

**Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services  
State Rehabilitation Council  
DRAFT Meeting Minutes  
November 14, 2012**

A meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was held on November 14, 2012 at the Division for Rehabilitative Services Henrico/Richmond Office located at 2001 Maywill Street, Richmond, Virginia.

**Members Present:** Suzanne Bowers, Matthew Deans, Toney Lineberry, Ellen McIlhenny, Romy Mohta, James Rothrock, Thalia Simpson-Clement, Lauren Snyder-Roche, Sally J. Thompson, Julie Triplett

**Members Absent:** John Eisenberg, Cheryl Johnson, Bryant Neville

**Others Present:** Jim Taylor, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired SRC Representative; Elizabeth Smith, Policy and Planning Director; Scott Fraley, Vocational Rehabilitation Quality Assurance Analyst; Mable Fleming, Senior Analyst; Barbara Tyson, Staff Support; Rick Sizemore, WWRC Director; Vanessa Rakestraw, Policy Analyst; Kathy Hayfield, DRS Director; Barbara Burkett, Lead Analyst Research and Evaluation; Larry Overbay, Southwest Regional Director; Dale Batten, Central Regional Director; Jane Steveson, Eastern Regional Director; Doug James, Northern Regional Director; Sherry Hailey, DRS Administration Supervisor, Sandy Williams, RS Budget Support; Interpreters

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am.

**Approval of Minutes:** With no changes required, the minutes of the August 13, 2012 meeting were approved as written; the addendum to the minutes includes the submitted SRC Roundtable Reports.

**Matters of Public comment:** There were no comments for the public.

**Chairperson's Report**

- The Nominating Committee nominated Ellen McIlhenny for the position of 2013 SRC Vice- Chair. Hearing no other nominations, a motion was made by Charlie Downs, seconded by Thalia Simpson-Clement, and unanimously passed to elect Ellen McIlhenny as Vice Chair.
- Charlie Downs will serve as the Chair of the Internal Affairs Committee for Federal Fiscal Year 2013, due to the pending resignation of Matthew Deans from the SRC due to his promotion. A Chair of the External Affairs Committee still needs to be designated.
- Mr. Lineberry provided an overview of the SRC Annual Retreat which was held on November 13, 2012. The SRC members provided feedback on the retreat to assist with planning for next year.
- Mr. Lineberry attended the Region III State Rehabilitation Council Meeting held in Baltimore on October 14-16, 2012. SRC Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Liaisons from

Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania were in attendance. The meeting was sponsored by the George Washington University Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center (GWU TACE).

- Mr. Lineberry will represent the SRC at the December 15 meeting of the DBVI SRC.

### **Commissioner's Report**

- Commissioner Rothrock reported on the implementation status of DARS. Transition to the new agency has occurred smoothly, preserving the identity and fiscal integrity of the programs. The Title V program, which is collaboration between the DARS Divisions for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, has transitioned to DRS.
- The Commissioner encouraged the SRC members to view the DARS Facebook page.
- He provided an update on the status and success of the DRS ICE (Intense Consumer Engagement) and the "Cold Case" programs which are being utilized to better engage vocational rehabilitation (VR) consumers in their VR program.
- On October 17, 2012 the Annual Champions Awards Ceremony Luncheon was held to recognize businesses that excelled in hiring VR consumers. It was held at the University of Richmond Jepson Center and was sponsored in part by Dominion Resources, Inc.
- As Chair of the National Governor's Association, Governor Markell of Delaware has established an initiative for the hiring of individuals with disabilities. Commissioner Rothrock attended a meeting to discuss this initiative and provided information on some DARS activities, to include the Long Term Employment Support Services program, Business Development Managers, Project SEARCH, and the promotion of Employment First in Virginia. On November 27, there will be a gathering of representatives from state agencies to further discuss the implementation of Employment First in Virginia.
- The Governor has requested that state agencies prepare a 4% budget reduction plan.

**Working Lunch and Council Roundtable Reports:** Jim Taylor provided an overview of the last DBVI SRC meeting. Written reports for the DBVI SRC and SILC meetings are included with the SRC meeting minutes. The DRS Regional Directors joined the SRC members for lunch to meet them and have discussions about services in their regions.

