

Director's Report

February 2024

The Year of the Credential:

As we continue to shift our focus from a job to a career pathway, we are going to put a spotlight on credential attainment as a way to be competitive for meaningful employment at a higher wage. We have evolved our dashboards to provide timely data on credentialed training and completion. We are working on an environmental analysis that will allow districts to create their own work plan to increase credential attainment. Including ways to celebrate staff and participant achievement. More later in this meeting.

VCAP continues to be our laboratory with the Career Pathway Navigators leading the effort to engage participants in looking at their “dream jobs” and making them a reality.

Summer Career Exploration Program:

We have launched year four of SCEP. It is now integrated into our transition program and staff continue to focus on how to improve the program and the connections to career pathways for students. This year we have increased our outreach to deaf and hard of hearing students who have been underrepresented in prior years. We are constantly reinforced by the experiences and outcomes for students who participate.

Rebrand and Marketing:

We continue our work with The Place Creative with smaller specific projects. We will be developing marketing materials including print, social media, video, and other outreach with a focus on reaching potential participants in learn and earn opportunities. Apprenticeships will be highlighted. Employers will be a target audience as well.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access:

We launched our four staff workgroups in person last month at the Waterbury Office Complex. Staff represent all offices, programs and VABIR. Each group will be focused on one of the goal areas identified in our implementation plan:

Workforce Development
Community Outreach
Building Staff Competencies
Organization Communications

We will set measurable leading and lagging indicators for each goal area and monitor progress over time. We are excited to be doing the work. We are also running a leadership development course focused on social change taught by Karen Proctor. We expect to run three cohorts for our expanded leadership team.

Opioid Employment Pilots:

We continue to roll out HA plus EAP services in Newport and Burlington for people in recovery from opioid misuse. The teams are doing very well. They are well connected in their local community with the Recovery Centers, BART, etc. Some of the early stories are very powerful. We were required to file a report to the legislature on the pilots. It is available to the SRC upon request. We can sustain the pilots through this state fiscal year and will be attempting to secure state, federal or Opioid Settlement funds to continue and expand the pilots hopefully statewide. We have learned a great deal about providing specialized services for this population. We have a very strong partnership with VDH and the DSU (formerly ADAP).

RSA Corrective Action Plan:

The unsung heroes, Amanda, Catherine, Alice, James and Linda from the DAIL business office have put tremendous effort into resolving the findings from our RSA monitoring review. We just submitted the second quarter progress report. It is conceivable we will have resolved all findings by July 1st. Incredible! Much credit goes to the team.

New Regional Manager for Brattleboro and Springfield:

After a lengthy recruitment process, I am very pleased to announce that Alicia White has been hired as Regional Manager for the Brattleboro and Springfield Offices. Alicia will begin work for HireAbility on February 12th. She is a Brattleboro native. Alicia has been in a leadership role for the Office of Child Support in Springfield for the last several years. She has experience working with people with developmental disabilities at HCRS. Alicia was the unanimous choice of all those who considered her for this position. I am confident that her high energy and shared values will give her a great start in her new role. Alicia is committed to completing her master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Alicia will be at an upcoming SRC meeting to introduce herself and report on her region as a regional manager does at every meeting.

WIOA State Plan:

The Title IV section of the State Plan for HireAbility is complete. The public hearing is Friday and public comments will be integrated and the plan signed by Secretary Samuelson and then submitted to RSA. We are part of a combined plan which will be officially submitted by VDOL on or before March 3, 2024. Thanks to the SRC members for their input.

WorkVT2.0:

We are closing out this project with kudos to all the staff involved for the impressive results. This project enrolled about 150 people receiving Social Security benefits with the goal of helping them to achieve higher wage jobs and leave the benefit rolls. You will hear much more about the project during this meeting. We are taking the strategies that worked and integrating them into all of HireAbility.

See you tomorrow...Diane