

Approved Minutes
ADVOCACY, OUTREACH, AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Thursday, September 2, 2021
12:15 PM – 1:45 PM
Waterbury State Office Building, Ash and Zoom

Meeting called by:

Asher Edelson called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

Members Present:

- Ana Kolbach
- Asher Edelson
- Bill Meirs
- Cari Kelley
- Courtney Blasius
- Diane Dalmasse (ex-officio, non-voting)
- Emily Marie Ahtúnan
- Helena Kehne
- Laura Siegel
- Martha Frank
- Sarah Lauderville
- Sherrie Brunelle

Members Absent:

- Calla Papademas
- Cara Sachs
- Olivia Smith-Hammond

SRC Liaison:

None

SRC Coordinator:

- Kate Larose

Speakers or Presenters:

- None

Guests:

- None

Interpreters

- Jen Rainey
- Nora Fitzken

1) Introductions (Asher Edelson)

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 (Asher Edelson)

Discussion:

Asher asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. Martha 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 (Asher Edelson)

Discussion:

None

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

4) Approval of Minutes (Asher Edelson)

Discussion:

Asher asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the [Minutes from May 6, 2021](#). There were none. Courtney moved to accept the minutes and it was seconded. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 11-0-0

Conclusions:

May 6, 2021 minutes were approved

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Upload approved minutes to the SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 9/7/2021

5) Legislative Updates (Group)

Discussion:

A. [Federal Legislation](#)

B. [State Legislation \(End of Session Summary\)](#)

Asher walked through the state and legislative updates detailed above.

Sarah said she was excited to see the removal of sheltered workshops at the federal level and added that Vermont has a lot to offer in terms of lessons learned as we have moved away from this at the state level a while ago. Martha said it was nice to see our numbers on integrated employment are much higher than the national average. Diane said that Vermont has run trainings on Vermont's experience in closing sheltered workshops and that training and technical assistance are offered to other states. Sherrie added that individuals with long COVID will be included under Section 504 and that DVR may soon see more consumers needing services as a result. Martha added that the Mathematica LLC project webinar is worth the watch. Kate will share the link to the webinar once it is available.

Diane added that the Council of State Governments send their newsletter out and it included information about how to use ARPA funds to benefit people with disabilities which she brought to Commissioner White's attention. She will share this with the committee for consideration.

Diane shared that DVR continues to work with CSAVR to obtain a waiver for timing of spending Federal Fiscal Year 2020 award as it is likely states will need to be returning funds even though it is likely more people will need services as a result of the pandemic. Vermont is working with Senator Sanders' and Leahy's staff to determine who has the authority to grant this waiver.

Sarah highlighted two pieces of legislation at the federal level that they want to promote and VCIL will hold a town hall on soon with Senator Sanders' office:

- Real Emergency Access for Aging and Disability
- Disaster Relief Act

These would help people with disabilities access funds

Sherrie stated that Legal Aid filed a [class action lawsuit](#) against the State of Vermont in regard to a stay on the emergency housing hotel program for people with disabilities. It looks like that case will be settled soon. She added that loan forgiveness will now be a more simplified process for people with [total and permanent disability \(TPD\)](#). Diane suggested reaching out to VSAC to create a fact sheet to share with people. Emily added that, under the past program, the TPD discharge program kept people from taking out future student loans.

Conclusions:

The Steering Committee will discuss drafting an SRC statement in support of the waiver request.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Share link to LLC Mathematica webinar, **Kate Larose**, when available
- Share Council of State Governments newsletter on ARPA funds, **Diane Dalmasse**, 9/15/2021
- Forward information about VCIL town hall, **Sarah Launderville**, 9/15/2021

6) Presentation: [Personal Attendant Services](#) (Sarah Launderville)**Discussion:**

Sarah walked through [this presentation](#) on personal attendant services.

Diane said that DVR was approached about the shortage in personal attendants throughout the state. As a result, DVR put together a proposal to develop partnerships with home health agencies to build a set of incentives and scholarships and to create a healthcare career ladder from PCA, to LNA, to RN, etc. to attain and attract people to become PCAs. There would also be money in the grant to fund an Assistive Technology Program staff member. Sarah added that funds from this grant will also go into VCIL's programming. Sarah also added that she visited Japan a few years ago to study their personal attendant program and this grant will also incorporate best practices from Japan's model into Vermont to support people to direct their own services and start to change the culture and philosophy.

Diane also added that it is unfortunate to hear that insurance will not cover parts of the assessment around environmental controls and perhaps it is worth revisiting at a future AOE meeting.

Asher asked about resurrecting PDAC as the funds were frozen in 2014. Sarah shared that some legislators expressed wanting to see adding asset limits and others have asked about tying it to employment. Another consideration might be adding on new people to the program when current users of the program die. Sherrie asked if there is a current wait list for the program. Sarah said there is not. Diane wondered if there's a way to tag on assessing need to the outreach DVR will already be doing to people on SSI/SSDI. Diane also shared that DVR has access to Medicaid Claims Data through DAIL, and she wondered if there's a way to use this data to assess need.

Conclusions:

See above.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

n/a

7) Calendar of Upcoming Events (Group)

A. Core Team Event

This year's Core Team Event will take place on October 12, 2021. The registration information will be available shortly on [VFN Core Team page](#). Governor Scott will be joining a portion of this meeting.

B. Summer Career Exploration Program

The Summer Career Exploration Program was a success with 150 youth and 108 employers participating around the state. Diane shared that DVR learned a tremendous amount, and they will be able to share a video soon highlighting Killington and Lake Monsters. The program had a zero exclusion policy so anyone who wanted to participate was able to and DVR provided needed supports.

C. [Youth Advocacy Council Recruitment](#)

VFN is again recruiting for Youth Advocacy Members ages 14-25. Martha asked that folks share the link above to youth who might be interested.

D. Aflac Recruitment

Carrie shared that her daughter has had a great experience working remotely with Aflac. The home-based positions start at \$15 an hour and pay weekly, and are currently hiring for multiple positions. Cari said that anyone interested in the opportunity can contact her for more information. Diane said that she will connect Cari with Nat Piper.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- n/a

8) Other Business (Chair)

A. Agenda Setting: November 4, 2021

Diane suggested having Lynn Cleveland, the new project manager, provide a presentation at the November meeting.

Sarah added that any salient follow-up from Our Time is Now project from the annual retreat to be added to next AOE agenda.

B. AOE Committee Focus

Emily shared that it would be helpful to further refine the AOE's focus so that there is an opportunity for active engagement on advocacy and outreach efforts in both members' communities and around the state. Sherrie, Diane, Cari, and Helena agreed. Sarah echoed these thoughts and said this is also something the Steering Committee grapples with and the committee will

ensure that we address this in our annual retreat agenda.

Conclusions:

See above

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- n/a

10) Adjournment (Asher Edelson)

Discussion:

Sherrie moved to adjourn. All approved. Vote unanimous 11-0-0

Conclusions:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Draft minutes uploaded to SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 9/7/2021
- Draft minutes emailed to Committee members, **Kate Larose**, 9/7/2021
- Minutes approved, **Committee**, 11/4/2021
- Approved minutes uploaded to website, **Kate Larose**, 11/9/2021