

SRC Policy and Procedures Committee

September 6, 2018 Minutes (approved 11/1/2018)

Thursday, March 1, 2018.	10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m..	Waterbury State Complex; Room Cherry C; HC 2 South 280 State Drive; Waterbury, VT 05671.	
Meeting called by:	Sherrie Brunelle, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.		
Members Present:	Sherrie Brunelle (Chair), Courtney Blasius, Jessica Brennan (nonvoting), Marlena Hughes (arrived at 10:23 a.m.), Sam Liss		
Members Absent:	None		
SRC Liaison:	James Smith, DVR Budget and Policy Manager.		
SRC Coordinator:	Debra Kobus		
Interpreters:	Not applicable.		
Speakers / Presenters:	Not applicable.		
Guests:	Maria Burt, Senior VR Counselor III.		
1) Introductions (Sherrie Brunelle).			
Discussion:	Those in attendance went around the table and introduced themselves.		
Conclusions:	Thanks to everyone!		
Action Items:		Person Responsible:	Deadline:
None.		Not applicable.	Not applicable.
2) Approval of Agenda (Sherrie Brunelle).			
Discussion:	<p>Sherrie asked if there were any changes or additions to the agenda. James asked that more time be extended for the Careers Initiative Guidance Document Agenda item as he is not ready to discuss the Car Repair item.</p> <p>The Car Repair Agenda item will be moved to the next meeting. Time saved will be allocated to Self-Employment. Sam moved, and it was seconded, to approve the modified agenda.</p> <p>There was no further discussion. All approved modified agenda. Vote unanimous: 3-0-0.</p>		
Conclusions:	Motion passes: today's modified agenda accepted.		
Action Items:		Person Responsible:	Deadline:
None.		Not applicable.	Not applicable.
3) Open for Public Comment (Sherrie Brunelle).			
Discussion:	There was no public comment.		
Conclusions:	Not applicable.		
Action Items:		Person Responsible:	Deadline:
None.		Not applicable.	Not applicable.
4) Approval of Minutes May 3, 2018 (Sherrie Brunelle).			
Discussion:	Sherrie asked the group to review the May 3, 2018 minutes for any proposed		

	changes/additions. There were none. Sam moved to approve, and it was seconded. All approved. Vote 3-0-0.	
Conclusions:	May 3, 2018 minutes approved.	
Action Items:	Person Responsible:	Deadline:
Upload approved minutes to http://vtsrc.org/members/meeting-minutes/procedures-policy-committee/	Debra Kobus	9/11/2018.
5) Update on Status of Public Hearing/Comment on the following policies: (James Smith).		
Discussion:	James reported that a formal public meeting will be scheduled to address the following new incremental policy changes soon. James is currently waiting for the items to be formatted and will then schedule and hold the Public Hearing on the following policy changes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Post-Employment Services (Approved 3/1) 2) Chapter 102: Informed Choice (Approved 3/1) 3) Chapter 313: Audiology Services and Hearing Aid Purchases (Approved 3/1). 	
Conclusions:	See above.	
Action Items:	Person Responsible:	Deadline:
James is currently waiting for the items to be formatted and will then schedule and hold the Public Hearing on the following policy changes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Post-Employment Services (Approved 3/1) 2) Chapter 102: Informed Choice (Approved 3/1) 3) Chapter 313: Audiology Services and Hearing Aid Purchases (Approved 3/1) 	James Smith.	By 11/1/18 Policy and Procedures Meeting.
6) Consumer Rights Chapter (Subcommittee Update Sherrie and Marlana).		
Discussion:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Determine if we want a Consumers Rights chapter: At the last meeting, the committee determined it wanted to proceed in developing a one-page document first. Further discussion of a full chapter is being considered. 2) Select from multiple draft options: Sherrie, Marlana Hughes, and Amanda Kohl met over the summer to review various Consumer Rights materials from other states and to clarify their task. Their focus was on a document that was clear, accessible to most readers, and easy to understand. Sherrie created multiple draft options for review and comment by Marlana and Amanda with the document provided committee members as the recommended document. Sherrie reported that it was not possible to meet the accessibility goal in the “one-page” format. Sam liked the 14-point font version and thought the writing was excellent. Jessie said she has heard from a lot of consumers that don’t use thick handouts as much as we would like them to so using this one-page format would be handy. Olivia liked the 14-point font and spacing as did Maria. Maria sees this as 	

