

Approved Minutes
SRC POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE
Thursday, January 7, 2021
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
via Zoom

Meeting called by:

Sherrie Brunelle, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present:

- Helena Kehne
- Kristen Carpentier
- Sherrie Brunelle
- Olivia Smith-Hammond
- Rocko Gieselman
- Patricia Wehman

Members Absent:

- Calla Papademas

SRC Liaison:

- James Smith

SRC Coordinator:

- Kate Larose

Presenters:

- Phillip Seiler

1) Introductions (Sherrie Brunelle)

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 (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Sherrie asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. There were none. Helena moved to approve the agenda and it was seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous 3-0-0

Conclusions:

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

3) Open for Public Comment (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

No one from the public was present.

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

4) Approval of Minutes for November 5, 2020 (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Sherrie asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the [minutes from November 5, 2020](#). Liv moved to approve the minutes and it was seconded. No discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 3-0-0

Conclusions:

November 5, 2020 minutes were approved.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Approved minutes uploaded to SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 1/12/2021

5) [Self-Employment](#) (Group)

Discussion:

Sherrie provided an overview of the historical concerns pertaining to this chapter including small funding amounts and business plans that were not viable. A workgroup was formed to review the chapter including VR counselors, a regional manager, James, and Sherrie. This draft was created by that workgroup over the course of the last several years. James added that the workgroup reviewed the self-employment chapters of other VR agencies to glean best practices from other states. James proceeded to walk through the draft chapter with the group. The following comments were shared by the group:

- Kristen shared the example of businesses such as food trucks that are highly seasonable and asked that we considering accommodating.
- Liv shared that we do not want to be so stringent that we restrict people from trying out a business that could result in streams of income.
- Sherrie asked that we include definitions of assessment, business plan, and start-up costs.
- Rocko shared that she is excited to see these updates as it will be useful in her work supporting consumers to success.
- Sherrie shared that in doing research on other states' policies they found that VR spending guidelines vary dramatically. The inclusion of a Self-Employment Funding Committee will help to make increased spending amounts possible.
- Helena asked if VR consumers are connected with other small business resources. Rocko shared that they connect with chambers as well as Community Action Agencies' Small Business Development Program counselors for mentorship, training, and technical assistance.
- Liv shared her experience going through this process and that she connected with her local community action agency (CVOEO) which she found helpful. Sherrie added that this looks different in each geographic area, sharing the example of people who work with NEKCA being required to attend workshops.
- Rocko said that though there is only one IPE goal, she likes to differentiate between short and long-term goals and that the assessment process outlined will be helpful to create those.
- James shared in the past VR counselors may have provided funding for business plans that they did not believe would be viable and that it felt inauthentic, so this process has been changed in the draft so that they would not move forward with a self-employment plan in those cases. Ideally this decision will be reached mutually by the consumer and counselor but if a consumer disagrees with this decision they can work with the CAP and go through a dispute resolution process.
- Sherrie asked why the amount was reduced from \$1,500 to \$1,000 for supplemental self-employment. James said he thinks it was because the other guidelines were raised so much but would be fine would changing it back to the original amount.
- Sherrie asked that the SSI/SSDI exception be noted.
- Rocko and James said they would like to see side-by-side narrative examples within the chapter.
- James removed the SSA PASS wording from the draft.
- Helena asked what happens if a consumer does not have the needed capital for the one-to-one equivalent funding requirement. Sherrie said that there may be grant sources that exist to help with this. Rocko shared that the plan is a good place to gather the list of available resources to consumers including in-kind contribution amounts. (James shared the example of an inherited asset such as a restaurant.)

- Kristen questioned the usage of the term “business launch” as sometimes it is not a launch but rather an expansion and the chapter should be updated to reflect that.
- James thought it would be good to add a new section for consumers who have an existing business they want to expand as it does not make sense for consumers to go through as many steps as someone starting a new business.

