

**Full State Rehabilitation Council Meeting**  
Thursday, April 4, 2019 from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
Waterbury State Office Complex  
ASH Conference Room  
HC 2 South, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, VT 05671

**Meeting called by:**

Brian Smith, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

**Members Present:**

- 1) Courtney Blasius
- 2) Jessica Brennan (VR), non-voting
- 3) Sherrie Brunelle
- 4) Maria Burt (VR), non-voting
- 5) Nick Caputo
- 6) Diane Dalmasse (VR) , ex-officio, non-voting
- 7) Martha Frank
- 8) Robin Ingenthron
- 9) Sam Liss
- 10) Rose Lucenti
- 11) Bill Meirs
- 12) Calla Papademas
- 13) Michelle Paya
- 14) Brian Smith

**Members Absent:**

- 1) Max Barrows
- 2) Olivia Smith-Hammond
- 3) Marlena Hughes
- 4) Christopher Kane
- 5) Cari Kelley
- 6) Sarah Lauderville
- 7) Deb Tucker Boyce

**SRC Liaison:**

James Smith

**SRC Coordinator:**

Debra Kobus

**Interpreters:**

None.

**Speakers or Presenters:**

None.

**Guests:**

- 1) Hib Doe
- 2) Shaun Donahue
- 3) Helena Kehne
- 4) Amanda Kohle
- 5) Rich Tulikangas

**1) Introductions (Brian Smith)**

**Discussion:**

Those in attendance went around the table and introduced themselves.

**Conclusions:**

Thanks to everyone!

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None.

**2) Approval of Agenda (Brian)**

**Discussion:**

Brian asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. There were none. Nick moved to accept the agenda and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 11-0-0.

**Conclusions:**

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted.

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None.

**3) Open for Public Comment (Brian Smith)**

**Discussion:**

There was no public comment.

**Conclusions:**

None.

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None.

**4) Approval of Minutes for February 7, 2019 (Brian Smith)**

**Discussion:**

Brian asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the February 7, 2019 Full SRC Minutes. There were none. Sherrie moved to approve the minutes and it was seconded. No discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 11-0-0.

**Conclusions:**

February 7, 2019 Full SRC Minutes were approved.

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

Upload approved minutes to SRC website. Debra Kobus, April 9, 2019.

**5) Consent Agenda (Brian Smith)**

**Discussion:**

Brian asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the following consent agenda items:

- AOE Committee: January 3, 2019.
- Performance Review Committee: February 7, 2019.
- Policy and Procedures Committee: January 3, 2019.
- Steering Committee: January 3, 2019.
- Coordinator's Report: April 4, 2019

There were none. Martha moved to approve, and it was seconded. No further discussion. Vote unanimous 11-0-0.

**Conclusions:**

Consent agenda items approved.

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

Upload Approved Minutes to SRC website, Debra Kobus, April 9, 2019.

**6) Committee Chair Updates**

**Discussion:**

**Advocacy, Outreach and Education Committee:**

Sam Liss provided the update for the AOE Committee meeting.

The Governor's Summit on the Employment of People with Disabilities (formerly the Disability Transportation Summit) has been approved and it will take place on December 2 at the Double Tree in South Burlington. We are reaching out to Senator Leahy's office to see if he knows retired State Senator Ted Kennedy, Jr. who is also the President of the American Association of People with Disabilities.

The Federal Senate and House recently passed a temporary addition of \$20m for Money Follows the Person legislation. In addition, the continuation of the spousal impoverishment protections through the end of December was passed. We are still waiting for a long-term bill, which is still in committee.

The other bills that we are following include: Able Age Adjustment Act, the Social Security 2100 Act, the Transformation to Competitive Employment Act (does not affect Vermont), and the reintroduction Disability Employment Incentive Act, all of which are still in committee.

We are waiting for Senators Casey and Portman to introduce our National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) employment incentive bill for people with disabilities at retirement age.