	<p>helpful in the orientation process.</p> <p>Marlena said that we began this process to make this information more accessible to our consumers which helps to empower them. Sam said that because it is in large font and easy reading that compensates for being more than one page.</p> <p>Sherrie made clear that said these were examples drafted for VR use not for CAP.</p> <p>The 14-point handout will be presented at the Senior Counselors meeting in October for their feedback – the handout will be given to Diane first for her comments. The handout will then go to the team working on orientation materials.</p> <p>3) Discuss 2nd Draft work (to be presented in Nov):</p> <p>Not needed at this time – see #2 above.</p> <p>4) Discuss what processes from 2nd draft of chapter and put into a one-page document (to be presented in Nov):</p> <p>The document was presented at this meeting.</p> <p>James would like to see the handout turned into a chapter in the Policy and Procedures Manual as would Sam who suggests that an introduction should be added.</p>
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Conclusions:	See above.
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Action Items:	Person Responsible:	Deadline:
The 14-point Consumer Rights Handout will be presented at the Senior Counselors meeting in October 2018 for their feedback. The handout will be given to Diane first for her comments. The handout will then go to the team working on orientation materials.	James Smith.	Before the Senior Counselors Meeting in October 2018 Meeting.
To Parking Lot: Full Consumer Rights Chapter developed based on 14-point font handout (introduction needs to be added).	Group.	To be determined.

7) Discuss Draft Careers Initiative Guidance Documents (James Smith).

Discussion:	<p>James said this has come out of the VR Careers Initiative which now is our primary performance measure (duration of employment, median earnings, measurable skills gain, credential attainment, and employer satisfaction).</p> <p>Two issues/questions came up related to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Managing long and short-term goals within a VR case. 2) Case service expenditures. <p>Some staff wanted to know when we should pay for basic support. There is a sense of urgency in VR and James did not want to wait in presenting this guidance to the committee.</p>
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Sam asked for a summary of each section related to its main objective.

Section I: Definitions (as illustrated).

Section II: General Policy Guidance (as illustrated).

Section III:

A) Development of IPEs and Managing Cases Under the WIOA Common Performance Measures: Some counselors have asked if they can have two goals (a short term and long term) which James explained is not allowable, however, there is enough flexibility in the Rehab Act to amend your goal and a person can achieve one goal and then a new case can be opened as there is no limit on the number of plans over time. Four case examples were provided to assist in guiding counselors related to this section which James went over with the Committee. Maria asked if example three should be combined with example one. James said that he wants to make sure that those that just want a job and not a career do not get left behind from receiving benefits. Maria said that a separate chapter related to this option of closing a case and then opening a new case would be helpful to counselors.

Sherrie said that the first comment she wrote down when reviewing the document was related to the example using car repairs and would like a different example used as it makes it harder to have some consistency with the car repairs policy. Sherrie thought that perhaps VR counselors could provide some feedback on this. Jessie thinks this document is helpful as she has received different directions over time. Jessie also stated that a basic needs option would be helpful as she agreed that car repairs/tires example made her uncomfortable as well.

Maria doesn't believe bringing this policy back to counselors would be very helpful but is open to other options. She believes it would be very helpful to having something to share with our other partners.

B) Case Service Expenditures to Support Careers:

VR counselors have been very helpful to consumers by searching out other entities that may provide financial assistance when a request does not fall under VR's case service expenditure allowances. Guidance related to appropriate case service expenditures would be very helpful to VR counselors.

