

DBVI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Agenda

December 9, 2022, 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227
Main Conference Room

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or

Android: <https://vadars.zoom.us/j/86763627708?pwd=Ukl3alYvOGF5dzdhRUdGUUXpKbi8xZz09>

Password: 758264

Or Telephone:

Dial:

+1 786 635 1003 (US Toll)

+1 669 900 6833 (US Toll)

+1 971 247 1195 (US Toll)

Meeting ID: 867 6362 7708

Password:758264

- 9:30 a.m. **Member Networking - OPTIONAL** – Coffee
- 10:00 a.m. **Welcome and Call to Order** – *Alexa Bowe*
 1. Adoption of Agenda
 2. Approval of September 2022, Meeting Minutes
- 10:10 a.m. **Public Comment**
- 10:20 a.m. **Commissioner’s Report** – *Dr. Rick Mitchell*
 Updates to Agency Report
- 10:30 a.m. **Deputy Commissioner’s Report** – *Pam Cato*
 Updates to Agency Report
- 10:40 a.m. **VR Program Update** – *Megan Hall*
 Updates to Agency Report
- 10:50 a.m. **Old and New Business** – *Alexa Bowe*
 1. Amendments to FOIA Regulations Pertaining to Electronic
 Communications Means – *Susan Davis*
 2. Annual Report Update
 3. CSAVR/NCSAB Debrief
 4. SRC Appointments
 5. 2023 Quarterly SRC Meeting Dates – March 10, June 9,
 September 8, December 8

12:00 p.m. **Break/Pick up Lunch**

12:10 p.m. **Networking Lunch**

12:30 p.m. **Representative Roundtable**

Heidi Lawyer – PEATC

Joliefawn Liddell – dCLV

Marianne Moore – VDOE

Milford Stern – Dept of Labor & Industry

1:00 p.m. **Adjourn**

DBVI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
Quarterly Meeting
DRAFT MINUTES
September 9, 2022, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
395 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227

SRC Members in Attendance

Christine Appert, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Alexa Bowe, Newport News, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor
Irene Conlin, Chair, 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
Leelynn Untalan Brady, Suffolk, Representative of Statewide Independent Living Council
Annette Hyde, Radiant, Representative of the Workforce Council
Liang Liao, Richmond, DBVI, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Ex-Officio Member
Joliefawn Liddell, Richmond, Representative of the Client Assistance Program
Ricardo Lizama, Arlington, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group
Rick Mitchell, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member
Marianne Moore, Richmond, Representative of the Virginia Department of Education
Chanthen Nene, Manassas, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group
Mark Roane, Richmond, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Milford Stern, Roanoke, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

SRC Member in Attendance via Zoom

Heidi Lawyer, Henrico, Representative of Parent Training & Information Center (PEATC) (attended virtually due to medical condition)
Rachael Rounds, Midlothian, Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Program (attended virtually due to medical condition)
Edna Johnson, Alexandria, Former or Current Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (attended virtually due to work conflict)

SRC Members Not Able to Attend

Julie Akers, Radford, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor
Prem Jadhvani, Vice Chair, Leesburg, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

DBVI Staff Present

Pam Cato, Deputy Commissioner of Services
Megan Hall, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services
Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant to Commissioner Mitchell – Recorder of Minutes
Wanda Swaringen, Executive Assistant, Services Division

ASL Interpreters

Heather Kubitski
Katherine Malady

Public

Lori Epik, Vocational Evaluator, DARS, DRS Charlottesville Office - Virtual
Meghan Cox, DARS, Policy Analyst, Policy & Legislative Affairs

Call to Order / Welcome and Introductions

Chair Conlin called the meeting to order. A roundtable of introductions took place. Quorum was met. The Council was introduced to DBVI's new Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services and SRC Liaison, Megan Hall.

Chair Conlin reviewed those members with terms expiring September 30, 2022:

Prem Jadhvani (eligible to reapply)

Mark Roane (eligible to reapply)

Christine Appert (completing second term, not eligible to reapply)

Julie Akers (completing second term, not eligible to reapply)

Irene Conlin (completing second term, not eligible to reapply)

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Roane moved to adopt the proposed agenda; Mr. Stern seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adoption of June 2022 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Bowe moved to adopt the June 10, 2022, SRC Quarterly Meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Nene seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

None

Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Rick Mitchell

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows.

The Agency is in the process of closing out last year's budget, working with the new budget and preparing decision packages for next year's budget. DBVI did receive preliminary notification that the Federal grant will be increasing October 1. In July the Agency received significant State funding.

Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) has received a significant amount of contracts recently. VIB was awarded a \$940,000 contract from the aircraft carrier USS TRUMAN, for a new product called Deck-in-the Box. This single purchase doubles sales of that product this year and helps a small business based in Virginia Beach and will increase jobs at VIB. A large number of quotes have been submitted for furniture to various DOD offices totaling more than \$4.5M.

Deputy Commissioner's Report – Pam Cato

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows.

The Agency is experiencing a record number of vacancies. Ms. Cato reviewed some of the positions open and their recruitment status. The Program Director of Rehabilitation Technology Services, Peggy Fields, has announced her retirement as of January 1, 2023.

Ms. Cato reviewed the seat vacancies coming up October 1 on the SRC. If anyone needs assistance completing the application, let Ms. Mills know. The application can be found at this link: <https://www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/va-government/boards-and-commissions/>

VR Program Update – Pam Cato

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows.

The Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment was completed last spring. Now the Agency is in the process of submitting some updated data to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

Ms. Cato gave an overview of the summer programs which included the Live Independent Feeling Empowered (LIFE) program, the Senior Retreat, Leap into Linux, Cyber Warriors, and the JMU Success Program.

Ms. Hall and Ms. Cato will meet with Melody Roane, Director of the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) about the possibility of having a program for parents to have an understanding of what students are learning at the Agency's programs so these skills can be encouraged and reinforced at home.

Dr. Edna Johnson offered to provide guidance or assistance with some type of workshop to further the understanding of providing reasonable accommodations and empowering young people moving towards their life career. Ms. Hall will discuss this further with Dr. Johnson.

Old and New Business Annual Report Update

Mr. Stern is the lead on producing the Annual Report and will soon be receiving information from the Agency to include in it. Ms. Bowe will receive the Success Stories shortly to review that will ultimately be included in the Annual Report. The goal is to have the Annual Report completed prior to the December 9 Quarterly SRC Meeting.

CSAVR Fall Conference Oct 29-Nov 2 San Antonio, TX NCSAB Fall Conference Nov 2-Nov 4 San Antonio, TX

Ms. Mills will send links to the websites for both of these conferences to the SRC Members. Please let Ms. Mills know if you are interested in attending by Friday, September 23.

Hearing Officer Renewals

Daniel Hand's contract will expire on September 30, 2022. Carl Schmidt's and Sarah Freeman's contracts are up for renewal September 30, 2022. Mr. Nene motioned to renew Mr. Hand's contract, to renew Mr. Schmidt's contract and not to renew Ms. Freeman's contract. Mr. Stern seconded all three of the motions. All were in favor and the motions were carried.