### **Program Reports:**

**Division for Rehabilitative Services:** Kathy Hayfield reviewed some of the current performance indicators for the DRS program. Last month 845 individuals were determined eligible for the VR program and 455 Employment Plans were written. Currently, there are 1,600 consumers on the waiting list. Effective November 15, the Most Significantly Disabled Priority Category under Order of Selection will be closed due to the fiscal situation. As funding is available, consumers will be brought off the waiting list for services. Kathy shared with the SRC a draft DRS budget report for their consideration. It was suggested that subsequent reports contain previous year comparison information for the SRC to better understand the consequences of the information presented. Kathy briefed the SRC on the outcomes, to date, of the ICE and "Cold Case" initiatives. The "Cold Case" initiative will be extended another six months.

**WWRC:** Rick Sizemore reviewed some of the information contained in the written WWRC Update provided to Council members prior to the meeting. He thanked the members for their support with the development of the WWRC Blueprint which will be released in January, 2013. SRC members also will be invited to attend the Barnett Hall opening celebration to be held in the spring, 2013.

## **Committee Reports**

**Internal Affairs:** Matthew Deans, Committee Chair, provided the following report. Liz Smith reviewed with the Committee proposed SRC recommendations for their 2012 Annual Report and to be included in the 2014 State Plan. A motion was made by Matthew Deans, seconded by Tony Lineberry, and passed unanimously to adopt the following recommendations:

1. Continue to support more visible coordination between the VR and independent living programs in providing services for Virginians with disabilities.
2. Continue to work to expand outreach to, and meet needs of, people with disabilities from different cultural backgrounds and those with Limited English Proficiency.
3. Project SEARCH already is recognized as an outstanding program to assist youth in achieving successful employment. Therefore, the Council continues to support the efforts of the agency to expand the Project SEARCH program across Virginia with continued collaboration with the Department of Education.
4. The Council is pleased with the continuous improvement in the competitive employment rate achieved by the department's VR consumers and supports the goal to continue to increase this rate, particularly in certain geographic areas where the rate has been traditionally lower than the state average.
5. The Council supports the agency's efforts to enhance consumer involvement in their VR program. The need for enhanced consumer involvement has been documented in the consumer satisfaction survey over the years. Therefore, the SRC recommends that the agency continue with these efforts and evaluate their effectiveness.
6. The Council is impressed with the agency's efforts to better understand and make use of client data and trending in management of the VR program. With strategic decision making, the Council hopes that the agency will be able to once again open the Most Significantly Disabled Priority Category under Order of Selection in the coming months.
7. The Council supports the agency's plan to conduct systemic evaluations of certain service provision areas to assist in strategic planning about these programs, most notably the vocational evaluation, Self-Employment Enterprise and rehabilitation technology/assistive technology service areas. The Council looks forward to being apprised of the results of these evaluations.

The Committee discussed the bids for new VR hearing officers. A motion was made by Matthew Deans, seconded by Romy Mohta, and passed unanimously to recommend that the agency enter into contracts with Carl Schmidt and Robert Hartsoe.

Mable Fleming presented the next Memorandum of Agreement between DARS and the SRC on the VR consumer satisfactions survey. Charlie Downs and Sally Thompson will work with Mable to explore the development of changes to the existing survey methodology. A motion was

made by Matthew Deans, seconded by Ellen McIlhenny, and unanimously passed to approve the Memorandum of Agreement as written.

**External Affairs:** In the absence of a Committee Chair, Vanessa Rakestraw called the meeting to order. The committee decided to wait on nominating a new chairperson until the status of council appointments is known. Barbara Burkett, Lead Analyst, provided an update of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). Cheryl Johnson and Suzanne Bowers agreed to assist with the development of the next CSNA.

Betsy Mcelfresh, Public Relations, presented a mock-up of the 2012 SRC Annual Report. It was suggested that the cover better emphasize VR sponsored post-secondary services to employment. Thalia Simpson-Clement and Ellen McIlhenny have provided a draft list of SRC accomplishments for the Report.

Liz Smith discussed plans to begin scheduling State Plan public hearings. Cheryl Johnson is willing to sponsor a hearing in Northern Virginia and one may be held at the March Transition Forum in Richmond. It was recommended that the SRC utilize social media to communicate about the public hearings and gather public comment. The Committee is looking for existing events that take place where a public hearing might be held. Anyone with knowledge of such an event is to share this with the Committee.

**Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm. The next meeting will be held on January 14, 2013 at the DARS Headquarters.

**Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)**  
**Report to the**  
**Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**

Written for the SRC meeting/retreat taking place on November 13<sup>th</sup> – November 14<sup>th</sup> of 2012 at the DARS headquarters in Richmond, Virginia as an update since Sarah Liddle's report dated August 13, 2012. Liddle's term expiring, Lauren Snyder Roche will now serve as the liaison.