Summary: Separate out into policy and guidance; share with the field for refinement; change "car repairs" to something else. At our next meeting in November, James should have a close to final draft for review and approval from this committee and then it will go out for public comment in December.

Conclusions:	See above.	
Action Items:	Person Responsible:	Deadline:
Careers Initiative Guidance - Separate out policy and guidance; share with the field for refinement; change	James Smith.	Before 11/1/18 Policy and

<p>“car repairs” to something else. At our next meeting in November, James should have a close to final draft for review and approval from this committee and then it will go out for public comment in December.</p>		<p>Procedures meeting.</p>
<p>8) Car Repairs Transportation (James Smith).</p>		
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>This agenda item was postponed for discussion until November’s meeting. Sherrie would like the agenda item’s title be changed to Transportation.</p>	
<p>Conclusions:</p>	<p>James will arrange for a small subcommittee in VR related to this agenda item. Marlena is welcome to participate.</p>	
<p>Action Items:</p>		
<p>Transportation – James will arrange for a small subcommittee in VR related to this agenda item. Marlena is welcome to participate.</p>	<p>Person Responsible: James Smith.</p>	<p>Deadline: Before the 11/1/18 Policy and Procedures Meeting</p>
<p>9) Potential New Policies (Group).</p>		
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>1) Disruptive behavior and violence: James said that because we are under the AHS umbrella there are some policies already established but it would be prudent to review what policies are being followed.</p> <p>2) Gender identity: There are VR staff members that could report on this to the Policy and Procedures Committee.</p> <p>3) Voter registration: VR asks a consumer during VR’s initial orientation whether assistance is needed in becoming registered to vote.</p> <p>The committee ran out of time to discuss items in detail. This agenda item will be put in the Parking Lot for discussion at a future date.</p>	
<p>Conclusions:</p>	<p>See above.</p>	
<p>Action Items:</p>		
<p>To Parking Lot:</p> <p>1) Disruptive behavior and violence: James said that because we are under the AHS umbrella there are some policies already established but it would be prudent to review what policies are being followed.</p> <p>2) Gender identity: There are VR staff members that could report on this to the Policy and Procedures Committee.</p> <p>3) Voter registration: VR asks a consumer during VR’s initial orientation whether assistance is needed in becoming registered to vote.</p>	<p>Person Responsible: Debra to remind group.</p>	<p>Deadline: To be determined.</p>

The committee ran out of time to discuss items in detail. This agenda item will be put in the Parking Lot for discussion at a future date.		
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10) Other Business (Sherrie Brunelle).		
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Discussion:	<p>1) Self-Employment Update:</p> <p>Sherrie did some extensive research on self-employment. She received documentation from 36 states and there are some states that have a whole guide on this subject. One of the key takeaways was that there is a multi-step process that is approved either within the agency or through bringing in outside people. There is also certain course work, assessments, and tools that are used.</p> <p>These are the biggest takeaways. Tiered levels of funding are provided like VR. There is a much higher expectation from these states from the consumer to financially contribute in this process.</p> <p>Sherrie would like to use the same model recently used for Consumer Rights and Responsibilities and put together a working group with a VR counselor and/or field managers who could sit down, look at this chapter, and make suggestions as to how this could be improved. Sherrie said that one of the things that DBVI does is they describe what self-employment is and definitions are clearly provided. Sam agrees that this is an area where structured guidelines would be helpful.</p> <p>James said that VR counselors would be very interested in learning more about your research. James will reach out to senior counselors and field managers to work with Sherrie on this.</p>
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Conclusions:	See above.
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Action Items:	Person Responsible:	Deadline:
Reach out to VR counselors and field managers to work with Sherrie on Self- Employment.	James Smith.	Before 11/1/18 Policy and Procedures Meeting

11) Adjournment (Sherrie Brunelle).		
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Discussion:	Sherrie asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Sam moved to adjourn and it was seconded. Vote unanimous: 4-0-0.
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Conclusions:	Motion passes. Adjourned at 12:04 p.m..
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Action Items:	Person Responsible:	Deadline:
Draft Minutes uploaded to http://vtsrc.org/members/draft-minutes/ .	Debra Kobus.	9/11/2018
Draft minutes emailed to Committee Members.	Debra Kobus.	9/11/2018
Minutes approved by Committee.	Committee Members	11/1/2018
Approved minutes uploaded to http://vtsrc.org/about/meeting-minutes/ .	Debra Kobus.	11/6/2018.

