

MINUTES
DBVI REHABILITATION COUNCIL
Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Headquarters Building
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA
December 1, 2017

SRC Attendees

Christine Appert, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Irene Conlin, Virginia Beach, Representative of an Individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing him or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent him or herself; Wanda Council, Newport News, VA, represents the Virginia Department of Education; Nicole Drummond, Falls Church, represents Virginia's Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center; Justin Graves, Fredericksburg, represents Business, Industry and Labor; Ken Jessup, Virginia Beach, represents Disability Advocacy Group; Larysa Kautz, Alexandria, Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Program Provider; Chris Martin, Ashland, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor; Jill Nerby, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Megan O'Toole, Montpelier, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor; Mark Roane, Richmond, Former or Current Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Shelesha Taylor, Richmond, represents the federally mandated Client Assistance Program (CAP); Karen Walker, Ashland, Business, Industry, and Labor.

Members Absent

Jeanne Armentrout, Roanoke, represents the Virginia Workforce Board.

Members of the Public

None.

DBVI Staff to the SRC

Takeisha Henley, Executive Assistant, DBVI; Pam Hinterlong, Director of Workforce Services, DBVI; Rick Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner for Services, DBVI; Deborah Collard, Program Analyst, DBVI.

Call to Order

Chairman Justin Graves called the meeting to order.

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Justin Graves asked members to introduce themselves and welcomed everyone.

Adoption of Agenda *(Action Item)*

Mr. Mark Roane moved to adopt agenda; Ms. Larysa Kautz seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Approval of September 2017 Meeting Minutes *(Action Item)*

Ms. Jill Nerby moved to approve the September 2017 meeting minutes; Ms. Ken Jessup seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Chairman Justin Graves announced two public events to take place the weekend of December 1st, 2017; DC Abilities Expo, at the Dulles Expo Center December 1st – 3rd, 2017; Future Quest, held at George Mason University from 8a.m. – 5p.m. Similar to the Abilities Expo, but smaller in scale; focused on Virginia high school students and their transition to college.

Commissioner's & Deputy Commissioner's Report – *Dr. Rick Mitchell*

Written report provided. Dr. Mitchell highlighted the agency report previously sent by Commissioner, Ray Hopkins. Additional comments are as follows:

Governor Elect, Ralph Norman and Transition Staff 2018

DBVI has begun preparing documentation for the New Secretary of Health and Human Services, in preparation for the New Governor and transition team. Efforts were made to reach out to some of those individuals letting them know about the services DBVI provides. A full packet was prepared to share with the transition team moving forward. Although, DBVI is not anticipating a lot of change, it is too early to substantiate. Overall, DBVI is prepared and working on the transition.

Federal Budget

DBVI has taken steps with the VR program to contain costs. As of October 1, 2017, the agency closed all categories and went on an order of selection. Dr. Mitchell gave a brief explanation of what this means for clients, and the agency. Currently, DBVI has 18 individuals on the wait list; which means they are eligible for services, but have been placed on a wait list until funds are available to serve those individuals. Pam Hinterlong further explained WIOA is branding for the VR Program. When states have to close categories under order of selection, if a client needs VR services to maintain employment, job retention, or they are in danger of losing their job – the agency can by-pass the order. Counselors worked diligently to determine eligibility before the order of selection began.

DBVI has a number of individuals that have been determined eligible; not all services have started. With that, DBVI's financial obligations have to be determined before removing any of the individuals from the wait list. Counselors are working on getting those cases into service.

Case Service Dollars

Before the meeting, Dr. Mitchell and Pam Hinterlong reviewed the case service dollars. DBVI has been very proactive in examining the services being provided by the agency. College training, room and board for individuals that are in college, maintenance, and assistive technology are the top three expenditures. During the year, the agency authorizes significant dollars in January and August. Going into the second half, DBVI is right at 50% of our case service dollars.

State Budget

DBVI asked for increases including for the VR program. It has not confirmed if it is in the Governor's budget.

DBVI has 18 VR counselors across the state. Three of those positions are currently vacant: Richmond, Roanoke, and the position moved from Norfolk to Fairfax. Commissioner Hopkins and Dr. Mitchell do not anticipate filling those positions until the beginning of the next state fiscal year.

