

Director's Report

Transition Services for Youth:

In an effort to improve service delivery, come into compliance with RSA requirements, and lighten the caseload burden for transition counselors we are undertaking a couple of new initiatives.

Restructuring the JOBS Program: We are centralizing the JOBS program management within Central Office. Kristin Kowenhoven and Terrienne Walker will assume statewide responsibility for the JOBS program – the caseload and relationship with the designated agencies. This is another rung in the HA career ladder for counselors as they will be program managers. We believe this will improve the consistency and quality of services for students and build a strong community of practice for programs.

Pre-ETS Program: we are working on the development and implementation of a pilot to change the service delivery structure for potentially eligible students. In the early stages of working with VABIR to create Pre-ETS Coordinator positions to take on primary responsibility for the management Pre-ETS cases and the required Aware documentation. Also working with VSAC to deliver workshops that offer content in the five required Pre-ETS service areas. The hope is to improve services for younger students and pave the way for their receiving full HA services as they exit high school.

Bill Sugarman retired as Regional Manager of the Barre and Morrisville offices and Tara Howe will assume Bill's role as Regional Manager. While we are sad to lose Tara as the HA Transition Program Manager, we are sure she will bring that same commitment and skill set to her new job.

We have promoted Kara Haines to the role of Transition Program Manager. Kara was Tara's Assistant. Kara has demonstrated outstanding skills and abilities in her role with transition and her experience working as a Transition Counselor and previously with DCF Family Services.

VCAP Update:

Rich Tulikangas is retiring at the end of June. We have hired Emily Sheils in his place as VCAP Project Director. Emily had been a transition counselor in our Barre office and most recently a CPN for VCAP in the same office. She brings her wonderful values and direct knowledge of the work of engaging customers I career pathways with her to this new role.

We are recruiting among existing counselors to identify a minimum of 6 new CPNs in the six offices without a CPN. Nine counselors have raised their hands and we will begin their transition over the summer. It is the goal of VCAP to have 100% of HA counselors becoming CPNs by the end of the five-year grant cycle. This systems change effort will result in more Vermonters with disabilities getting credentials, higher wage jobs, moving out of poverty and having choices in how and where they live.

I looked recently at a list of VCAP enrollees' vocational goals on their IPEs and it was very impressive!

Emergency Housing Effort:

We remain very involved in the AHS teams who are working to rehouse people living in hotels and motels. These are people with very complex and long-standing problems that need significant intervention. The program is ending, and the stress is mounting on the impacted individuals and families and the state systems trying to help.

RSA Monitoring Review:

We submitted our Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to RSA last week and are awaiting their feedback and ultimate approval. James, Amanda, Alice, and Catherine have done mountains of work in addition to Linda Ducharme and Bill Kelly from the Business Office. We are confident we are on the right track to correct all findings. The one which remains very difficult is monitoring contracts for client services like JOBS contracts. We shall see how it all progresses.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

We are working on our Implementation Plan with Social Contract team. We continue our leadership development work with Karen Proctor. We are having our first in person all HA VABIR staff meeting on October 5th at Lake Morey. The day

will be devoted to our mission and vision for DEI and moving people with disabilities out of poverty.

SCEP:

We are ahead of schedule in beginning our third year of the Summer Career Exploration Program with over 100 students enrolled to date. Placements are being made. Transportation arranged. It is a testament to the planning and execution by CO and the district youth teams.

Budget:

We are in solid budget shape. Reallotment timer is here. James and Allison are working on how much we can request and plan to spend. We are reasonably confident there will be funds in the pool!

Summer starts tomorrow! Enjoy!