SRC Elections

Ms. Appert nominated Alexa Bowe to serve as 2022-2023 SRC Chair. Ms. Conlin seconded the nomination. All were in favor. No other nominations were presented. Ms. Moore nominated Chanthan Nene for 2022-2023 SRC Vice Chair. Mr. Stern seconded the nomination. All were in favor.

Representative Roundtable

Several of the SRC members provided highlights on the organizations they represent.

Heidi Lawyer – PEATC – Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center

Joliefawn Liddell – dCLV – disAbility Law Center of Virginia

Marianne Moore - VDOE – Virginia Department of Education

Mark Roane – NFB – National Federation of the Blind

Milford Stern – DOLI – Virginia Department of Labor and Industry

Adjourn

Ms. Bowe motioned to end the meeting. Ms. Appert seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Next SRC Quarterly Meeting

December 9, 2022

SRC Bi Laws Area: Section 5	
Title of Section: Electronic Member Participation	Number: DBVI SRC
Effective Date: March 2023	Review by Date: December 9, 2022
Approved Date:	Approved by:
Revision Date:	

I. Purpose

This issuance provides guidance for member participation by electronic means for holding all-virtual public meetings.

II. References

- Virginia Freedom of Information Act; Virginia Code Section § 2.2-3708.3.
- Virginia Freedom of Information Act; Virginia Code Section § 2.2-3707.
- Virginia Freedom of Information Act; Virginia Code Section § 2.2-3701.

III. Policy

- a. Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired State Rehabilitation Council
Electronic Member Participation-Individual Remote Participation in lieu of Attending an
In-Person Public Meeting (Virginia Code Section §2.2-3708.3 B)

It is the policy of the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired State Rehabilitation Council (DBVI SRC) that members may participate in meetings of the SRC by electronic means as permitted by *Virginia Code §2.2-3708.3*. This policy shall apply to the entire membership and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.

Electronic Member Participation Permission #1: Disability, Medical Condition or Caregiving Obligations – If notified on or before the day of the meeting, it shall be the policy of the SRC to allow a member to participate electronically. At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair shall state the member’s electronic participation and the general reason (specifics are not required). A quorum of SRC members must be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting

location, and there must be arrangements for the voice of the remote participant (or other forms of communication for members who rely on communication other than speech) to be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location. The SRC shall record in its minutes the remote location from which the member participated and the fact that the member participated through electronic means due to a disability, medical condition or caregiving obligation.

Electronic Member Participation Permission #2: Personal Matters – If notified on or before the day of the meeting, it shall be the policy of the SRC to allow a member to participate electronically. At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair shall state the member's electronic participation and the general reason (specifics are not required). Each SRC member may only use this permission one time per year, or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater. A quorum of the SRC members must be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location, and there must be arrangements for the voice of the remote participant (or other forms of communication for members who rely on communication other than speech) to be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location. The SRC shall record in its minutes the remote location from which the member participated and the nature of the personal matter cited by the member. Individual participation from a remote location shall be approved unless such participation would violate this policy or the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq. of the Code of Virginia).

If a member's participation from a remote location is challenged, then the SRC shall vote on whether to allow such participation. If the SRC votes to disapprove of the member's participation because such participation would violate this policy, such disapproval shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity.

The SRC may meet without a quorum physically assembled at one location if the meeting is being held solely to receive presentations, updates, public comment, or conduct other forms of information gathering. If a quorum is not physically assembled, the SRC shall not take any votes or make any formal recommendations at the meeting. The meeting notice shall include the electronic communication means by which members of the public may witness the meeting.

b. Proposed change regarding all-virtual public meetings.

The Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired may hold all-virtual public meetings. The decision to hold an all-virtual public meeting shall be made by the State Rehabilitation Chair in consultation with the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services. The basis for the decision to hold an all-virtual public meeting shall be documented in the State Rehabilitation Council minutes.

An all-virtual public meeting must adhere to guidance in §2.2-3708.3 C.

- i. The required meeting notice must identify that the meeting will be all-virtual and includes a statement that the meeting method will not change unless the public body provides a new meeting notice in accordance with the provision of §2.2-3707;
- ii. Public access to the all-virtual public meeting is provided via electronic communication means;

- iii. The electronic communication means used allows the public to hear all members of the public body participating in the all-virtual public meeting and when audio-visual technology is available, to see the members of the public body as well;
 - iv. A phone number or other live contact information is provided to alert the public body if the audio or video transmission of the meeting provided by the public body fails, the public body monitors such designated means of communication during the meeting, and the public body take a recess until public access is restored if the transmission fails for the public;
 - v. A copy of the proposed agenda and all agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials furnished to members of a public body for a meeting is made available to the public in electronic format at the same time that such materials are provided to members of the public body;
 - vi. The public is afforded the opportunity to comment through electronic means, including by way of written comments, at those public meetings which public comment is customarily received;
 - vii. No more than two members of the public body are together in any one remote location unless that remote location is open to the public to physically access it;
 - viii. If a closed session is held during an all-virtual public meeting, transmission of the meeting to the public resumes before the public body votes to certify the closed meeting as required by subsection D of §2.2-3712;
 - ix. The public body does not convene an all-virtual public meeting
 - (a) more than two times per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater, or
 - (b) consecutively with another all-virtual public meeting; and
 - x. Minutes of all-virtual public meetings held by electronic communication means are taken as required by §2.2-3707 and include the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means and the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held. If a member's participation from a remote location is disapproved the disapproval shall be record in the minutes with specificity.
- c. All DBVI SRC meetings including all-virtual meetings will comply with §2.2-3707 to include:
- i. For in-person meetings a quorum is physically assembled at one primary or central meeting location (2.2-3701); for all-virtual meetings members do not need to be assembled at one primary or central location to establish a quorum.
 - ii. Appropriate notice of the meeting has been provided at least three working days in advance of the date scheduled for the meeting and the notice identifies the meeting as in-person or all-virtual.
 - iii. A copy of the proposed agenda and agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials that will be distributed to members of the public body and that have been made available to the staff of the public body in sufficient time for duplication and forwarding to all locations where public access will be provided shall be made available to the public at the time of the meeting.

- iv. Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded as required by §2.2-3707. Votes taken during any meeting conducted through electronic communication means shall be recorded by name in roll-call fashion and included in the minutes.

Once adopted, the policy shall be applied strictly and uniformly, without exception, to the entire membership and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.