\*SILC meeting was moved from October to November in order to ensure a quorum be met. That meeting will take place November 14<sup>th</sup> – November 15<sup>th</sup> in Richmond, Virginia.

\*The SILC article was published in Capitol Connections and can be found online at: [http://www.vccqm.org/vcc\\_qm\\_current.htm](http://www.vccqm.org/vcc_qm_current.htm) and clicking on "current issue". The article (on pg. 23) was written by Shawn Utt, SILC Chair, Rhonda Jeter, Administrator, and submitted by SILC member and regular Capitol Connections contributor, Ken Jessup.

\*Ken Jessup, Council member, has been appointed by Governor McDonnell to the SRC of DBVI.

\*The SILC's needs assessment survey has closed with a successful 621 responses. Mable Fleming of Policy and Planning (DARS) helped the SPIL (Statewide Plan for Independent Living) Team develop the survey and provided technical assistance.

\*Based on the responses, the SPIL Team has developed four SPIL goals to be voted on by the full Council during the November meeting. Following the meeting, the proposed goals will be released for public commenting.

\*Recruitment of youth with disabilities to become NCIL (National Council on Independent Living) members is ongoing. Three new youth memberships have been processed, and more are expected to be after January 1, 2013.

\*Next SILC meeting, and first one of 2013, will be January 30<sup>th</sup>- January 31<sup>st</sup> in Richmond Virginia, coinciding with IL Day at the VA General assembly

Respectfully Submitted,            Lauren Snyder Roche, SILC member

Department for Blind and Vision Impaired  
State Rehabilitation Council  
October 6, 2012

**Commissioner's Report**

RSA Updates -

- RSA still does not have a Commissioner, though whenever the topic is raised it is reported that they still plan to appoint a Commissioner. Acting leaders in RSA and

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) include Acting RSA Commissioner, Ed Anthony, and the new Acting OSERS Assistant Secretary, Michael Yudin

- This quarter RSA has officially acknowledged that DBVI has completed all activities specified in the corrective action plan of the FY 2010 Monitoring report. DBVI has been advised that the 2013 State Plan amendments have been posted to the RSA website.
- DBVI staff participated in the RSA sponsored Transition Conference.
- DBVI is sending several Regional Managers, VR Program Director, VR Counselors, Job Placement and Job Development Specialists to the upcoming biennial National Employment Conference.
- RSA has announced its intention to host a National Training Conference for the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Program sometime in 2013.
- RSA published in the federal register a notice of proposed rule-making related to data collection and reporting for the VR Program. The announced changes to the RSA 2 and RSA 911 reports could have significant impact on resources required for data collection and for basic business practices.

#### Budget Updates –

- DBVI has completed the state and federal fiscal years with no significant budget issues and will have VR funding to carry forward into FY 2013. There is much concern at the national level about the possibility of sequestration and potential budget cuts of 7.8% to 15% if Congress does not act to minimize these cross the board cuts. DBVI federally funded programs will be reduced. For the VR Program we believe that there would be sufficient funding to deliver services to as usual for the remainder of FFY 2013. Changes would occur in FFY 2014 and beyond. Although the Commonwealth has reported increases in its revenue projections, there are few dollars available for discretionary programs.

#### SRC Appointments

- DBVI is seeking candidates to represent community rehabilitation programs, and a 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 himself or herself.
- Some new appointments have been made and include Celia Yetts from the Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy, Nikki Jeffords who is a VRC from the Norfolk Office, Rebecca Bridges, Rick Gonzalez (who is returning to the SRC), Ken Jessup who is the State Independent Living Council Representative.
- Reappoints include Melanie Brunson, Claudie Grant, and Rick Holley.

#### Legislative Updates

- The Virginia Disability Commission appears interested in supporting the addition of the special education of blind and vision impaired students to the Standards of Quality. This issue has long been discussed by the Virginia Department of Education and DBVI as an area of concern. DBVI has not asked for any agency supported legislation for the upcoming session.
- Governor Markel of Delaware, as the chair of the National Governor's Association (NGA), has adopted an initiative entitled "A Better Bottom Line: Hiring People with

Disabilities.” DBVI is hoping that this focus from the NGA will lead to state sponsored initiatives in Virginia.

### DBVI Initiatives

- During the past year, DBVI Program Directors are encouraged to initiate projects to improve services within their assigned areas. During FFY 2012, DBVI recognized several successful initiatives including the introduction of a Monthly Video Conference Training Series for VR personnel, the development of a rehabilitation technology and low vision demonstration lab housed in the DBVI Headquarters, Mobile Vocational Evaluations provided through VRCBVI, and the expansion of the downloading of digital books by consumers through the Library and Resources Center.