The Card Room Event took place about three weeks ago and it was very successful. Those in attendance included Sam, Amanda, Martha and three members of the Youth Advocacy Council. Sam was impressed with the courageousness of the youth advisory members in approaching the legislators. Amanda and Martha both thought it was a great day.

The Youth Summit has been scheduled for May 30, 2019 and is the culminating event for the Youth Advocacy Council. It will be held at Vermont Technical College (VTC) located in Randolph, Vermont.

The Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (GCEPD) has a new coordinator, Eileen Casey, who is making real progress in networking with other councils and committees. The GCEPD is coordinating the Spirit of the

Americans with Disabilities Act Employer Award winners between 2014-2018 to come together locally in 12 different area meetings in order to offer them a menu of options in order to act as ongoing ambassadors for people with disabilities.

**Policy and Procedures Committee:**

Sherrie Brunelle provided the update for the P & P Committee.

The group has been busy working on updating various chapters. Most recently, we have been working on updating the handout for the appeals process, chapter 204, case closure, and case work practices. We currently don't have anything pending for public comment. Revisions are being made to the self-employment chapter with the help and expertise of Hib Doe and others. We are looking at developing a process to review proposals submitted for accessing self-employment funds, which has grown. Sherrie has reviewed 30 or more other states' processes on this subject.

We are looking for more members on the Policies and Procedures Committee. Please reach out to Sherrie or Debra if interested!

**Performance Review Committee:**

Marlena had a prior commitment, so James provided the update for the PR Committee.

Today the PR Committee reviewed VR service data since the passage of WIOA and since we lost reallocation funding which shows significant shifts in who we serve. The committee reviewed that and thought it was significant enough to bring to the full SRC. We also spent time reviewing the new VR Dashboard which offers a review of the metrics and on how a counselor is doing related to it. Shaun Donahue said that the Dashboard is a natural supervisory tool. There are 11,000 data points to make the Dashboard work. Hib Doe said that at the end of the day, staff want to do a good job. This tool shows staff how their effort is helping us reach our goals.

**Conclusions:**

Thanks everyone.

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None.

**7) Presentation of Data on VR Consumer Population Changes Since WIOA**

(James Smith). Presentation available on SRC website.

**Discussion:**

James said with the passage of WIOA (enacted in 2014), loss of significant funding, and how these changes have impacted the age distribution of those we serve and the total number of consumers we serve. James provided a handout to everyone and walked us through his presentation.

Coverage includes:

- Overview of WIOA Pre-ETS
- Overview of Re-allotment
- Impact of WIOA on age distribution of consumers served
- Impact of WIOA and re-allotment on number of consumers served

Overview of WIOA Pre-ETS:

Prior to WIOA 100% of the Title I Basic VR grant was for standard VR services meaning:

- The consumer applied and was found eligible based on a disability that was a significant barrier to employment
- The consumer developed a plan for employment outlining necessary services
- The consumer was closed successfully if they achieved an employment outcome (they were employed for a minimum of 90 days)
- VR generally only served high school students in the year prior to graduation/exit
- There was no requirement that DVR spend a specific percentage of funds on students in transition

WIOA created a new program called Pre-Employment Transition Service which:

- Could only be provided to high school students on an IEP or 504
- Only allowed 5 required services
- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, experiences outside of the traditional school setting, and/or internships
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
- Instruction in self-advocacy

Pre-ETS only services cannot result in a countable employment outcome for VR. They are considered pre-employment services.

#### Overview of WIOA Pre-ETS:

- WIOA did not provide new funds for Pre-ETS. Instead Congress assigned 15% of the Basic VR grant to Pre-ETS
- Because WIOA prohibited VR agencies from covering administrative costs with Pre-ETS the actual cost is greater than 15% of the award
- As a result, WIOA effectively reduced funding for youth and adults in the core VR program
- As a result, DVR reassign about \$1.5 million from services for youth and adults to students
- As noted, Pre-ETS cases cannot result in an employment outcome unless the student goes on to enroll in the core VR program.