Department for Blind and Vision Impaired
State Rehabilitation Council
Agency VR Report
December 9, 2022

Deputy Commissioner's Report – Pam Cato

Regional Office Updates

Bristol	Fully Staffed
Fairfax	Recruiting for an Education Coordinator and a Rehabilitation Teacher
Norfolk	Recruiting for a part-time Rehabilitation Technology Specialist
Richmond	Recruiting for a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Education Coordinator
Roanoke	Recruiting for a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and an Education Coordinator
Staunton	Recruiting for an Orientation and Mobility Specialist
Headquarters	Recruiting for the Rehabilitation Teaching & Independent Living Program Director and an Assistant VR Director
Business Relations Unit	Recruiting for a Business Relations Specialist Roanoke Region
VRCBVI	Recruiting for an Access Technology Instructor and a Personal and Home Management Instructor

State Plan Goals

DBVI, with assistance from the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), developed six goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) programs for this state plan cycle. The six goals are listed below and updates are included in this report.

1. Expanding and enhancing workforce development activities to develop and maintain effective working relationships with Virginia business and industry at the local, regional, and state level to develop partnerships that facilitate industry recognized credential attainment, skill development, and entry into career pathways for eligible individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind leading to competitive integrated employment.

2. Increasing and improving competitive integrated employment outcomes, with wages above the state average, for all blind, vision impaired, or deafblind individuals receiving services from DBVI.
3. Achieving agency annual performance goals and establishing base lines for the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.
4. Providing rehabilitation technology to blind, vision impaired, or deafblind individuals, including youth and students, to facilitate their success in training and competitive integrated employment settings.
5. Expanding transition services for youth and students seeking employment and/or post-secondary training; including pre-employment transition services for secondary school students.
6. Expanding the utilization of Supported Employment services for adults and youth to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Business Relations Unit Updates- Cindy Roberts

In honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, DBVI's Annual Award Ceremony "Celebrating Ability in the Workplace" was held on campus on Wednesday, October 5th. The event centered on this year's theme "Disability: Part of the Equity Equation". Commissioner Rick Mitchell opened the event with a welcome and remarks, followed by John Littel, Secretary of Health and Human Resources who provided the keynote address. Megan Hall, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Alexis Fryar-Bowles, Office of Senator Mark Warner and Cindy Roberts, Director of Business and Corporate Initiatives presided over the awards ceremony. DBVI recognized Milrich Virtual Professionals, based in Woodbridge, Va as "Business of the Year" hiring 6 DBVI career seekers into remote customer service positions. Providing remarks virtually were CEO and Owner, Melanie Koerperich and Angela Baka, Chief Human Resource Manager. The award was accepted by two previous DBVI careers seekers, successfully employed by Milrich. Three individuals were recognized as "Employee of the Year" for their educational background and professional accomplishments. Alexa Bowe, SRC Chair provided a testimonial and assisted with honoring Bradford Staffing with "DBVI's Award of Excellence" for our longstanding partnership in executing and serving as the employer of record for our paid work based learning program. It was announced at that time, 103 internships have been set up across the state leading to a

successful career path for many individuals served by the agency. Pam Cato, Deputy Commissioner for Services provided reflections and closing remarks.

DBVI Career Connections was held in September with special guest, Johna Gravitt, Accessibility and Talent Associate with Bender Consulting. Bender is a company that collaborates with business, industry and government to create career opportunities for persons with disabilities. The founder of the company, Joyce Bender has served as the CEO for over 20 years. Headquartered in the Pittsburgh, PA area, Bender has a national footprint in the United States. The mission is to be the bridge for companies wanting to create a diverse and inclusive workforce and recruiting qualified candidates to meet that need. Johna began her employment with Bender Consulting in 2014 and was hired on full time within three months. As a person who is blind and uses a guide dog, Johna understands the barriers to employment that many of our career seekers face. She spoke of the available positions, application and interview process. Many of the openings are for professional positions with career advancement opportunities. LaPearl Smith, Business Relations Specialist, Norfolk connected the agency with Bender and will serve as the point of contact. The team will be forwarding career seekers resume for review. 15 individuals participated.

A special edition of DBVI Career Connections was held in October with a Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) Virtual Career Fair. Individuals were able to meet VIB Hiring Managers who provided an overview of the different positions within their respective areas. Pat Thomas, Director of Service Contracts helped to facilitate the meeting and provided a time of Q&A. Career seekers were able to provide a brief elevator speech and their career goal. Resumes are being forwarded on for review, while individuals complete the formal application for employment. 20 individuals participated.

DBVI Career Connections was held in November with Maximus presenting. Stephanie Chu-Javiar and Adam Roberts, Recruiter were guest presenters. Maximus is a federal contractor and has a national presence. They are heavily involved in VA and have contracts currently with State government surrounding Medicare/Medicaid called the "Cover VA Project". They spent time discussing the benefit package, competitive wages and application process, and the opportunity for remote work. Individuals interested will forward their resume on to Maximus and make application for the desired position. Mr. Roberts then did a demonstration in the career portal. There was a time of Q&A, and individuals participating in "Steer Your Career" were invited to pitch their elevator speech's. BRS Smith will serve as the POC for Maximus. 27 individuals participated, including vocational rehabilitation Counselors.

The fourth and final series of “Steer Your Career” for 2022 began in November and will end on December 14th. Approximately 45 career seekers have gone through the workshops throughout the year with not all finishing due to reasons such as entering employment, beginning a paid work based learning experience, etc. We will begin recruiting for the next session which will begin in February.

Kathy West-Evans, CSAVR (Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation) connected several eastern states with Kirk Adams, Business Consultant with United Safety Tech. A team from Maryland, VA General and DBVI met with Mr. Adams (formerly with American Federation for the Blind) to have a better understanding of the needs of the business. United Safety Tech is located in Baltimore, MD and has obtained a 100 million dollar grant from the Department of Defense to manufacture medical gloves. They will be hiring production and warehouse employees and plan for 40% for their workforce to be individuals with disabilities. He will be sending the team job descriptions. Anticipated hiring will begin in February and March of 2023.

Ms. Roberts facilitated the Region Three CSAVR NET POC meeting in November. POC’s from PA, DC, MD, New Jersey Blind and General and Delaware General attended. Denise Burke, Delaware General invited special guest Sonjia Kurzepa, Recruiter for “Ability Go” to present to the group on their immediate need for customer service representatives. Ms. Kurzepa explained to the group they are a DOBE (Disability Owned Business Company) and hire only for competitive integrated employment. They recently received a large contract with a Health Care provider and need to hire several hundred individuals by the end of December. The positions are remote. Three individuals have applied and are going through the assessment process.

Ms. Roberts met with David Leon, Deputy Director of Workforce, DARS. They each provided updates on the business teams, new hires and positions to be filled. Mr. Leon recently filled positions in NOVA and Blue Ridge and will be filling a position in South West Va. DBVI will be placing the VRO Business Relations Specialist position back into the state recruit in January. Both agencies are looking at a strategic plan of how we could move both teams towards better collaboration in the future, which will include joint meetings, trainings etc.

