 with the following participants: Madeline Hernández Dipiní, CRC, Administrator of the VRA; María Benítez, CRC, Assistant Administrator of the Operational Policies Area (VRA); Rosa H. Lugo, CRC, Executive Assistant of the Administrator's Office (VRA); Mr. Carlos Molina Román, President of the PRSRC; and Mrs. Sharon Ortiz, Executive Director of the PRSRC. The second meeting was held on June 20 of 2019 and on this occasion both the President and Executive Director of the PRSRC were oriented on the Programs of the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration. Madeline Hernández Dipiní, María Benítez and Rosa Lugo of the VRA were present again at this meeting.

The third meeting was held on September 10 of 2019 coinciding with the last Ordinary Meeting of the PRSRC for Fiscal Year 2018-2019. This time, Ms. Hernández Dipiní, Administrator (VRA) and Ms. Benítez, Assistant Administrator (VRA) participated again and offered the opportunity to the members of the Council to talk, exchange impressions and ask questions related to the operation of the VRA, the population served and the quality of the services provided.

PHOTOS

ORDINARY MEETINGS

Ordinary Meeting – November 2018



Ordinary Meeting – January 2019



Ordinary Meeting – March 2019



Ordinary Meeting – May 2019



Ordinary Meeting – July 2019

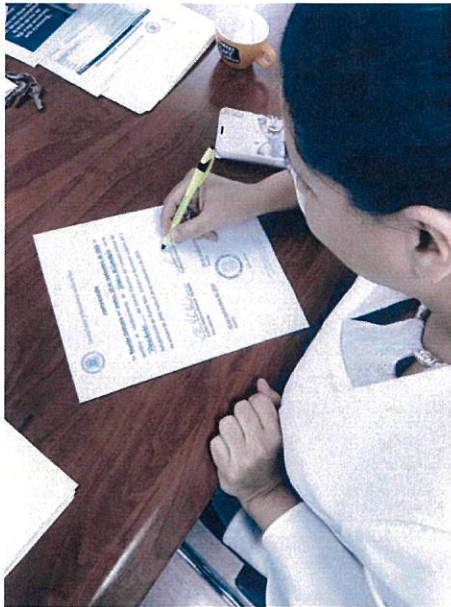


Ordinary Meeting – September 2019

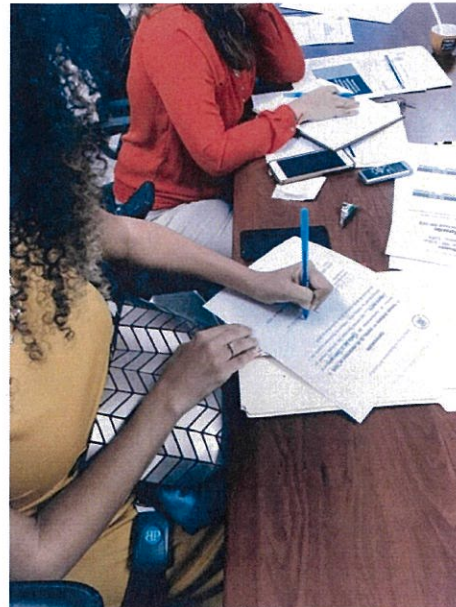


Ordinary Meeting – September 2019 (*continuation*)

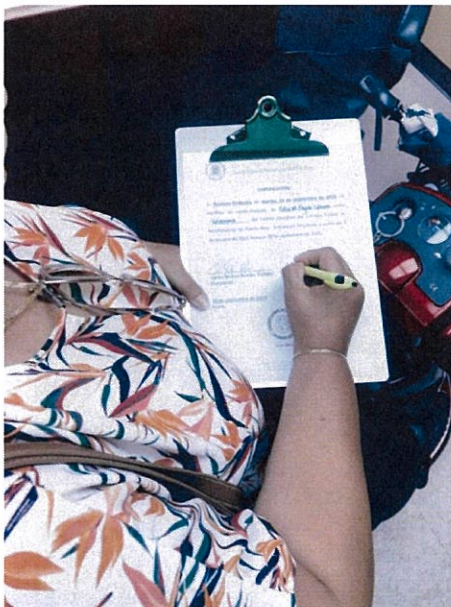
Voting and Election of the Executive Committee for Fiscal Year 2019-2020



