

Director's Report, (Taken from the 2022 Annual Report)

We completed a rebranding and marketing effort this past year and we are now **HireAbility Vermont** *Where Ability Meets Opportunity*. It has been an exciting process of redefining our look and feel and our message for the 21st century. Our new identity has been incredibly well received by partners, staff, and the general public. Please check out our new website [Home - HireAbility \(hireabilityvt.com\)](https://www.hireabilityvt.com).

We remain in very solid fiscal shape. We were awarded significant reallocation funds for the second consecutive year. These funds allow us to expand and serve more Vermonters with disabilities more effectively towards employment and career pathways.

We are officially in an approved hybrid work model with most people working two days in the office and three days at home. Staff really value the work life balance this provides to them and their families. We learned a great deal about how to most effectively serve our customers during the pandemic. With face to face being optimal for most people during the early engagement, relationship building process and then consumer choice about how to conduct future meetings/contacts. Our offices are open and staffed five days per week.

We continue the paradigm shift we began in response to the WIOA Common Performance Measures from jobs to career pathways. This focus on credential attainment and higher wage jobs in beginning to reap the benefits for our consumers. We have fully launched our DIF grant project, the Vermont Career Advancement Project. We have hired six Career Pathways Navigators who will lead the way for all counselors on to how to assist people most effectively with disabilities to believe they can successfully engage in education and training and attain a career. We have funded two staff with the Community College of VT and the VT Technical College to facilitate these goals with Vermonters with disabilities.

We successfully completed a second year of the Summer Career Exploration Program for students. We served over 100 students placed with 90 employers. Feedback from students, families and employers has been very positive. One parent shared, "While she is just starting out, I wanted to let you know that so far, it's amazing. Thanks to your staff, I'm so happy with this wonderful initiative. What a great investment in Vermont's future. Honestly, imagine the impact of helping young people become confident and believe that they can work – less people on assistance, more people on a career track, more success etc."

We have begun a two-year journey of organizational change focused on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access with Social Contract, LLC. We are completing phase one of a four stage blueprint for change. Their assessment of our baseline efforts to diversify our workforce and ensure HireAbility welcomes everyone no matter who they are or where they came from is almost done. Our real work will begin in earnest early in the new year.

As always, I look forward to continuing our robust and productive partnership with the VT State Rehabilitation Council.

Diane P. Dalmasse, Director, HireAbility VT

