

## Director's Report

12/8/2016

**“Re-Sets”:** The final WIOA regulations and our unanticipated steep reduction in revenue have created the need to do several VR program “resets”. I will be speaking with staff the morning of December 9<sup>th</sup> to provide an overview. They are confidential until the pre-work has been done and I have informed all staff. I will plan to send an email to SRC members outlining the resets on 12/9.

**Budget:** We continue to work to finalize our expenditure plans for SFY '17 and SFY '18. We have let the Designated Agencies know that AHS has approved the use of Global Commitment funds to cover the supported employment grants for developmental services and JOBS (and CRT ticket payments) for SFY '17. This substitute funding, significant reductions and a hiring freeze will assist us to balance our budget for SFY '17. SFY '18 will be very tight. We plan to reallocate the funding of the equivalent of 6 VR counselors to the Linking Learning to Careers grant project as Career Consultants. Brian Guy will become the Assistant Director of LLC. We will have much reduced flexibility in budgeting for future years.

**Linking Learning to Careers:** The request to Joint Fiscal Committee to accept the funds is on its way. We should have a decision by 12/31/16. We will then be recruiting for and hiring a project director. Amber Fulcher will be hiring two AT Specialists. We will be doing an MOU with CCV. We anticipate training the Career Consultants beginning in March and enrolling students in April. There will be challenges in adding this enhanced package of services to our existing infrastructure of Transition Counselors and YESs. We are very excited about the opportunities for students to find their career pathway.

**AWARE:** We had a steering committee meeting yesterday and I am very pleased that we are “all green” on our implementation plan and ahead in some areas. This is almost entirely due to the tireless, and I mean tireless efforts, of Alice Porter. We understand that RSA will grant no waivers on data collection deadlines. We “go live” in September 2017 and are working a strategy to meet the first quarterly reporting deadline under WIOA. I am optimistic we will find a solution. Testing will begin in February. We have a testing team and a training team identified and ready to go.

**Making the State a Model in Hiring People with Disabilities:** Hugh and I met with the Governors Workforce Equity and Diversity Council yesterday to update them on our progress giving state hiring managers access to CWS, our Business Account Managers and Progressive Employment. Nat Piper, BAM, in Central Vermont is working with Bill Sugarman, VR Regional Manager, to set up an initial meeting with district managers in the pilot area. We are hoping to begin the pilot early next year.

**AWARE:** We had a Steering Committee meeting recently and we are “all green” on our deliverables and risk assessment. We are ahead of schedule on our data conversion thanks to Alice Porter. The workload remains intense but staff involved are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel ☺ RSA has indicated that no waivers of data submission will be granted and we still have the issue of the first quarter's data being three months before we go live. We are strategizing on how to deal with that issue.

**EAP:** In 2013 RSA completed a monitoring visit and issued a finding relative to including the revenue from our EAP program as program income. We have been operating an EAP program since 1987 and it has been reviewed many times including as recently as 2007 with no finding on EAP. We have tried to make the case. About two months ago, we got a letter asking for detailed information on our EAP program. We submitted our response on 11/29. We essentially proposed a method for cost allocation that would count allowable VR services provided by EAP staff to eligible VR consumers as program income. We are hopeful that they will work with us on our proposed solution and resolve their finding.

**Jobs for Independence:** We continue to serve participants who are homeless, offenders or substance abusers. These are hard to serve individuals with many needs. We are assisting them to find jobs! Except for Rutland and Bennington, referrals are down and the ESD grant staff are focused on getting them back up again so we are meeting our monthly targets. There are currently about 972 people enrolled and we need to get to 3000 in the next 12 months to meet the overall goal of 3000. 1500 in the treatment group and 1500 in the control group.

**Career Pathways:** We are working with CCV to develop a 2-day training program on how to learn about Career Pathways and how to shift our current practice from helping people find a job to finding a career. The training will occur 1/20 and 1/27. I am excited about this new frame coming from WIOA and believe it will lead to moving people into higher wage jobs.

**AHS Workforce Development Group:** The group met yesterday and endorsed the idea of dusting off an AHS Employment Policy we had drafted a couple of years ago, updating it and marketing it to AHS leadership. This is exciting to me as I think it will set a context for the importance of employment to all age appropriate AHS program participants. I will bring copies of the older draft policy for your review.

Happy Holidays!

Diane