#### Overview of Re-Allotment:

- The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) re-allots appropriated VR grant funds that other states cannot match
- Prior to 2008 re-allotment was minimal

- As a result of the 2008 great recession states drastically reduced state match to VR programs leaving over \$100 million in unmatched funds
- State like VT were able to draw down the unused funds
- Between 2008 and 2015 VR drew down between \$3 million and \$5.7 million in extra funds per year
- In 2016 re-allotment was radically reduced to \$1.4 million and by 2018 it was reduced to \$600,000

Combined Financial and Service Impact:

- Combination of loss of re-allotment and reassignment of resources meant that about \$6 million total funding reduction in the core VR program serving youth and adults. This equals about 25% of the total budget.
- 14.5 FTE VR counselors were reassigned to serve high school students exclusively
- 9 FTE positions were reassigned or not filled through attrition
- Cuts were made to other services and programs funded by VR including VABIR staff, supported employment, benefits counseling and case services

See PowerPoint for figures on:

- Impact on Numbers Served Pre-ETS.
- Core VR and Age Distribution Pre-ETS and Core VR.
- VR Core Program
- Age Distribution in VR Core Program

**Conclusions:**

Very informative. Thank you, James, for the presentation!

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

Upload Approved Minutes to SRC website, Debra Kobus, April 9, 2019.

**8) Career Counseling and Assessment and Interactive Virtual Job Share Presentation (Rich Tulikangas).**

**Discussion:**



Rich said this is part of the overall Career's Initiative at VR and in partnership with VABIR. He handed out a Career Assessment Preferred Tools Checklist which will be posted to the SRC website along with Career Counseling & Assessments.

### **Career Counseling & Assessment Charter:**

- Overall Careers Initiative –changing culture and practice at VR & VABIR
- Career Counseling & Assessment –building a “Toolkit” of preferred assessment tools
- Selecting CC & A Specialists in each district office
- Train the trainers approach to using the tools –training underway on individual tools
- The Counseling side –providing training to staff re: appropriateness of selecting tools, the ethics of interpreting results, and providing support for customer usage

### **Initial Tools –Virtual Job Shadow provides online surveys as indicated below:**

- CAREER CLUSTERS INTEREST SURVEY (CCIS)  
This Survey matches a person's interests to career clusters based on the activities they most enjoy.
- CAREER CLUSTER INTEREST SURVEY EZ (CCIS-EZ)  
This abbreviated version of the Career Cluster Interest Survey matches your interests to Career Clusters based on the activities you most enjoy.
- O\*NET INTEREST PROFILER™ (O\*NET IP)  
This survey helps you find out what your interests are and how they relate to the world of work.
- O\*NET WORK IMPORTANCE LOCATOR™ (O\*NET WIL)  
The Work Importance Locator™ helps you learn more about your work values and can help you decide what is important to you in a job.

Sam asked how this careers tool project is related to the Linking Learning to Careers Grant. Rich said only that we are encouraging our students to participate in Linking Learning, but it is not specifically a part of it.

### **Conclusions:**

Thank you, Rich, for the presentation!

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

Upload presentation to SRC website, Debra Kobus, April 9, 2019.

**9) Director's Report (Diane Dalmasse)**

**Discussion:**

Diane reported the following:

**Budget:** On track both on the federal and state fiscal year.

**Dashboard:** The most exciting news is rolling out our new Dashboard. Alice Porter and Amanda Kohle presented it to all staff via Skype last Friday and it was very well received by staff. We have been somewhat rudderless since WIOA and now we have been clear on the five leading indicators. Please see the Leading and Lagging indicators handout posted on SRC website. Ask Diane for electronic copies of this. We are also rolling out a youth in transition dashboard.

