

Briefing Notes
DBVI REHABILITATION COUNCIL
Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind & Vision Impaired
401 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA
March 13, 2020 – Via Zoom Teleconference

SRC Attendees

Christine Appert, Chair, 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; Jenny McKenzie, Roanoke, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor; Justin Graves, Fairfax, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor; Ken Jessup, Virginia Beach, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group; Mark Roane, Vice-Chair, Richmond, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Megan O’Toole Hall, Montpelier, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Ex-Officio Member; Ray Hopkins, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member; Shelesha Taylor, Richmond, Representative of the federally mandated Client Assistance Program (CAP); Tammy Burns, Midlothian, Representative of Virginia’s Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center; Wanda Council, Newport News, VA, Representative of the Virginia Department of Education; Larysa Kautz, Alexandria, Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Program Provider.

Members Absent

Julie Akers, Ashland, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor; Gina Koke, Richmond, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group; Jill Nerby, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

DBVI Staff to the SRC

Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant for Services, DBVI; Pam Hinterlong, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services, DBVI; Dr. Rick Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner for Services, DBVI.

Guest

Deborah Collard, Program Analyst, DBVI.

Call to Order

Chairwoman Appert called the meeting to order.

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Hinterlong took roll call and welcomed everyone.

Review of Briefing Items

The Council agreed to table the Representative Round Table for the June 2020 SRC Meeting.

Commissioner’s Report – *Commissioner Ray Hopkins*

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

Commissioner Hopkins briefed the Council on the steps the Agency is taking due to the Governor’s directives and guidelines regarding the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) which includes travel restrictions, cancellation of state-sponsored conferences and moving toward teleworking for State employees. At this time there is one northern Virginia employee in quarantine. The Agency is in the process of determining how to carry on critical

agency functions should the Agency be directed to close offices. Agency staff have been instructed not to enter long-term care facilities and nursing homes, and they will not be engaging in many scheduled events including training for some time.

Deputy Commissioner's Report – *Dr. Richard Mitchell*

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

The General Assembly has passed a budget and is now waiting for the Governor's approval. If approved, there is new funding of \$1.5 million for the VR program and \$398,000 for the RT program. The new funding will start July 1, 2020.

VR Program Update – *Pam Hinterlong*

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

Individuals have been moving off the current wait list over the last several months. Plans are being reviewed on how to serve more people more quickly.

DBVI is in the process of transitioning to the WIOA Common Performance Measures (CPM). These new measures replace the Standards and Indicators report that was previously shared with the SRC. The six core WIOA programs are all required to now report on the CPMs. Guest Deborah Collard gave an overview of CPM. Several measures are not available yet or are in the process of being available. CPM for the VR program nationally are in a baseline status which is developing the mechanisms to measure and report. All state VR agencies nationwide are working with RSA on reporting of CPM and utilizing 911 data along with new performance data dashboards developed by RSA. Based on current information from RSA, DBVI is able to report on Measurable Skills Gains. See March 2020 Agency VR Report CPM Tables.

As part of the implementation of the WIOA CPMs and to assist state VR agencies with determining how the RSA 911 data elements are used and how the CPMs are calculated, RSA has developed a set of five dashboards or graphics that illustrate key data elements. One of the dashboards outlines Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) outcomes. In PY19 Q1 there were 54 CIE outcomes achieved. For the top ten careers by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) categories, median hourly wage, and median weekly hours see the March 2020 Agency VR Report for the SOC Table.

Old/New Business

Consumer Satisfaction Survey – *Deborah Collard*

In order to increase engagement in the VR program evaluation new strategies are being considered. The VR Director and Program Analyst are discussing options for improving individual responses to the existing consumer satisfaction survey including increasing VR Counselor understanding of and involvement in communicating the evaluation process and adding language to VR case closure letters to explain the evaluation process. Other strategies are being considered for increasing follow-up support efforts with individuals who have been invited to participate in the online survey. Additionally, several recommendations for changes to the existing survey are being developed as well as consideration of the time the evaluation is offered to VR program participants, which could include not only surveying those individuals who have completed the program but those that are current as well. DBVI looks forward to partnering with the SRC as these new strategies and recommendations are developed, considered, and implemented. VR programs across the nation are being reviewed as well to see what they are doing.

Fair Hearing Officer Selection

The Agency needs volunteers to select Fair Hearing Officers. Irene Conlin volunteered to be the primary representative, and Shelesha Taylor has volunteered to be the backup representative.

State Plan Goals – *Pam Hinterlong*

The State Plan is out for public comment. It will then go before the Virginia Board for Workforce Development next week, and then submitted through the portal.

Other - *Wanda Council*

Information is available on the Department of Education website regarding the public schools and COVID-19. Children with specialized needs are being taken into consideration.

Date of next meeting – June 12, 2020