

MINUTES
DBVI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
September 10, 2021
Held Via Zoom Video Conference

SRC Members in Attendance

Christine Appert, Chair, Charlottesville, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Alexa Bowe, Newport News, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor
Tammy Burns, Midlothian, Representative of Virginia's Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center
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
Ray Hopkins, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member
Prem Jadhvani, Leesburg, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor
Edna Johnson, Alexandria, Former or Current Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Liang Liao, Richmond, DBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Joliefawn Liddell, Richmond, Representative of the Client Assistance Program
Ricardo Lizama, Arlington, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group
Marianne Moore, Richmond, Representative of the Virginia Department of Education
Chanthen Nene, Manassas, Representative of Disability Advocacy Group
Mark Roane, Vice-Chair, Richmond, Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Milford Stern, Roanoke, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

SRC Members Not Able to Attend

Julie Akers, Radford, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor
Annette Hyde, Radiant, Representative of the Workforce Council
Ken Jessup, Virginia Beach, Representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council
Larysa Kautz, Alexandria, Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Program Provider

DBVI Staff Present

Pam Cato, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services
Karen Kahn, Business Relations Specialist
Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant for Services – Recorder of Minutes
Richard Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner for Services
Cindy Roberts, Director of Business and Corporate Initiatives

ASL Interpreters

Laurie Bolster, Interpreter Service Program, VDDHH
Elizabeth Leitch, Interpreter Service Program, VDDHH

Public
None

Call to Order / Welcome and Introductions

Chair Appert called the meeting to order. Meeting was virtual, so no official business or voting was permitted. Ms. Cato welcomed and identified those on the call.

Review of Agenda

No questions or comments were raised regarding the agenda.

Review of June 11 Meeting Minutes

No questions or comments were raised regarding the June 11, 2021, SRC meeting minutes.

Public Comment

None

Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Ray Hopkins

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

The Agency is closing out the previous state fiscal year and working in current fiscal year making proposals and projections for the upcoming fiscal year. Previous state fiscal year ended positively as far as carryover funds and funds available to go through 2022. This is directly tied to the pandemic and the way services have been altered during the course of the pandemic. The Agency did request and received a small amount of re-allotted funds. The Agency will be receiving \$12.5M for three Capital Outlay Projects through the American Rescue Plan as a result of the Special Session held by the General Assembly in August.

The Agency continues to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. DBVI previously rolled back efforts to bring people unmasked back into Agency facilities; however, as the spread of COVID-19 has increased and positivity has increased, DBVI is now requiring the wearing of masks at DBVI facilities in accordance with the recommendations of local health districts and the CDC. DBVI is in the process of meeting the requirements of the Governor's Executive Directive #18 which was issued on August 5, 2021, requiring all employees in Executive Branch Agencies to disclose their vaccination status; those not fully vaccinated need to submit to weekly testing. Virginia Industries for the Blind was immediately contacted by federal and state agencies about procuring self-administered tests and have been actively engaged in meeting these requests.

A Summit is being planned for December where staff and other key leaders from across the Commonwealth will talk about rehabilitation in Virginia as well as nationally and where we foresee rehabilitation going.

Deputy Commissioner's Report – Dr. Richard Mitchell

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

DBVI is currently recruiting for several VR Counselors in the Fairfax office as well as a Rehabilitation Technologist.

The Services Division is monitoring in-person visits across the Commonwealth. Regional Office Managers provide daily reports on positivity rates in their area.

The Agency completed the LIFE Program in August and STEPS for Success Program in July and will resume the Adult Training Program September 13.

VR Program Update – Pam Cato

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

A DBVI Centennial event is scheduled for September 29, 2021, from 2 – 3 PM, which will highlight DBVI's Vocational Rehabilitation, Rehabilitation Technology and Business Relations.

On October 6, 2021, from 10 – 11:30 AM, DBVI will be “Celebrating Ability in the Workplace” in Honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Ms. Cato gave additional information on the STEPS to Success Program offered through VRCBVI in collaboration with the University of Richmond, as well as the LIFE Program.

Visit DBVI's Centennial website for a calendar of events and links to events.

<https://www.vdbvi.org/centennial.htm>

Ms. Mills will send GovDelivery sign up link to SRC members which share DBVI events and announcements.

Old and New Business

Annual Report – Update for Completion

Mr. Stern and Mr. Jadhvani are leading the Annual Report project. Some additional information is still needed, but a rough layout should be completed within the next few weeks. Mr. Jadhvani is reviewing the Success Stories and will forward those to be included in the Annual Report to Mr. Stern next week.

CSNA Focus Group Session

The mandatory triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) Focus Group Session that includes the SRC is scheduled for September 20, 2021. Ms. Mills will resend the link to join to the SRC members.

Fall CSAVR Conference

The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) virtual conference will be held November 1 – 5, 2021. The conference link: [CSAVR Conference](#) In addition, the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) will hold a virtual conference December 6 – 10, 2021. A draft agenda and registration will be available for the NCSAB the week of October 4. SRC members interested in attending either of the conferences should let Ms. Mills know.

Update-SRC Elections to be Held @ Dec 3 SRC Mtg

The SRC elections for Chair and Vice-Chair have been deferred to the December 2021 SRC meeting with hopes that the SRC is able to meet in person and vote. Please let Chair Appert or Ms. Cato know if you are interested on being on the slate or would like to nominate an individual.

Proposed Amendment to SRC Bylaws

Commissioner Hopkins recommended Ms. Cato work with Dr. Mitchell and Ms. Alicia Johnson with the Office of the Attorney General to create language for the proposed Bylaw amendment regarding virtual meetings for the SRC as a whole and for individual members. The proposed amendment will be revisited at the December SRC meeting.

Next SRC Quarterly Mtg – December 3

The next meeting is scheduled to be held December 3. If it is in-person, the meeting will include a tour of the DBVI campus and a working lunch. It is recommended to block out the entire day on the calendar to allow for travel time if it is in person.

DBVI Business Team Presentation

DBVI's Business Team members, Ms. Roberts and Ms. Kahn, shared a PowerPoint presentation describing the work that the Business Team does as far as collaborating with community partners and client career seekers

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.