### Deputy Commissioner’s Report

#### Regional Office Updates

- Bristol - The Bristol regional office has hired a new Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to fill a vacancy created by a retirement.
- Roanoke – DBVI is currently recruiting for a VR Counselor and a Deafblind Specialist in our Roanoke office.
- Staunton - The Staunton regional office is recruiting for a Job Development/Placement specialist.
- Fairfax - The Fairfax regional office is recruiting to fill a vacant Orientation and Mobility (O&M) position. The recruit also continues for an Education Services Coordinator. The manager is also in the final stages of selecting two Office Services Specialists.
- Richmond - The Richmond office is recruiting for a VR Counselor.
- Norfolk - Norfolk Regional office is recruiting for an Education Services Coordinator and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.
- Headquarters - At headquarters, we are continuing to recruit to fill the vacant VR Compliance and Customer Satisfaction Analyst position. We are also working on developing the position description for a new Business Development/Job Placement position in each of our regional offices. These will take the place of our current part time Job Development and placement positions that are funded by agency Endowment funds.

#### VRCBVI report

- The Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired is in the final stages of selecting a new O & M Instructor and will be posting their vacant Vocational Evaluator position soon. The recruitment for the Assistant Director for Administration closes October 5<sup>th</sup>.

### Vocational Rehabilitation Program Report

#### VR Outcomes

- During the first three quarters of FFY 2012 the DBVI VR program assisted 132 individuals in accomplishing their vocational goals in integrated and competitive settings. The average hourly wage was \$15.21 with average weekly earnings of \$485.16; the average age of workers was 45 years with average number of hours worked equaling 28.
- Individuals cases were closed in the following RSA categories: 108 competitively employed with an average hourly wage of \$15.55; 8 self-employed with average hourly

wage of \$ 16.02; 8 employed via Randolph-Sheppard Food Manager's Program with average hourly wage of \$11.80; 2 became Homemakers; 0 were unpaid family workers; 3 used Supported Employment Services with an average hourly wage of \$9.86.

#### VR Manual Policies and Procedures

- VR Policy Manual Chapter IX-A revisions pertaining to sponsorship of college training by DBVI are in final review. In addition to including most of the current policy, the revision includes expanded explanation of emancipation of students, clarification of sectarian schools, clearer guidance regarding timeliness of student completion of college training, and general revision of format to ensure ease of reading for staff and consumers. After receiving SRC input the revisions will be posted to the DBVI internal and external sites.
- During the next quarter, VR Policy Manual revisions will include Chapter III – Eligibility and all appendices.

#### State Plan for FY 2013

- Development of the FY 2013 State Plan will begin during the second quarter with focus on outreach activities by field offices, updating attachments related to Goals and Priorities, and identifying new goals and priorities based on the 2010-2012 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Results. Several SRC members volunteered to assist with the 2013 State Plan development.

#### SRC Annual Report

- A SRC committee was established to work on development of the 2012 Annual Report. Susan Davis Payne will gather required agency information to include success stories and agency statistics.

#### Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

- DBVI continued to work with Mississippi State University (MSU) to complete the federally required Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) for the period of 2010-2012. Mississippi developed surveys for four groups which included consumers whose cases were closed successfully and non-successfully rehabilitation during the period of 2009-2011, stakeholders, employers, and DBVI staff. Surveys and cover letters were mailed and e-mailed to approximately 2000 individuals.
- MSU requested and was granted a one month unfunded extension in order to thoroughly analyze survey data and develop the CSNA report for DBVI by October 31, 2012.

#### **Other Business**

New Member Orientation will be scheduled for December 14, 2012. In the mean time, new (and interested seasoned SRC Members) members can review the SRC Online Training tutorial provided through the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Interwork Institute of San Diego State University, and Georgia State University. The online training can be found at eRehab site at [http://www.erehab.org/series\\_national.php](http://www.erehab.org/series_national.php)

The following five public meetings have been scheduled by DBVI for the fall of 2012:



Roanoke - October 17;  
Richmond - October 19;  
Bristol - October 30;  
Richmond - November 2 (during the NFB state conference); and,  
Alexandria November 10 (during the ACB state conference).

The marketing committee continues to develop ideas for outreach, and it was reported that The SRC will soon have a link on the agency website. The committee also will inquire from other agencies regarding any policies, guidance and/or experience they may have regarding facebook.

It was decided that the next SRC meeting would be held at VRCBVI to give members an opportunity to see the new facility.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting is scheduled for December 15.

Submitted by: Jim Taylor