Re-allotment

In July, VR agencies look at how much money they have spent throughout the year. Dr. Mitchell explained that for every VR dollar the agency has to put in 22.7 cents to get the federal dollar of 77%. DBVI asked for right at a million dollars for re-allotments, based on what the agency has been receiving the last couple of years. Because of the natural disasters in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico, when re-allotments came out, those states got a significantly smaller amount and DBVI only received \$422,000, which is slightly over a half of million dollars less than what the agency is accustomed to operating under. Normally, with the federal grant, agencies have two years to spend the funds. However, with the 2017 VR grant, as of October 1, 2017, this year: the agency went into the 2018 grant. Dr. Mitchell also explained that there were several reasons for this, specifically, because the agency did not get the allotment it is accustomed to getting. This reinforced the decision to close the category.

Pam Hinterlong will send the council the letter from CSVAR about the current budget that the federal government is proposing and the potential effect on the VR program if passed.

Dr. Mitchell suggested inviting Cindy Roberts, the Director of Corporate and Business Initiatives, to give the SRC a quick report on the Business Relations Unit and some of the collaborations taking place with a number of workforce partners within and outside the agency.

VR Program Update – Pam Hinterlong & Deborah Collard

Pam Hinterlong referenced already sending the report to the SRC, and welcomed any questions the council may have.

Exciting news: Under WIOA once the recognized employment outcomes has customized employment the agency can achieve with the VR program. Virginia is partnering four agencies: DBVI, DARS, DOE, and DBHDS; the entire VR team will have the opportunity to participate in a live webinar that Virginia will own and have archived. There is going to be seven teams, thirty people per team, that will get intensive training to be implementers. Persons selected and which regions, will be provided as things move forward.

Consumer Satisfaction - Deborah Collard

The council recently received a great deal of consumer satisfaction information, one of the key ways the SRC collaborates with DBVI in serving clients. DBVI welcomes questions, feedback, and input from the council.

Insights: (2018 – back)

The SRC receives updated information on the customer satisfaction survey, evaluations, and an annual report that summarizes information about things happening during that year.

The evaluation program runs on the federal fiscal year, October 1 – September 30. DBVI is currently working on the 2017 report. The evaluation will remain open through the end of the year for feedback. Moving forward, the first quarter will be used to compile, analyze, and write up the report, and then it will be sent to the SRC.

2018

Currently preparing to start the evaluation program; surveys have not been sent out, and provided the council with the quarterly report with the recommended changes. The council was encouraged to review the

recommendations and provide feedback to Pam Hinterlong by January 5, 2018. The evaluation program will begin January 2018.

Survey Stats - 25-28% response rate; 50% by mail (online responses increased); 34% online (at 4% in 2013); 16% phone

2016

Satisfaction survey results – Overall satisfaction rating is 73.66; baseline of 82.29 established in 2011; and 86.67 in 2015. Still collecting preliminary results from 2017; as of November 30, 2017, it was 80.4.

VR staff and individual interaction and how that partnership is viewed, is being monitored. Knowledgeable about their disability, felt the counselor was respectful, and if the counselor was sensitive to their needs, are the three main ways the information is broken down in the surveys.

Stats - 2011-2016 the average was 85 points; 83/84 in respectful; 79 in knowledgeable; 78 about sensitive to needs

All comments are at the end of the annual report and included for the boards review. They were broken down based on their overall satisfaction. The survey is specific for the VR program.

2017

There was a question, more in line with WIOA about opportunities to meet/interact with employers, which was NOT in the 2016 report and will not be in the most recent annual report. DBVI will provide preliminary information at the next quarterly meeting. All individuals are informed about the survey at the beginning of the VR program, but counselors are asked to remind them. Follow up efforts have increased to track, call, mail, and collect current contact information. Dr. Mitchell and Pam Hinterlong will be meeting to look at the process on how to get more real time and current data for people in service. Per Dr. Mitchell, when a case is open during the initial interview and throughout the case, staff remind individuals of the administrative review process just in case the individual is unhappy with something relayed by the counselor.

Old and/or New Business – *Chairman Justin Graves*

Members discussed outreach ideas, Ken Jessup will follow-up.