**Development Team:** We are making progress. James has convened a Ticket Charter Group to move the project ahead. We have made it to round two of the Kessler Foundation grants and a proposal is due mid-June. We are also planning to apply for a SAMSHA grant to expand the IPS supported employment model to people engaged in the Adult Outpatient Programs at the designated agencies.

**Careers Initiative:** We had a very productive meeting with VR and VABIR managers to focus on the dashboard's five leading indicators and how the two organizations can team to improvement performance and outcomes.

We are creating two additional work groups. The first on setting long and short-term goals. Counselors need more guidance on how to manage the job right now and the career pathway. The second group will focus on creating guidance on follow-up both for the first 90 days post placement and periodic longer-term follow-up.

**Youth Advocacy Council:** The YAC had a very successful meeting at the Statehouse in March. They were able to tour the statehouse, almost none of the members had been before. They were able to meet with Governor Scott for half an hour in his Ceremonial Office. Three of the members joined the VR and SRC outreach effort in the card room. It was a great day.

**Governor's Summit:** We were given the go ahead by Governor Scott to have the Governor's Summit on the Employment of People with Disabilities on December 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Doubletree in South Burlington. We are in the process of reaching out to VTrans, convening a planning group and reaching out to contacts for Ted Kennedy Jr.

**Consumer and Employer Satisfaction Surveys:** The survey for our consumers has gone live and Market Decisions is conducting the survey. We are asking a few questions related to our Careers Initiative so we can obtain a baseline. We know we likely will not do well but by getting baseline data we can track our progress. The survey of employer will begin shortly. We have not done an employer survey for several years, so we are excited to see the results.

We have also decided to do a youth survey and focus groups. Market Decisions will run a few focus groups to inform the development of questions and methods, i.e. texting surveys. We have never conducted a youth survey and we are really interested in what the results will be from students. We hope to survey school staff as well.

**Linking Learning to Careers:** Post enrollment, LLC staff have built a dashboard for "enhanced services" and are doing monthly case reviews with the LLC teams in each of our twelve offices. School Collaboration, Work Based Learning Experiences, Assistive Technology, and Post-Secondary options are the areas of focus for this monthly case review.

Hib Doe was the point person in development of the leading and lagging indicators. Leading measures that we developed included team involvement, assessment, career-focused training, higher-wage occupation, and follow-up. Lagging measures are case completion, rehab rate, median earnings, 125%+ minimum wage, and post-exit employment. Hib said, and all agreed, that Alice's work on creating this Dashboard was phenomenal and greatly appreciated!

Brian Smith asked if there was a motion to show our appreciation for Alice's work. Sherrie so moved and it was seconded that the State Rehabilitation Council recognizes Alice for the level of detail and hard work demonstrated in the assembly of the Dashboard. It will have a long-lasting effect and produce better outcomes for the people with serve. Hib Doe suggests a Certificate of Appreciation be given to her at the next Full SRC meeting where Alice and Amanda will be presenting the Dashboard. It was suggested that James lead on accomplishing this task. All agreed.

**Conclusions:**

Thank you, Diane.

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

Prepare a Certificate of Appreciation for Alice Porter for her work on the Dashboard, which is to be presented at the next Full SRC, James Smith, 6/6/19.

**10) VR Regional Manager Updates (Shaun Donahue & Hib Doe)**

**Discussion:**

**Shaun Donahue, Regional Manager of the St. Johnsbury and White River Junction District Offices, provided the following update:**

One of the things that he has noticed is that folks in general seem to be experiencing a little more mastery with Aware, which makes people feel good. There was a lot of trepidation when this began and believe we are over the hump. Folks are

generally excited about the dashboard. Within that dashboard folks can see how they are doing in comparison with their peers as well as the state. Alice, Hib, and Amanda were key and instrumental in creating the Dashboard.

We have committed over the 9 months to process map the entire VR processes. Each office will look at all the steps, who does them, how to make them leaner, etc. He was a little concerned that his staff would feel this was one more thing to do but in fact it has been really energizing.