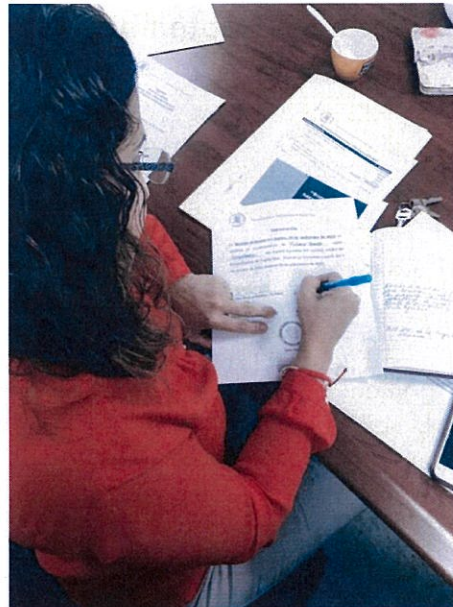
Yessica M. Guardiola Marrero, Esq.
President



Mrs. María del C. Rodríguez Morales,
Vice President



Mrs. Celia M. Pagán Torres,
Treasurer



Mrs. Viviana Torres Dávila,
Secretary

EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

Extraordinary Meeting – May 2019; CRPs Event



Extraordinary Meeting – Visit of RSA Monitors



WORKING COMMITTEES

Meetings of Executive Committee -



→ August 6 of 2019: Development and Drafting of Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2019-2020.

August 13 of 2019: Discussion and Drafting of Answers for RSA's Requested Input 2019 of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, Inc. ←



→ September 10 of 2019: Evaluation and Discussion of Job Performance of the Executive Director.

Meeting of Executive Committee and Finance Committee – *Analysis and Development of Budget Request 2019-2010*



Meeting of Legislation and Public Policy Committee –

Discussion of Communications Sent by the VRA



ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING

Meeting of the Administrative Staff of the PRSRC and Administrative Staff of the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration

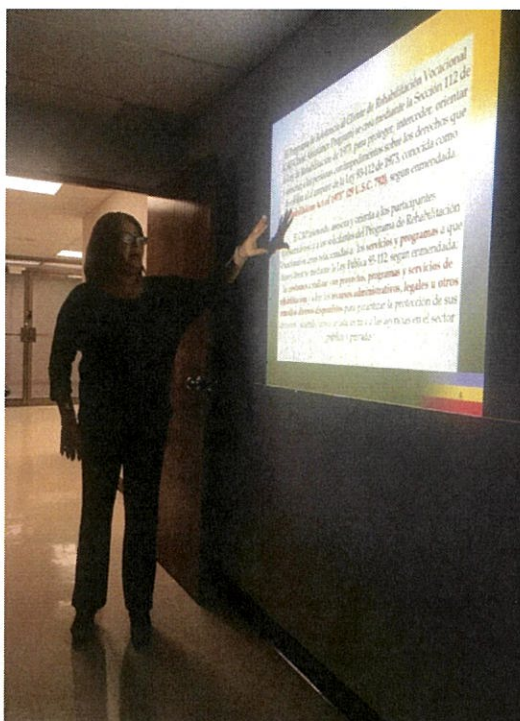


From the left: Mr. Carlos Molina Román, President of the PRSRC;
Madeline Hernández Dipiní, CRC, Administrator of the VRA;
María Benítez Benítez, CRC, Assistant Administrator of the Operational Policies
Area of the VRA; Rosa H. Lugo Cabán, CRC, Executive Assistant of the VRA;
and Sharon Ortiz Cardona, PhD/CPL, Executive Director of the PRSRC

ORIENTATIONS TO THE PRSRC

Presentation: Client Assistance Program (CAP); Federal Report Fiscal Year 2017

Date: November 14 of 2018
 Resource: Mrs. Grissel Ortiz Arroyo
 Intercessor of People with Disabilities (CAP)
 Advocacy of People with Disabilities



Orientation: Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome (HPS)

Date: May 14 of 2019
Resource: Mr. Carlos Molina Román
President of the PRSRC



ACTIVITIES –

“Rights and Responsibilities for Labor Inclusion”
Training Activity for Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)
May 10 of 2019
Luis Muñoz Marín Foundation, Trujillo Alto, San Juan





Acknowledgement

We want to finalize this report by thanking all the people who in one way or another collaborated so that we could meet the work schedule planned for the fiscal year.

We project and plan to continue counting on their collaboration to carry out efforts and activities that impact the well-being of consumers and people with disabilities in Puerto Rico.

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