

## Director's Report

June 7, 2018

**Careers Initiative:** CI will be our total focus for the next three years. It is a very exciting body of work we will share with the SRC later in the meeting.

**Personnel Changes:** It is with a very heavy heart that I share the news that Karen Blake Orne will return to the Newport office as a VR Counselor. (Jody Casey retired.) Karen has been a part of the senior management team for the last 7 plus years. She has managed consumer complaints and personnel issues as well as supervising the program for the deaf and hard of hearing, the Assistive Technology Project, and the Transition Program. We are recruiting for a "new Karen" and there is some internal interest in the position. They are impossible "shoes to fill".

In addition, Leo Schiff requested he step out of the regional manager's role for the Springfield and Brattleboro offices due to health, well-being and family issues. He will return to the role of senior counselor in the Brattleboro office. Nancy Dwyer will become the regional manager for the two offices. I am confident she will do a great job.

We have hired Amanda Kohle as the new Quality Assurance Manager. As you all know, Amanda has been a transition counselor in our Barre office and is a member of the SRC. Amanda is a very skilled, capable person. We are very excited to have her join us in central office in this new role. Finally, we will be able to focus on the development of a quality assurance system for VR. HOORAY!

We hired Laura Lawson as our new training coordinator. Laura was a transition counselor in our Newport office. Laura is a highly organized, high energy person who has lots of experience as a trainer and educator in her background. We are very pleased to have her in central office.

**Budget:** We are on track both on the federal and state years. We are a little behind in ticket payments but are confident in our revenue projections. Congress put back the Title VIB supported employment funds which is very welcome. We intend to use them to support job coaches in the offices. We our new focus on credential attainment and measurable skills acquisition they will become more important than ever.

**College Steps Pilot:** We are moving along with the pilot in Rutland with College Steps and Castleton University. Rutland staff have identified 6 young adults who will need lower level supports and 2 young people who will need a higher level of support. The goal is to provide supports to students with other disabilities who could succeed in post-secondary education with that support. We will keep the SRC informed as we begin in the Fall semester.

**Transition Team Performance Measures:** After years of discussion, we have finally finalized the performance metrics for transition counselors. Copy attached. These have been vetted with

the VR management team and with Transition Counselors, Youth Employment Specialists and Career Consultants. They will go into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. Nothing is cast in concrete and we will monitor and evaluate these measures as we go. I would suggest inviting Tara Howe to come to a meeting to review in detail.

**VR VDOL Partnership:** As I may have shared previously, our relationship with the Vermont Department of Labor under the new administration is outstanding.

**Grant and Ticket to Work Opportunities:** Since our loss of reallocation funding, we have decided to aggressively pursue additional funding. We are looking at grants and increasing ticket revenue for starters. We are partnering with VDOL on a US DOL RFP to create apprenticeships for job seekers and incumbent workers with opioid addiction issues. We submitted a grant to US DOL with VDOL and CCV to expand apprenticeship opportunities for all job seekers including people with disabilities. We are pursuing a grant through the Social Security Administration to improve return to work rates for injured workers and people on FMLA. We are optimistic that the Jobs for Independence JFI grant program will continue after the grant ends this calendar year.

We are planning to take a deep data dive on our ticket to work revenue. Who are we successful with? What are their profiles? Should we be marketing to ticket holders who are current clients? We generate close to \$2.5 million in ticket revenue. Can we make it \$3 million?

Summer is around the corner. My boat's in the water and all is good.

Diane