We reinstated a policy of having training dollars available in our district and several staff have accessed these funds, which are above and beyond what is normally provided.

In terms of LLC, we are post enrollment. We are offering services and folks are energized about providing these services.

We have over 1,000 consumers that are over 55 and have had several conversations with Nat to get guidance about how to serve that population better.

Case reviews have been done for the last two quarters. At first it was a challenge but now is much more enjoyable especially considering the feedback that has been provided.

Rose Lucenti from the Department of Labor and Shaun will be working together on a project!

Another exciting project coming up is our Substance Abuse Treatment Project that brings together a variety of groups to discuss how they will work together alongside VR. We will be doing this in St. Johnsbury. Having an employment consultant has been very helpful.

**Hib Doe, Regional Manager of the Newport and St. Albans District Offices provided the following update:**

As Shaun, we just hired a new person up in Newport and have been training her on Aware.

Up in the Northeast Kingdom, unemployment is higher. We met with several employers from up there and handed out information.

Each office is doing a district project and the Newport Office career training offset we help people in progressive employment we go to an employer and then provide a training offset to them. It is a small amount of money (about \$100) but it is an incentive. We have a whole approval process if someone is interested in doing this. We provide a monthly stipend while they go through this. About half have been successful so far. We found that sometimes people need supports while they are going through training. By providing a monthly stipend they will use that money towards monthly expenses. We are tracking that project and following those folks. The project has promise for statewide implementation. Newport has been very busy. We are mostly full staff.

St. Albans is a whole different economy. We had a really great job expo last week where 45 employers were looking to hire people. We are very happy in how this turned about. Our pilot project is Early Engagement. If we can get them into the system quicker, we are hoping to increase their motivation. We have had several individuals where this has helped, and staff are very excited about it.

St. Albans is fully staffed.

We are also collaborating in St. Albans with a substance abuse treatment program, like St. Johnsbury, with an employment consultant.

**Conclusions:**

Thank you, Shaun and Hib, for the updates.

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None.

**11) Other Business (Brian Smith)**

**Discussion:**

Sam asked if the Labor Department has anything like the job tools that Rich presented? Rose said yes some of them. Rose also said that she would like the VR replicated at the Department of Labor. Sherrie commented that such replication would be desirable given that DVR and DOL have to report on the same data.

**Conclusions:**

None.

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None.

**11) Round Table (Brian Smith)**

**Discussion:**

Everyone went around the table letting people know what they liked best about the meeting. Everyone thought it was very informative and the presentations were very useful. It was a good meeting. Enjoys coming here. It was great seeing folks. Really liked the dashboard and data. Always a good meeting. Always something new to learn and really likes to hear from the regional managers. Thanks for inviting us. Really appreciated what the SRC does. It was great seeing the different assessment tools. Concurrence on the dashboard. Always impressed with what VR does. If you are a Vermonter with a disability, you are very lucky to have VR. Very informative and appreciates the presentations. Appreciates highlights of what we do at VR and what our partners do. It was an exceptionally good meeting. Format was particularly energizing. Especially liked the dashboard and appreciates Alice (although we aren't going to poach her!). It was a fun meeting. I wasn't bored and



represented a retooling for the future. Brian did a great job in facilitating.

**Conclusions:**

None.

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None.

**12) Other Business (Brian Smith)**

**Discussion:**

None.

**Conclusions:**

None.

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

None.

**13) Adjournment (Brian Smith)**

**Discussion:**

Brian asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Sherrie moved to adjourn, and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 11-0-0.

**Conclusions:**

Motion to adjourn approved at 3:15 p.m.

**Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:**

- Draft minutes uploaded to SRC website, Debra Kobus, 4/9/19.
- Draft minutes emailed to Committee members, Debra Kobus, 4/9/19.
- Minutes approved, Committee, 6/6/19.
- Approved minutes uploaded to website, Debra Kobus, 6/11/19.