Ms. Roberts along with Penni Wetherell, DARS Placement Counselor, Fishersville office were invited to meet with Robin Robbins, Senior Human Resource Manager at the Omni Homestead Resort in Hot Springs. Ms. Robbins was thrilled to hear of the services for business offered by both agencies. Of particular interest to Ms. Roberts is their Omni Cares Program for college students, which allows them to participate in

summer internships within the hospitality industry. They also offer housing, transportation, competitive pay, benefits etc. Ms. Robbins was very interested in our paid work based learning program and would like to present at an upcoming "Career Connections". She would also like the management team to receive diversity training. After the meeting, she connected Ms. Roberts with the regional director of Omni in Va and the human resource manager at the Richmond Omni location.

Susan Revere, Executive Director, Richmond Public Library Foundation contacted Ms. Roberts on needs they have. They are working on accessibility of their website, building etc and have had patrons express some concerns. They are working on ADA compliance and have asked for our help. She would also like to learn more about our Library and Resource Center, and expressed a possible partnership. Ms. Roberts introduced her to Donna Cox, Dr. Peggy Fields and Shawn Corcoran. The DBVI team responded to her immediately and expressed their desire to help! A career seeker placed in paid work based learning and now an employee, was able to assist with the connection.

Ms. Roberts and Karen Kahn, Business Relations Specialist, Capital Area traveled to Charlottesville to reconnect with Va Career Works partners. They met with VEC Manager, Don Shotwell, who is also serving as center manager until a replacement is hired. They were connected with the WIOA Adult and Transition Specialist. The Business Services Team is still meeting virtually. They discussed services for business and also employers in the area who are seeking employees as well as transportation needs for those in more rural areas.

The Business Relations team met with Marianne Haegli, Program Director and Troy Collette, Business Development Manager with NSITE. They provided a detailed ppt deck with the different training components, some at no cost as well as their employment portal. We had a great discussion as well as Q&A. They will be our guests at our February Career Connections.

RM Bowman and Ms. Roberts met with an individual who has participated in two paid work based learnings and Career Connections and is finishing his doctoral program (Mental Health Counselor). He has been offered a job with a contract company (Department of Behavioral Health) and will be working intensely with a caseload of individuals receiving services. He will began in October and reported his income at 88K.

Ms. Smith, Ms. Kahn, Ms. Roberts and Megan Hall, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services, attended the Career Pathways training at WWRC and the Omni in Charlottesville. They were seated within their respective

regions. Throughout the training, there was excellent networking with our DARS counterparts and the business relations team. I had opportunities to meet with the speakers and spend time with David Leon and the business development managers discussing future collaborative efforts.

Ms. Kahn reported that Milrich Virtual Professionals has hired their fifth DBVI consumer from the Richmond Regional Office and six overall. The career seeker was specifically looking for a remote position that would match his vocational goal and work with his current schedule. He is very excited for the opportunity and DBVI is happy to be able to offer an on-the-job training (OJT) for Milrich Virtual Professionals. This individual recently completed Steer Your Career.

Ms. Kahn attended the 2022 Virginia Veterans and Military Affairs Conference at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. The event opened with Barry DuVal, the President & CEO of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Fred Thompson with Thompson Hospitality and Daniel Gade, Commissioner of Virginia Dept. of Veterans Services. Stu Shea, President & CEO of Peraton gave the keynote address. Peraton is the largest employer of veterans in Virginia. Panel discussions took place on the topics of:

- Military Compatibility, Resiliency and Quality of Life
- Corporate Culture and How Employers Can Play a Role in Addressing the Mental Health of our Veteran Workforce
- Ensuring a Successful Transition from Military to Civilian Careers

A luncheon followed with keynote remarks provided by The Honorable Glenn Youngkin, Governor of Virginia and awards were given to the businesses with the highest number of veteran employees. Businesses recognized included Ryde Technologies, LLC, ITA International, LLC, B3Group Incorporated and Navy Exchange Service Command.

Ms. Kahn put together a team meeting with Chris Martin, Director of Employment Services at SOAR365, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Isaac Crisp and a consumer who is seeking a work experience opportunity. Chris stated that he is in the process of developing some potential opportunities that should align with the consumer's vocational goal. Chris will keep the team notified when a potential opportunity comes to fruition.

Ms. Kahn met with Christina Clark, Executive Director of STEM Education and Innovation Center, a local non-profit in Fredericksburg. She learned about Karen and

DBVI through Jessica Webber, Director of the Virginia Career Works, who connected the two through an introductory email. Karen set up a Google Meets call and met Christina and each of them gave an overview of their programs. Christina is interested in hosting an intern in an administrative assistant capacity and has some other ideas of how STEM EIC and DBVI can partner together. Both Karen and Christina are excited about this new partnership.

Ms. Kahn was asked to present to the City of Richmond's Aging and People with Disabilities Advisory Board on the non-profit organization Virginia Ability. Karen regularly attends these monthly meetings representing DBVI but the group was interested in learning more about Virginia Ability. Karen is a Community Council Advisory member for Virginia Ability and in recognition of October's Disability Employment Awareness month she participated in the annual forum which also serves as a fundraising event. Karen, along with Megan Hall, , represented DBVI as one of the sponsor exhibitors. The event, held at the Glen Allen Cultural Arts Center, featured a panel from DARS discussing disability employment initiatives and musician and motivational speaker George Dennehy who shared his story of being born without arms but going on to live a full life including playing the guitar with his feet and driving a car. The forum ended with a networking social in the sculpture garden and the feedback from the guests in attendance was overwhelmingly positive.

Ms. Kahn was invited to present at the ADA Conference for the Virginia Dept. of Corrections at their staff training center in Goochland. She opened the presentation with information about DBVI as an agency and the many services they provide. She was excited to share information about the new alternative hiring process as well as incentives for hiring DBVI career seekers. She discussed in detail the work-based learning opportunities, on-the-job training and how DBVI could fill some of their many job openings with talented career seekers. Next, she presented material on the topic of disability awareness and etiquette. Following Karen's presentation, Karen Roane shared information on Orientation and Mobility including a demonstration of using a white cane and she had Karen Kahn help her demonstrate how to be a human guide. Lastly, Shawn Corcoran shared information about assistive technology and brought several items to demonstrate to the group.

Ms. Kahn attended the RVA Career Expo sponsored by Virginia Tech. There were over 100 employers in attendance and Karen was able to speak to many of them.

Ms. Kahn was asked to accompany a consumer for the onboarding process with Amazon. The consumer has been hired as a picker and is to begin November 2, 2022. To date, Amazon has hired 4 DBVI career seekers

Ms. Kahn and Karen Roane, Orientation and Mobility Instructor participated in a virtual meeting for the Richmond Connects Advisory Committee. The group is made up of stakeholders from a variety of organizations, agencies and businesses to help address the transportation issues currently for pedestrians, bicyclists and others. Since transportation is often a huge barrier for DBVI career seekers both staff agreed to participate in the meetings to be a voice for the individuals they serve.

NOVA Business Relations Specialist, Diane McBride and Fairfax and Nitesh Rathod Assistive Technology Coordinator attended the Loudoun Workforce Disability Career Fair. DBVI facilitated a breakout room session where assistive devices and supports were demonstrated. DBVI also had a table in the career fair hall. DBVI staff shared information about current open positions with DBVI and encouraged career seekers to search for positions on the virginia gov jobs site. Sixty-four career seekers visited the DBVI table.