Summary Action Items from 9/6/18:		
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Public Hearing: James is currently waiting for the items to be formatted and will then schedule and hold the Public	James Smith.	By 11/1/18 Policy and Procedures Meeting.
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<p>Hearing on the following policy changes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Post-Employment Services (Approved 3/1). 2) Chapter 102: Informed Choice (Approved 3/1). 3) Chapter 313: Audiology Services and Hearing Aid Purchases (Approved 3/1). 		
<p>Transportation: James will pull together a couple of counselors to look at what might be some appropriate revisions to the Transportation Chapter particularly as it applies to Car Repairs providing clarity, consistency, and perhaps “travel training” guidance. Marlena is interested in working on this item.</p>	James Smith.	Before 11/1/18 Policy and Procedures Meeting.
<p>Financial Means Testing: VR is directed to look at the programmatic implications of applying a financial means tests both for consumers and VR operation.</p>	James Smith.	Before 11/1/18 Policy and Procedures Meeting.
<p>Self-Employment - Reach out to VR counselors and field managers to work with Sherrie on Self-Employment.</p>	James Smith.	Before 11/1/18 Policy and Procedures Meeting.
<p>Careers Initiative Guidance - Separate out policy and guidance; share with the field for refinement. At our next meeting in November, James should have a close to final draft for review and approval from this committee and then it will go out for public comment in December.</p>	James Smith.	Before 11/1/18 Policy and Procedures meeting.
<p>Consumer Rights Handout: The 14-point Consumer Rights Handout will be presented at the Senior Counselors meeting in October 2018 for their feedback – the handout will be given to Diane first for her comments. The handout will then go to the team working on orientation materials.</p>	James Smith.	Before the Senior Counselors Meeting in October 2018

Parking Lot:		
<p>Chapter 310 - Supported Employment – ideas where improvements could be made.</p>	Michelle Paya.	By 1/3/2019 Policy and Procedures Meeting.
<p>Draft Policy on Post-Secondary Training and Education after planning meetings are completed related to WIOA’s new requirements. This should include discussion about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RSA policy directive speaks to what happens when one defaults on a loan so when we get to the Post- Secondary Education Chapter we will need to talk about that piece and make sure it is clearly reflected in our policy; <p>We also need to flesh out VR’s policy on what VR will</p>	James Smith.	To be determined.

pay for related college expenses including College Steps.		
<p>To Parking Lot on 9/6/18:</p> <p>Possible new chapters on:</p> <p>1) Disruptive behavior and violence: James said that because we are under the AHS umbrella there are some policies already established but it would be prudent to review what are being followed.</p> <p>2) Gender identity: There are VR staff members that could report on this to the Policy and Procedures Committee.</p> <p>3) Voter registration: VR asks a consumer during VR's initial orientation whether assistance is needed in becoming registered to vote.</p> <p>The committee ran out of time to discuss items in detail. This agenda item will be put in the Parking Lot for discussion at a future date.</p>	Debra to remind group.	To be determined.
To Parking Lot on 9/6/18: Full Consumer Rights Chapter developed based on handout (introduction needs to be added).	Debra to remind the group.	To be determined.
<p>Agenda items for upcoming meetings:</p> <p>November Agenda Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car Repairs—Transportation. • Financial means testing (part 1). • Self-employment. <p>January Agenda Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial means testing (part 2). • Supported employment. • Career Pathways: January check in. 	Debra to remind the group.	To be determined.

