

## Director's Report

**Kessler Foundation Award** – We were in fact awarded roughly \$500,000 over two years from the Kessler Foundation. The grant award will fund **Vermont Works 2.0**, an initiative to support people who receive SSDI benefits to work at a level that ceases their benefits. Teams consisting of a VR Counselor, a Benefits Counselor and a VABIR Employment Consultant in Rutland and Bennington will support 200 people over two years. We will be adding a 6<sup>th</sup> Benefits Counselor which will get us back to one BC for each region. We have two very strong teams who are committed to and excited about doing this work. We will be reviewing current caseloads, reaching out to people closed as working and still receiving SSA benefits and marketing to Ticket holders who may never have heard about VR. We are working with Spike a professional marketing firm to develop our marketing strategies. We plan to open recruitment April 1<sup>st</sup>. Stay tuned. We think this work will have national significance.

**WIOA Unified State Plan** – James and staff are in the final stages of writing the VR State Plan. James shared the Goals and Priorities Section and has integrated your feedback for a final vote during this meeting. There is a State Workforce Development Board meeting on February 20<sup>th</sup> where they will approve the entire plan for submission. We anticipate setting targets with VDOL and AOE for the Common Performance Measures.

**Progressive Education** – We have reinvigorated the Progressive Education Charter and created 3 new goals: (1) Ensure staff have the training and support framework for career planning, (2) Each district will have routine connections with education and training providers in their community, and (3) Business account Managers and Employment Consultants identify career ladders, in-house trainings and opportunities for advancement within the businesses they serve. Meeting the 35% statewide target for participation in education and training on the dashboard is a priority for this year.

**Performance Management Training** – Supervisors and managers attended a day long training designed to provide them with tools for recognizing and retaining our high performers. It was very well facilitated by Sharon Behar, our organizational development specialist. Staff feedback has been exceptional.

The **Individual Development Plan** was reviewed as part of this training. Feedback from the Employee Engagement Survey was that we did not ask staff about or support career development. So, the IDP will be done annually coinciding with the performance evaluation. We are excited to roll this out and it will hopefully improve staff satisfaction.

**McClure Foundation** - Our Development Team is hard at work identifying opportunities for new revenue, specifically to integrate best practices from our Linking Learning to Careers grant into the core VR program for youth in transition. We are drafting a Letter of Intent to the McClure Foundation to sustain LLC post-secondary options for youth – due 2/6/20.

**VR Priorities** – The VR Senior Management Team spent a half a day updating our Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) spread sheet for this calendar year. It was very affirming to see what we accomplished last year and to identify our goals for this upcoming year. I will pass around a copy of the document so you can get a sense of the work ahead.

**Motivational Interviewing** - We are contracting with Trevor Manthey, our original MI trainer to return to do advanced MI training with staff and to re-engage the management team with MI. We are also going to bring Stephen Andrews here for a two-day intensive training for our MI coaches. We are also contracting with Stephen to do coding and scoring on audio tapes for proficiency.

**Invest EAP** – Steve Dickens and Marc Adams are working on two new initiatives. A partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield to provide behavioral health screening and a partnership with SHRM to develop a certification program for Recovery Friendly Work Places.

**New VR Staff Training Program** – Heather Batalion, VR Staff Development Coordinator, will be working with CCV to finally complete an on-line training program for VR staff with a focus on VR Counselors. CCV will develop this program on their e-learning platform and host it for us.

**Process Mapping** – The Expanded VR Management Team will meet 2/11 to debrief the VR process mapping that was completed over calendar year 2019. We

will share the ahas that happened locally, reflect on the experience, discuss statewide changes and the use of process mapping going forward.