Ms. McBride reports a DBVI career seeker who participated in a paid internship with National Industries for the Blind as a Technical Support Professional has accepted a full time position as a Specialist, Learning and Development with a salary of 65K per year. NOVA Business Relations Specialist provided job seeking services, interview practice and internship development.

Ms. McBride has been working with a DBVI deaf/blind career seeker in supporting her with her professional job search. The client met with Gary Gaston and received counseling on writing her federal resume and identifying federal jobs. She attended the federal job club and participated in numerous career fairs that Ms. McBride referred her to. She recently applied, interviewed and accepted an offer for a position as a specialist for the older adult program with the Helen Keller National Center. Client was connected with DBVI's Elizabeth Spiers to prepare for the interview. Ms. McBride counseled the career seeker on wage negotiation which resulted in being offered and accepting an offer at a higher salary than originally offered.

LaPearl Smith, BRS-Norfolk Regional Office met with Pat Thomas, Service Contracts Manager for Virginia Industries for the Blind on Sept. 12th. The meeting occurred at the Virginia Beach office of VIB. Pat gave Ms. Smith a tour of the packaging area

where VIB packs flooring materials for the U.S. Navy. Pat also shared a new contract that VIB received from the Navy to refurbish and pack fire extinguishers and shared current and future opportunities.

Ms. Smith met with Lisa Zalraiddin-Wornam and Larry Brunson on Sept. 13th at the Brooks Crossing Workforce Center in downtown Newport News. Lisa is the director of Workforce Initiatives for the Peninsula Consortium and Larry is the center director. Lisa shared several grants that the Peninsula received because of her work including STEM programs for high school students and more business partnerships.

Ms. Smith hosted a virtual Meet and Greet for consumers of the Norfolk Regional Office on Oct. 11th. Along with consumers, Patti Davis and Danielle Howett, VR counselors in Norfolk and Cindy Roberts, Director of Business Initiatives for DBVI also participated.

Ms. Smith recently represented DBVI at the Collaboration Conference held in Norfolk. While there she attended many sessions surrounding workforce and was able to connect with many community partners, employment service organizations, Ability One Contractors and network with DARS counterparts

VRCBVI- Brooke Rogers

New/Departing Staff:

Neel Sheth, Access Technology/Computer Instructor- started 09/25/2022

Ernecia Conner, Part Time Dorm Supervisor- started 10/29/2022

Zina Bey, Part Time Dorm Supervisor- started 11/14/2022

William Sutton, Community Engagement Coordinator- Started 11/28/2022

Programming Update:

Adult Training Program-

VRCBVI currently has 19 students in the adult program. 17 are residential students and two are commuter students. We have an additional commuter student scheduled to start evaluation/training in late November, and four additional residential students scheduled to start evaluation/training in January 2023.

We have fifteen additional students who have been accepted to attend VRCBVI who will be scheduled to start training throughout the Fall/Winter 2022 and Spring 2023.

Family and Friends Day 2022-

On Saturday, October 15, 2022, VRCBVI hosted its annual Family and Friends Day event. The theme of this event was, "What If THIS Actually Works?". It was a beautiful day that started out with an inspiring keynote from Commissioner Rick Mitchell. There were several current VRCBVI students in attendance with their families as well as individuals from the community. A father from Chesterfield and his 14-year old son participated in the activities of the day. They said that they were interested in finding out more information about the 2023 LIFE program. A woman introduced herself as being newly blind, and her VR Counselor encouraged her to attend Family and Friends Day. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in classes such as "Oh the places you can go" (Cane Travel), "It's OK everyone, I know what I'm doing!" (Personal and Home Management), "Oh Man- I can't find my phone" (Personal and Home Management), "Getting what I Need to be successful in school and work" (Access Technology). Participants were able to engage in a lively discussion during the Conversation and Blindness session about what they thought THIS (from the event's theme) was, and how THIS has and could change their lives. Several definitions of THIS included learning to use the tools of blindness such as cane travel, independence, confidence, community, expectations and hope. It was a very successful event with participants wanting to know how they could stay in touch with each other to provide encouragement and support.

Upcoming Events:

Thanksgiving Recess- VRCBVI (the center and the dorm) will close at noon on Wednesday, 11/23/22 for Thanksgiving recess. The Dorm reopens Sunday, 11/27/2022 at 4:00p.m. for students to return, and classes resume the following Monday.

December Recess- VRCBVI's dorm closes at 5:00p.m. on Thursday 12/15/22. The dorm will reopen on Tuesday, 01/03/2023 at 4:00p.m. for students to return, and classes will resume the following Wednesday.

2023 LIFE Program- Save the date information was sent out: Are you ready for the adventure of your LIFE? (Learning Independence, Feeling Empowered". Save the date! July 9, 2023-August 4, 2023. LIFE is a four-week residential training program for students aged 14-18 years old who are returning to a high school academic program in the fall of 2023. It includes the three components of skills of blindness training (all students), Confidence building activities (all students), and a two week paid work based learning experience (Students aged 16-18).

Important Dates for LIFE 2023:

Application Deadline May 8, 2023 by midnight

Program Begins July 9, 2023 with check in from 1:00 to 4:00p.m.

Program Ends August 4, 2023 at noon

Graduation Ceremony August 4, 2023 at 11:00a.m.

Student/parent meetings with staff via Zoom August 7-10, 2023

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Report – Megan Hall and Deborah Collard

As discussed at previous SRC meetings, DBVI has transitioned to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Common Performance Measures (CPM). These 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. The six core partners in WIOA include:

- Adult Formula Program (WIOA title I)
- Youth Formula Program (WIOA title I)
- Dislocated Worker Formula Program (WIOA title I)
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIOA title II)
- Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (WIOA title III)
- Vocational Rehabilitation program (WIOA title IV)

Common Performance Measures:

Under section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA, there are six primary indicators of performance:

A. Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program (for title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of participants in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit);

B. Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program (for title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of participants in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit);

C. Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit: The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

D. Credential Attainment: The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program;

E. Measurable Skill Gains: The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment. Depending on the type of education or training program, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

- a) Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level;
- b) Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- c) Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards²;
- d) Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones, such as completion of OJT or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training; or

e) Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks such as knowledge-based exams.

F. Effectiveness in Serving Employers: WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) requires the Departments (DOE and DOL) to establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness in serving employers. The Departments are piloting three approaches designed to gauge three critical workforce needs of the business community.

Approach 1 – Retention with the same employer – addresses the programs' efforts to provide employers with skilled workers;

Approach 2 – Repeat Business Customers – addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time; and

Approach 3 – Employer Penetration Rate – addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to all employers and sectors within a State and local economy.