FOR REFERENCE only - 2018 PRIORITIES taken from November 2, 2017 Policy and Procedures Minutes

1) Priority: Develop chapter on Career Pathways.

Discussion occurred about the most reliable ways to assist individuals in this endeavor. James stated that post-secondary education and Career Pathways are combined in VR's new performance measures. This requires supporting people in careers and career development and the most reliable way to do that, outside of helping people find employment, is to support them in obtaining access to and pay for post-secondary training and sometimes education. James expects VR will be investing more into credential attainment through mid-skill technical training as it is a reliable way to get people in higher wage positions and helps to stop individuals from not progressing out of entry level work.

Sherrie concurred and said that obtaining employment is not the end goal for VR – advancing in employment is also a significant emphasis of WIOA. According to her counterparts in different states, a discussion about whether the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) grants and funding should be considered a comparable benefit or not. Discussion also centered on renaming this priority to Credential Attainment.

2. Priority: Develop clearer guidelines around self-employment to include discussions around post-secondary education and training policy as it relates to self-employment; when VR is to get involved; and how VR is to get involved, i.e. assistive technology or tuition support.

James said the Self-Employment Chapter is not clear as to when to approve and when not to. We appear to have a high failure rate when it comes to self-employment and what equals work. There is a lot of interest in having more structure to this chapter.

Sherrie agreed that this committee should make it a priority as it is one of the areas that she sees in the Client Assistance Program that has a lack of clarity and people come to them because they do not agree with the decision that was made. There are also questions surrounding the amount of money allocated to start your own business as it is low as compared to what it is, and we don't have any clear guidance on whether the consumer should be required to demonstrate they can secure funding elsewhere.

3. Priority: In-depth discussion on car repair guidelines to make the guidelines clearer.

Sherrie said the Client Assistance Program (CAP) of Vermont Legal Aid's Disability Law Project gets a lot of inquiries about denials or problems accessing funding for vehicle repairs rather than vehicle purchases. The current policy is that someone who needs vehicle repairs can access up to \$1000 over their time working with VR. VR also uses Car Coach but there is nothing in the Policy and Procedure Manual about how that works. Vehicle repairs need to be tied to employment.

4. Priority: Develop a chapter on Consumer Rights and Denial of Benefits.

Sherrie will consult with the Client Assistance Program (CAP) in drafting a first chapter of Consumer Rights and will report back. Sam would like to have discussions to include financial means testing around some of these priorities. The discussion could begin in this committee and then go out to the Full SRC. Sherrie agreed.

James wondered if there could be means testing for a single service. Sherrie said that having a financial means test is generally something that is not mandated but can be initiated by VR at the State level. Sherrie will research the single (individual) service question.

Sherrie asked if there should be a **priority listing for working on these policies**:

Sam said that Self Employment would be the next important chapter after Consumer Rights.

James stated post-secondary training and education would impact more people than Self Employment and the guidance surrounding Self Employment was not particularly good.

Michelle stated that Consumer Rights and Self-Employment would be her choice for priorities. Michelle added that VR counselors need to be guided on the post-secondary training and education requirements because they need to be doing this now.

James will be responsible for coming up with a first draft for a self-employment/post-secondary training and education policy since VR must start reporting on this metric. James will draft up

guidance for the January meeting.

In addition, a letter is needed for VR counselors to use when they are denying benefits. Sherrie will find out if the Client Assistance Program (CAP) would be willing to draft up a letter on Denial of Benefits under Consumer Rights. The guidance on this chapter would take some time.

Sherrie reminded the committee that Informed Choice/Hearing Aid Chapter is on the agenda for the January meeting, so we may need to adjust January's agenda somewhat. James said the Hearing Aid Chapter is important as it is one of those areas where means testing may be applicable.

Motion by Sam - the committee's 1st priority should be credential attainment and the other post-secondary options in Career Pathways; 2nd Self-Employment and 3rd Car Repair, Michelle seconded. No further discussion. Calla abstained. All committee members approved.