

Director's Report
June 3, 2021

Pandemic Update:

We will continue to successfully work from home until September. We have surveyed staff on their wishes for a hybrid model including days at home and days in the office. Each manager has created a grid for their two offices showing who is in the office each day. We are now going to have staff complete the telework forms for the Department of Human Resources. We are planning now to allow staff the lead time to prepare emotionally and otherwise for a return to the offices.

Budget:

We remain in very solid fiscal shape. We are rolling out many of our reallocation projects. Money is beginning to flow out the door to very worthy places for our consumers. One example are the four high schools who were selected through an RFP process where we will fund Youth Employment Specialists for several years with the school sustaining the position at the end.

Paid Training and Paid Work Experiences:

We will roll out the protocols to pay minimum wage for work experiences in September. We think this will make this option more attractive and doable for our customers. An even bigger game changer, I believe, is to pay people for time spent in training. So often counselors hear that people are not able to engage in credentialed training because they must pay the bills. We think this will remove a major barrier and enable consumers to obtain credentials and higher wage jobs.

Summer Career Exploration Program:

I am so excited about how our summer youth employment program is coming together. We will provide employment placements to over 200 youth including a classroom experience on career exploration. Everyone has stepped up, Transition Counselors, YESs, BAMs, managers, and CO staff to make this a reality. We will hopefully be celebrating success in the Fall. This comes at a time when youth need to re-engage in their communities post pandemic and we are creating opportunities to make that happen.

VT Career Opportunities Program:

Thanks to Rich Tulikangas and James we did submit a proposal to RSA for one their Disability Innovation Projects – Career Advancement grant awards. We are hopeful. We have very little idea when the awards will be made. We think the competition will be stiff. It will be transformational to our system in the development of on ramps for people with disabilities to credentialled training programs. It includes CCV and VTC as pivotal partners. Very exciting! Keep your fingers crossed.

Rebranding: We continue our work with The Place Creative. We are working on logo, look and feel – images and colors. The plan is still to roll out this Fall. As we get closer, we will share with SRC.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

We are in the process of writing an RFP to identify an organization to work alongside of us on this journey of organizational change. We have adopted a seven-step process and a Commitment Statement. You will hear at the meeting about these efforts from Liz Harrington, Regional Manager, and lead for our DEI work.

Kessler Project:

The Kessler Project is rolling in our Burlington and Rutland offices. VABIR will shortly finally have access to contact information for all ticket holders in Vermont so we can direct market to them. We are learning already that we should not attempt to protect people's benefits. It is their decision! Early outcomes are wonderful.

Linking Learning to Careers:

We are winding down this 5-year grant program and will be doing evaluation, information and celebration of our successes. We have already adopted lessons learned into our core transition program.

Summer is almost here. My boat will be floating at the dock on Friday. My son and his family flew in last night from Hong Kong and are at his home on Long Island. YAHOO! We are not looking at the light at the end of the tunnel. We have come out of the tunnel and the sun is shining 😊