²Within each State there is an administrative unit that provides authorization to postsecondary institutions within the State. States differ in the requirements to which they hold postsecondary institutions responsible for satisfactory progress. Progress for WIOA purposes must comply with any applicable State standards. Likewise, every State has a State educational agency that establishes education standards for secondary education within the State, which would apply for purposes of determining if a participant is meeting the State's academic standards.

WIOA Employer Engagement Common Performance Measure (CPM)

DBVI reports with WIOA core partners on the joint CPM of Effectiveness in Serving Employers as described below:

1. Effectiveness in Serving Employers (States select two of three measures) – Virginia has selected employer retention and employer penetration as described below:

- Retention with the same employer – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide employers with skilled workers; and
- Employer Penetration Rate - addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to all employers and sectors within a State and local economy.

Since this indicator is a new approach for measuring performance under WIOA’s six core programs, DOE and RSA have implemented a pilot program during which States must select two of the three approaches. DOE and RSA will evaluate State experiences with the various approaches and plan to identify a standardized indicator to be implemented in the future.

All state VR agencies nationwide continue working with RSA on reporting of WIOA Common Performance Measures (CPM) and utilizing RSA 911 data along with performance data dashboards developed by RSA to demonstrate VR program performance. Based on current information, DBVI is able to report on several measures as shown in the table below.

CPM	PY17	PY18	PY19	PY20	PY21
Employment rate 2 nd Q after exit	N/A	42.2% DBVI 51.5% VA*	37.6% DBVI 54.4% VA*	39.9% DBVI 51.6% VA*	39%
Employment rate 4 th Q after exit	N/A	N/A	27.7% DBVI 52.2% VA*	30.2% DBVI 47.5% VA*	33%
Median Earnings 2 nd Q after exit	N/A	\$4362 DBVI \$3011 VA*	\$4445 DBVI \$3127 VA*	\$5540 DBVI \$3238 VA*	\$4878
Credential Attainment Rate	N/A	N/A	16.7% DBVI	61.8% DBVI 43.3% VA*	49%
Measureable Skill Gains (MSG) Rate	19.5% DBVI 40.2 % VA*	53.0% DBVI 45.0% VA*	82.6% DBVI 85.65 VA*	85.5% DBVI 88.9% VA*	85%
Number of DBVI Participants Earning an MSG**	95	249	247	243	244
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Reported as a statewide measure with WIOA partners				
Employer Retention Rate	N/A	N/A	62% VA*	70% DBVI TBD VA	69%
Employer Penetration - DBVI	187 services 109 businesses	256 services 129 businesses	266 services 132 businesses	190 services 84 businesses	190 services 117 businesses

*Reported for the state of Virginia, this includes Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) VR data combined with DBVI VR data.

**Not a WIOA CPM, but considered a primary indicator of performance by RSA.

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 PY21 Q4 there were 32 CIE outcomes achieved. DBVI continues to have a wide variety of occupations and strong median wages represented in CIE outcomes. The top ten careers by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) categories, median hourly wage, and median weekly hours are listed in the table below.

Standard Occupational Classification	Individuals	Median Hours	Median Wage
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	3	27	\$12.15
Managers, All Others	2	40	\$34.14
Management Analysts	2	40	\$21.40
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Hosuekeeping Cleaners	2	22	\$11.00
Customer Service Representatives	2	18	\$13.00
Agents, Except Wholesale, Retail and Farm Products	1	40	\$27.22
Mental Health Counselors	1	20	\$100.00
Insurance Sales Agents	1	40	\$18.00
Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	1	18	\$18.75
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	1	40	\$30.29

Another WIOA performance area where DBVI continues to be consistent and robust is in the provision of the required pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). For PY2021 Q4, DBVI reported 112 students receiving pre-ETS, including the following number of services provided: 43 job exploration counseling services (14.3%), 74 work based learning experiences (24.7%), 74 counseling and enrollment opportunities services (24.7%), 57 work readiness training experiences (19.0%), and 52 instructions in self advocacy services (17.3%).

Additionally, through the national Rehab Data Workgroup, RSA has shared several “Other Measures that Matter” with the RSA quarterly Dashboards. These measures are provided to enhance the VR agencies’ understanding of the use of the new data elements collected and the implementation of WIOA. For FPY21 DBVI can share

Other Measures that Matters #4: The Provision of VR Services. In FPY21 Q4, DBVI had 890 total VR participants of which 868 participants received services representing 97.5 % of participants receiving VR services. This is consistent with FPY21 Q3 where DBVI had 97% of participants receiving VR services.

DBVI can also share Other Measures that Matters #5: Percent of Participants Enrolled in Education/Training Program Leading to a Recognized Credential/Employment. For FPY21 Q4, DBVI had 890 total VR participants of which 261 participants were eligible to earn a measurable skill gain (MSG) representing 29.3% of participants eligible to earn an MSG. This is an increase from FPY21 Q3 where DBVI had 27.2% of participants who were eligible to earn an MSG.

The Other Measures provided by the national Rehab Data Workgroup through RSA will continue to be monitored and analyzed by the VR team. The information will be used to inform decisions about program implementation and ongoing improvement.

Pre-Employment Transition Services and Career Pathways – Tish Harris

This has been a busy quarter for DBVI Pre-ETS with an IT tiered cohort, a new pilot for Career Immersion and planning for the IT Credential Fair as well as next spring through summer. The tiered IT cohort began with information sessions in September, with any interested individuals required to hear the expectations and information on an Information Session offered both during the day and in the evening. We have partnered with Intellectual Point due to the experience and patience of their instructors, the ability of instructors to teach nonvisually, recorded class sessions and a practice test back open to students. A total of 16 participants took the Comp TIA Fundamentals class that began in October, and ran during the evenings 7-9 for two Monday through Fridays. We had both students and adults in the cohort. We achieved our goal of career exploration for students and having a win-win experience. One student who was interested in technology took the training, and determined she did not want a tech career path. This is a win-win with the student achieving a basic understanding of computer systems, and not wasting valuable time and money to pursue technology at a higher level only to find she did not like it.

Several students had to stop after the first tier due to family or work obligations, but 8 continued on to the Information Technology Infrastructure Libraries training. The instruction began in November, and training is now complete. Intellectual Point will proctor the credential tests on December 5th, which is a huge benefit for our students who require accommodations. The next step will be Security+ which begins in January.

November 18-20 saw a new pilot, Careers in Action-Bridge to Success, take place in Natural Bridge, Virginia. Twenty-one students, their parents and DBVI staff all came together for an incredible weekend of growth. The students participating represented a diverse array of disabilities (all had vision impairments) and career interests. We had our first deaf-blind student join us for an onsite program. Students and their parents were greeted upon arrival on Friday with lunch, introduction to staff, and expectations for the weekend provided during the session. Our group followed up with a wagon tour of the Safari Park, which is Virginia's only drive through zoological park. Each student had buckets of feed to feed the animals on the wagon tour, which ended up being a huge success with lots of laughter and learning about the various animals on the tour, especially when the animal managed to take off with the entire bucket. Immediately following the tour, all participants had a creature feature session, where a resident staff zoo keeper explained the various jobs that could be found at the safari park and how all staff worked together, from picking up feed buckets and emptying trash to animal care.