Conclusions:

Sherrie will have an updated draft to share at the March meeting.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Research regulations regarding in-kind contributions, **Sherrie Brunelle**, 3/1/2021

6) [Rehabilitation Technology Services](#) (Phillip Seiler)

Discussion:

James said that it makes most sense to ignore the existing chapter and start fresh as it was last revised in December of 2009 and given that we now have a standalone assistive technology program that has VR components embedded within and due to the fact that technology changes quickly.

Phillip Seiler, program director with the [Vermont Assistive Technology](#) Program Director, provided an overview of [the program](#). He shared that they follow the CETT process (Consumer, Environment, Task, and Tools) first get to know consumer, their challenges and who they are as a person, what their current work environment is like and how that plays into the big picture, and what are the things they are trying to accomplish that they are having difficulty with that AT can help with. Once they have a firm understanding they provide ideas about tools that can assist them via a written report that lays out recommendations. He said that the recommendations can range from no tech to high tech and that they make recommendations on the whole spectrum and try to find the lowest element that will support the consumer. He shared the example of someone on the autism spectrum who is overwhelmed by stimuli and that simply finding another environment for them to work in with less stimuli might be a recommendation. They also provide some post-employment services. The AT specialists are the experts in the field so that VR counselors do not have to be, and they try to provide ongoing support as needed. He agreed with James’ recommendation to start over on the chapter versus attempting to modify the current chapter.

Sherrie asked if the AT Program has something in a written form such as a process document that can be shared. That will be shared with the committee via follow-up. Sherrie also asked if home modifications should be addressed within this chapter or as a standalone chapter. James said that a separate chapter probably makes most sense.

James wondered about including formal follow-up and close out processes with VR counselors to provide a case closure point for the AT specialist. Phil agreed that this would be a good idea and shared the challenge that AT specialists serve multiple district offices and do not always have as much in-person relationship building time with VR staff as they would like.

Sherrie asked what feedback he has heard from AT specialists about processes that would be helpful. Phil said he will ask this at next week's staff meeting. Sherries wondered if there are ways that we can improve the processes and maximize the outcomes.

Phil shared that they are also piloting an intake form in the Burlington office that provides AT specialists with more information about the consumer before their first meeting. The plan is to roll this out statewide.

Sherrie asked how this process is working from the perspectives of VR counselors. Rocko shared that it has been a positive experience and that a process outline that is not too stringent would also be useful. Kristen shared that they have a try out center in Rutland so they work more closely with their AT specialist starting with an initial three way meeting to talk about goals, followed by interim check-in meetings, so they already have an informal system they are following and it is working well.

Phil said they are in the process of relocating the Burlington try out center so that it will be newly co-located in the VR office.

Helena shared her experience working with assistive technology and said it was very positive. She also echoed Phil's comments that the Waterbury location was difficult to access as a consumer living in the Northeast Kingdom without access to transportation.

Liv shared that it was really useful to go to the try out center to get a sense of the available technology and discuss the options that would realistically fit her needs and preferences.

Conclusions:

Phil and AT program will be invited to provide an update for the May agenda.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Share AT process document with committee and ask about the process LLC is using, **Phil Seiler**, 1/30/2021
- Look at regulations on home modifications, Sherrie Brunelle, 1/30/2021
- Solicit input of AT specialists at staff meeting on process, **Phil Seiler**, 1/30/2021

- Invite Phil to May meeting, **Kate Larose**, 1/12/2021

7) Other Business (Group)

A. Agenda Setting: March 4, 2021

It was decided that the following two items would be on the agenda for the March meeting:

- Self- Employment Update
- Review of Transportation (given overlaps with reallocation work)

The carry forward list for future meetings include:

- Referral and Application Process (201) May
- Rehab Tech Services- May
- Transportation (312)
- Ticket to Work (107)

Conclusions:

See above

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

n/a

8) Adjournment (Sherrie Brunelle)

Helena moved to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded. Vote unanimous 4-0-0

Conclusions:

Sherrie called the meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Draft minutes uploaded to SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 1/12/2021
- Draft minutes emailed to Committee members, **Kate Larose**, 1/12/2021
- Minutes approved, **Committee**, 3/4/2021
- Approved minutes uploaded to website, **Kate Larose**, 3/9/2021