Ken suggested, appointing a person to represent the SRC on the DARS Board; Nicole Drummon attends the DARS Board meetings, so she volunteered to be the liaison. She will forward the meeting minutes to Chairman Justin Graves, and provide a short report/update at future SRC meetings.

SRC Annual Report – *Christine Appert*

The report has been drafted, but is not ready for review, which is why it has not been sent to the council. Chairman Justin Graves has some great success stories for the report. The SRC will receive the report once formatted, and then it will go to Pam Hinterlong and Takeisha Henley for editing. Pam Hinterlong requested a tight turnaround from the Council about any concerns they may have.

Update on the Fair Hearing Officer Contract – *Chairman Justin Graves & Shelesha Taylor (Action Item)*

Ms. Taylor reported both writing samples were similar, and the hearing officer, Daniel Hand had to write a decision based on the same story. However, the writer chose to talk about DARS specifically. The decision has

not been confirmed and is contingent on it passing the review committee. Ms. Nicole Drummond motioned that given the majority that have viewed the contract voted to approve, the SRC move to approve this. Ms. Irene Conlin seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Update on CSAVR/NCSAB meetings in Greenville, SC – *Dr. Rick Mitchell & Pam Hinterlong*

Dr. Mitchell and Pam Hinterlong attended the CSAVR/NCSAB Fall meeting that was held in Greenville, SC from November 13-17, 2017. At the conference, RSA announced the 10 states that would be monitored; Virginia was not included this year. However, to be sure we comply with all regulations, a team (to include; Pam Hinterlong, Deborah Collard, and other staff) was assembled in preparation for monitoring next year.

Dr. Mitchell explained RSA monitoring in regards to pre-employment transition services, also known as Pre-ETS, and the 15% set aside for students transitioning into employment. In retrospect, RSA contacted all states across the country that did not spend all of the 15% to provide technical assistance; DBVI provided details about the call at the SRC September meeting. As a result, the agency has to provide a breakdown of how we spent the 15% on required and authorized services. Dr. Mitchell and Pam Hinterlong have been working on ways to capture that information. A follow-up call will be scheduled during the week of February 5, 2018.

Ken Jessup suggested that Chairman Justin Graves attend the CSAVR monthly conference calls for informational purposes. **Dr. Mitchell will ask the Commissioner to include the SRC on the emails with the call in information from here on out.**

Planning for the 2018 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment – *Pam Hinterlong*

In September, the SRC was informed that DBVI was in negotiations with San Diego State University. Under WIOA, the agency is required to do a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) every three years, which will happen in 2018. The SRC has agreed to move forward and the contract will begin January 2018. Once the preliminary meetings start, the SRC may be asked to provide input once meeting dates are confirmed.

The CNSA helps guide agency programs, and is one of the pieces DBVI has to have to do the annual fiscal forecast for Pre-ETS. For anyone interested in seeing the contract, Chairman Justin Graves has a copy. The overall report will contain some new requirements from WIOA.

Preliminary meeting will start in January, and will take place over the phone. The scope of work outlines details of the onsite visit here in Virginia. They will be in Northern Virginia and in the Stanton/Roanoke area to meet with people in the outer regions.

A draft will be due in June and the final deliverable by August. Vice Chair Christine Appert volunteered to be the SRC liaison. More information will be provided as things progress.

Future meeting date(s) – *Chairman Justin Graves*

The council agreed to hold off on the retreat. However, a social component will be added to the next SRC meeting agenda. In addition, a discussion on the makeup of the group and how/why it was formed will be on the next agenda.

The Council determined that Friday's would work better for the SRC meetings. The next meeting will be Friday, March 2, 2018. The other three quarterly SRC meetings are June 8, September 14, and December 14, 2018. Mr. Chris Martin put forth the motion to accept future meeting dates. Ms. Wanda Council seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Success Stories: A release form was received for all of the success store before use.

Chairman Justin Graves led the discussion about the selection of success stories. Three out of nine stories were selected - Farris Hallaj, Jim Whisnant, and Wanda Cook. Brian Armbruster was selected as an alternative.

Adjournment

Mr. Ken Jessup adjourned the meeting.