All participants returned to the hotel to prepare for dinner at the Washington ballroom. Our speaker for the evening to inspire students was Kendal Swartzentruber, who is the state Co-Coordinator of VDOE's I'm Determined Program and the Region 5 Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) Coordinator. Kendal had an interactive program that let students voice their ideas to parents using interview questions to go through a series of answers that promoted student advocacy and self-determination. Kendal went through the room with a mic and nearly every student spoke to the crowd with some of their answers. It was incredibly moving and powerful. Multiple parents spoke to Kendal afterwards about the I'm Determined conference at JMU in June. Kendal has asked all four of our DBVI student mentors to apply to be a youth leader with I'm Determined!

After Kendal completed his work with students, we took time for shout outs to recognize steps forward from our students and mentors. Lots of great kudos given! Saturday began with breakfast and the students going on a walking career immersion at the hotel while adults had a resource session led by Megan Hall. Adults heard from Keli Bradbury, who works with TTAC at Radford University. Keli spoke to adults about letting students explore interests, the good day plan and the single day plan, which are all resources provided free by I'm Determined. Following Keli, Megan Hall led discussion on programs and resources from DBVI, and Cindy Roberts provided an overview of work based learning. We provided this information on resources in a format that allowed for questions and answers from parents.

While parents were getting great information, students were broken up into three groups based on their answers to which career group interested them most: I like to

work with my hands, I am social and like to work with people, and I like to work with business processed or leadership. Groups each had students, DBVI staff and O&M Specialists take the tour with them. Students stopped in three main areas: 1- Front desk to learn about front desk, night audit, reservations, IT and resort management, as well as gift shop stocking and purchases; 2- The kitchen area to learn about various kitchen jobs, as well as jobs in the dining room and room service; 3- The laundry facilities to learn about various housekeeping, laundry and maintenance jobs. As soon as all three groups had visited every area, we all joined together in a meeting room circle where Cindy Roberts presented information on how to build a resume, Felicia Williams spoke about personal branding, and Tish Harris had a round robin about the one question all employers ask, "Tell me about yourself". Every single student took a turn telling the group something they were great at!

We met back together for lunch, then went next door to the Natural Bridge State Park to hear about jobs with the state park system. We all visited the Natural Bridge, caverns, falls and Indian village on a walking tour. After a rest time, we gathered for dinner, shout outs, and a dance throw down where both students and some parents got on their feet and danced together. It was wonderful to see students move outside their comfort zones and dance! The night ended with a Scavenger Hunt that asked students to find 5 of 8 items listed in the scavenger hunt, but students knuckled down and all participants found all 8!

Our final morning was Sunday, where we recapped and had every student write down their next steps to move forward. Certificates were presented for the program, and door prizes were awarded. The number of parents that stopped us to remark on how amazing the weekend was and to note the change in their student in just a few days made all the hard work worthwhile.

Planning for upcoming events, including the IT Credential Fair on December 8, Resiliency in January, Android and Productivity in February and March, Leap into Linux and Cyber Warriors for STEM programs and the JMU college immersion programs are in the planning stages. In addition, Tish Harris of the Pre-ETS team became a certified Windmills trainer to lead sessions on disability with employers. Pre-ETS also has two upcoming presentations for the Inspiration Innovation Expo in January presented by University of Wisconsin –Stout to premiere innovative ideas to the VR field. For the second year in a row, DBVI Pre-ETS as chosen to do a live Q&A after the recorded session, which is an honor.

The VR consumer satisfaction evaluation program for FPY2021 continues with outreach to 211 eligible individuals with VR cases closed July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021. During the current cycle of the evaluation program several changes have been implemented in order to improve response rate and enhance the feedback received. DBVI partnered with the SRC to update and edit the survey platform and questions for FPYs 2020 and 2021. These updates, including additional personnel resources to provide follow up, have been implemented and show indications of improvement in response rate and reduction of response time. The current response rate is approximately 40%, up from 30% in FPY20. Additionally, the time to complete the evaluation is down approximately 20%.

Adjustments to outreach of eligible individuals who may participate in the evaluation, including the re-introduction of providing the option to complete the survey by mail, and increased follow up activities with the addition of resources, were implemented in March 2021. DBVI anticipates the response rate will continue to remain close to 40% and subsequently, enhance the valuable feedback received.

Responses to the VR consumer satisfaction evaluation continue to be shared with the Director of VR and Workforce for consultation, training planning, resolution of potential issues, and continuous program improvement. Data review and analysis will continue to take place in order to provide quarterly updates to the SRC and as needed.

Response summaries and graphics for FPY2021 can be viewed at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-RKJ723YW/>

VR Customer Satisfaction PRELIMINARY results to date; through June 2022.

The information in Tables 1 and 2 below, includes preliminary data from FPY2021 evaluation responses. The FPY2021 evaluation program is open through the third calendar quarter of 2022. Data included in this update are preliminary* and are subject to change.

Table 1. Overall Satisfaction rating with the VR Program FFY2016 through current FPY2021, range = 20-100 points.

Year	Total	Rehabilitated	Not Rehabilitated
FFY2016	73.7	82.8	63.3
FFY2017	79.7	85.6	69.8
FFY2018	78.6	94.7	58.5
FFY2019 & 2020	73.3	87.3	45.5

FPY2020	78.8	91.82	71.20
FPY2021*	89.0	TBD	TBD

Table 2. Satisfaction with VR Staff FFY2016 through FPY2021, range = 20 – 100 points.

How satisfied are you that your VR Counselor was:

Year	Respectful	Knowledgeable About your disability	Sensitive to your needs
FFY2016	83.7	78.6	78.0
FFY2017	86.6	86.0	83.9
FFY2018	92.9	81.4	85.7
FFY2019 & 2020	84.4	83.8	85.7
FPY2020	85.8	87.2	84.3
FPY2021*	92.0	89.8	92.1

A Summary of Selected Provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act for the DBVI State Rehabilitation Council

Chapter 37 of Title 2.2 of the Code of Virginia is commonly referred to as FOIA.

FOIA ensures that the people of the Commonwealth ready access to public records in the custody of public officials and ensures free entry to meetings of public bodies wherein the business of the people is being conducted. (Virginia Code § 2.2-3700)

“The affairs of the government are not intended to be conducted in an atmosphere of secrecy since at all times the public is to be the beneficiary of any action taken at any level of governments.”

New Virginia Code § 2.2-3701 FOIA definitions effective September 1, 2022, include:

"All-virtual public meeting" means a public meeting (i) conducted by a public body, other than those excepted pursuant to subsection C of § 2.2-3708.3, using electronic communication means, (ii) during which all members of the public body who participate do so remotely rather than being assembled in one physical location, and (iii) to which public access is provided through electronic communication means.

"Electronic communication" means the use of technology having electrical, digital, magnetic, wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or similar capabilities to transmit or receive information.

“Public body” means any legislative body, authority, board, bureau, commission, district, or agency of the Commonwealth...and other organizations or corporations or agencies in the Commonwealth supported wholly or principally by public funds. It shall include any committee, subcommittee, or other entity however designated of the public body created to perform delegated functions of the public body or to advise the public body. It shall not exclude any such committee, subcommittee, or entity because it has private sector or citizen members.

"Remote participation" means participation by an individual member of a public body by electronic communication means in a public meeting where a quorum of the public body is otherwise physically assembled.

Why do you need to know about FOIA?

Any person elected, reelected, appointed, or reappointed to anybody not to be excepted from this chapter ***shall*** (i) be furnished by the public body’s administrator or legal counsel with a copy of this chapter within two weeks following election, reelection, appointment, or reappointment and (ii) **read and become familiar with the provisions of this chapter.**

Virginia Code § 2.2-3703

What is Covered by FOIA?

- FOIA covers two general areas:
 - Meetings
 - Records

Meetings Defined

- Meetings include work sessions
- When sitting physically or through electronic communication
- Requires (i) three members; or (ii) a quorum, if less than three

Virginia Code § 2.2-3701

What if you go to a social function or other gathering and there are two or more members of the Council there?

Not prohibited if:

- No part of the purpose of such a gathering is the discussion or transaction of any public business
- Not called or prearranged with any purpose of discussing or transacting any business of the council proposed, deliberated, or decided.

FOIA Meeting Requirements

- All meeting shall be open to the public, unless subject to a specific provision for a closed meeting.
- Public includes the media
- Any person may photograph, film, record or otherwise reproduce any portion of a meeting required to be open
- No public body shall conduct a meeting required by open in any building or facility where recording devices are prohibited.
- A board may not vote in secret or by written ballot.

Virginia Code §§ 2.2-3707.01 and 2.2-3711

What are the FOIA Notice Requirements?

- Notice of the time, date, and location of meetings is required.
- Notice shall be posted at least three working days prior to the meeting, including posting on the Virginia Town Hall and DBVI.
- Notice, reasonable under the circumstance, of special, emergency, or continued meetings shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided to the members of the public body conducting the meeting.
- Any person may file a written request for notification with a public body annually.
- The public body shall provide notice of all meetings directly to each such person. The notice may be provided electronically.
- At least one copy of the proposed agenda and all agenda packets, and, unless exempt, all materials furnished to members of a public body for a meeting shall be made available for public inspection at the same time documents are furnished to the members of the public body.

Virginia Code § 2.2-3707

What are the Written Records – Minutes Requirements?

- Written minutes are required and shall include:
 - (a) the date, time, and location of the meeting.
 - (b) the members of the public body recorded as present and absent.
 - (c) a summary of the discussion on matters proposed, deliberated, or decided, and a record of any votes taken.

- Minutes, including draft minutes, and all records of open meetings, including audio/visual records, shall be deemed public records and subject to FOIA
 - In other words, if a tape is made of a meeting, it is also deemed a public record and submit to disclosure.

Virginia Code § 2.2-3707

What are the FIOA requirements for Written Records for Electronic Communication Meetings?

- For electronic communication meetings, minutes shall include:
 - (1) the identity of the members of the public body who participated through electronic communication means.
 - (2) the identity of the members of the public body who were physically assembled at one physical location, and
 - (3) the identity of the members of the public body who were not present at the location identified in clause (2) but who monitored such meeting through electronic means.

Virginia Code § 2.2-3707 (H)

What are the FOIA requirements for Posting of Minutes?

- All boards, commissions, councils, and other public bodies created in the executive branch and subject to FOIA must post minutes of their meetings on its agency website and Virginia Town Hall.
- Minutes must be posted within seven working days of final approval of the minutes.

Virginia Code § 2.2-3707.2

What about Meetings Held Through Electronic Communication means?

- FOIA sections pertaining Electronic Communication became effective September 1, 2022
- Encourages public access to board and council public meetings and to meetings where public comment is normally received through in person, electronic means, and other means. Individual board or council members may participate in meetings electronically if:
 - The Board/Council has a policy, and the member notifies the chair that the member has:
 - A temporary or permanent disability or medical condition that prevents physical participation
 - A family member who has a medical condition and requires care that prevents the member from attending
 - Physical residence more than 60 miles from the identified meeting location
 - A personal matter. The member must identify the personal matter and cannot use remote participation for this reason for more two meetings per calendar year or than 25% of meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the whole number, whichever is greater
- DBVI may hold all-virtual Board/Council meetings if
 - There is an electronic communication policy
 - The required meeting notice describes whether the meeting is in-person or all-virtual and notifies the

- public that the method chosen for the meeting shall not be changed unless a new notice is posted.
- There is public access to the all-virtual meeting provided via electronic communication means
 - Electronic means allows the public to hear members participating in the all-virtual meeting and when available, to see members as well
 - A phone number or other live contact information is provided to alert the members if audio or video transmission of the meeting fails, the body must monitor these means of communication during the meeting; the members must take recess if the technology fails for the public
 - The proposed agenda, agenda packets, and all materials given to the members are available to the public in electronic format at the same time that members receive the materials (except exempt materials)
 - The public can make comment through electronic means, including written comments, at meetings where public comment is customarily received
 - No more than two members are together at any one remote location unless that location is open to the public to physically access it
 - If in closed session during an all-virtual public meeting, transmission of the meeting to the public resumes for the member's vote to certify the closed meeting
 - An all-virtual public meeting does not convene more than two times per calendar year or 25% of the

- meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater, or is conducted consecutively with another all-virtual public meeting
- Minutes of all-virtual public meetings are taken as required, which include that the meeting was held by electronic means and the type of electronic communications.
 - If a member's participation from a remote location is disapproved because of a violation of policy, the disapproval shall be included in the minutes with specificity.
 - The public body shall adopt a policy, by recorded vote at a public meeting before an all-virtual public meeting can be used. The policy shall be strictly and uniformly applied to the entire membership without exception and without regard to the identity of the member, requesting remote participation on matters that will considered or voted on at the meeting.
 - The policy shall:
 - Describe the circumstances under which an all-virtual public meeting and remote participation will be allowed and the process that will be used for making requests to use remote participating, approving or denying requests, and creating a record of the requests.
 - Describe the number of times remote participation for personal matters or all-virtual public meetings can be used per calendar year.

- A committee, subcommittee, or other entity of the board or council may adopt an electronic communication policy for the committee, subcommittee, or other entity.

Virginia Code §§ 2.2-3708.3, 2.2-3708.3 (D) and 2.2-3712

Regarding Meeting Minutes

- Electronic communication meetings minutes must:
 - Identify the members at each remote location identified in the required meeting notices who participated in the meeting through electronic communication means,
 - Identify the members of who were physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location,
 - Identity of the members who were not present at the locations identified in the required notice but who monitored the meeting through electronic communication means.

Virginia Code § 2.2-3708.3 (D)

If you have questions, please contact:

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