

Minutes – April 3, 2014

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)

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Thursday, April 3, 2014	12:30 PM – 3:30 PM	Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired 60 Kimball Avenue South Burlington VT 05403
Meeting called by	Allen Evans, Vice-Chair at 12:30 p.m.	
Members Present	Adam Leonard, Samantha Brennan, Patti Shane, Anthony Williams, Ellen Vaut, Alaina Clements, April Tuck, Diane Dalmasse, Kerry White, and Whitney Nichols (via phone)	
Members Absent	Michele Hubert and Sarah Launderville	
SRC Liaison	James Smith, DVR Budget and Policy Manager	
SRC Coordinator	Rebekah M. Stephens	
Interpreters	n/a	
Speakers/Presenters	Karen Schwartz-Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council (VTDDC), Chelsea Sicely-VTDDC Administrative Assistant, Karen Blake-Orne-VR Field Services Manager and Cathy Seguin-VR State Reach Up Coordinator	
Guests	Neal Meier, new SRC SILC representative (in process)	
1. Today's Agenda		
2minutes	-----	
Discussion	No discussion.	
Conclusions	Accepted.	
2. Approval of Minutes – February 6, 2014 SRC Meeting		
1 minute	-----	
Discussion	April Tuck made motion to approve. Alaina Clements 2 nd . No discussion.	
Conclusions	Approved unanimously.	
Action Items		Person Responsible
Upload approved minutes to www.VTSRC.org		Rebekah Stephens
		Deadline
		4/11/2014
3. Consent Agenda		
2 minutes	-----	
Discussion	Consent agenda includes approved minutes for January 9, 2014 Steering Committee meeting and Coordinator's report. No discussion. Adam Leonard made motion to accept. Patti Shane 2 nd .	
Conclusions	Accepted unanimously.	
Action Items		Person Responsible
None		n/a
		Deadline
		n/a
4. Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council (VTDDC) Presentation		
1 hour	Karen Schwartz, Executive Director and Chelsea Sicely Administrative Assistant	
Discussion	The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council (VTDDC) was created by federal statute over 40 years. Half of the federal funding received by VTDDC goes out in grants used for system advocacy and scholarships. "Every five years the VTDDC gathers public input and creates a new State Plan". Goal 5 of the VTDDC's State Plan focuses on employment – "More Vermonters with developmental disabilities will be employed for more hours and more pay in jobs that they choose." The Goal is to 1 – "Make Vermont an Employment First State", 2 – "Promote best practices and programs that increase hours, pay, and benefits for employees with developmental disabilities" and 3 – "Promote best practices and programs that provide transition-age students with a wide range of work experiences to be successful after graduation." During the VTDDC's last needs assessment it was found that individuals desire more hours and more pay for employment. However, individuals also reported having a concern about earning too much and losing their benefits. VTDDC is now on face book and also puts out an online newsletter. Members of the SRC expressed that the Developmental Services (DS) Medicaid waiver program should include more of a rehabilitation component. This would encourage independence within the population being offered services. The current	

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DS waiver program does not encourage independence. The Council discussed the program involving “Shared Living Providers”. This program provides a tax free stipend to providers for hosting an individual with developmental disabilities in their home. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will be requiring more oversight for some of these programs.		
Conclusions	Thank you to the VTDDC for an informative presentation and for providing lunch.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
5. Reach Up Update		
40 minutes	Karen Blake-Orne, VR Field Services Manager and Cindy Seguin, VR State Reach Up Coordinator	
Discussion	Reach Up is Vermont’s Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), which is the federal program. Reach Up serves families with children under the age of 19 years of age. VR has approximately 850 – 1000 consumers that receive Reach Up services. As of May 1, 2014, the cumulative lifetime limit for benefits will be 60 months. Individuals receiving benefits will be able to receive deferments from this cumulative limit for certain circumstances: for example an individual with a new baby will receive a 12 month deferment. Vocational Rehabilitation consumers actively participating in their employment plans will also receive a deferment. Every family receiving Reach Up benefits will now have a work requirement. Single parents with children under 6 years of age will need to work a minimum of 20 hours per week to continue receiving benefits. Single parents with children over 6 years of age will need to work 30 hours per week and two parent households will be required to work 40 hours per week. Work requirements can be satisfied by community service and/or paid employment. As long as, a family is meeting their work requirements they will eligible to receive Reach Up benefits until the children age out of the program. After taking into account all possible deferments, there are 652 families (statewide) that are at the 58 month plus for cumulative benefits limit. VR has 123 of these families in their caseloads. VR serves approximately 19% of the statewide Reach Up population. Because of the deferment offered to VR Reach Up consumers, VR will not close these cases until a consumer meets their Reach Up work requirement. The questions was asked, “Will this throw off DVR’s case closure numbers?” VR is able to offer support to an individual post-closure, when it is appropriate. There are options to assist consumers with meeting their work requirements. Another question, “Are there concerns from the VR counselors about navigating this new world order?” The counselors have voiced a concern about the potential of an influx of additional cases due to these new work requirements. It takes time to secure employment for a VR consumer. There are, however, group work sites for instant placement of individuals that need immediate work placement in order to not lose their Reach Up benefits. One more question, “Once a person gets a job is there follow up with that person?” Anthony Williams explained that VABIR will follow up for a year in some cases when appropriate. However, not all agencies have the resources to provide this kind of follow up. Karen shared a recent success story – a VR consumer receiving Reach Up benefits for 134 months (over 11 years) has successfully secured employment and is now off Reach Up and looking forward to a great future for her and her family. Cindy shared that as a result of the new motivational interviewing techniques, several consumers have disclosed substance abuse issues to their counselors that have been hampering their employment attempts. Motivational interviewing allows individuals to take ownership over their own employment issues.	
Conclusions	Many individuals will experience a “soft” landing on May 1, 2014. Plans are in place for those that need more support in reaching their Reach Up work requirements. Karen will keep the SRC updated as these new requirements take effect on May 1, 2014.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Provide update on rollout of new Reach Up work requirements and effect on DVR to SRC	Karen Blake-Orne	TBD

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6. Order of Selection		
10 minutes	James Smith	
Discussion	Since February 2014 SRC meeting, there are 3 new individuals that fall under category 3. DVR is good budget wise and believes that there would be no downside to opening up services to these individuals. Neal Meier made motion to open services. Allen Evans 2 nd . The vote is 10 Ayes and 1 Nay.	
Conclusions	The Ayes have it. Approval is given to open services for these 3 individuals. The SRC members requested James send them the definition of OSS (Order of Selection Services).	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Forward definition of Order of Selection Services (OSS) to all SRC members	Rebekah Stephens	4/15/2014
7. Vote of Approval on Final Needs Assessment		
20 minutes	James Smith	
Discussion	The final Needs Assessment is needed so that the State Plan can be prepared by July. James is asking for the SRC to approve the Needs Assessment. The SRC expressed that it is clear that a lot of effort went into the preparation of the final Needs Assessment and that all of the SRC's recommendations from the February 6, 2014 SRC meeting were taken into account in this final draft. April Tuck made motion to approve the final Needs Assessment. Alaina Clements 2 nd . All SRC members in favor of approval – Aye.	
Conclusions	Approved unanimously.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Provide update on State Plan to SRC	James Smith	TBD
8. Director's Report		
25 minutes	Diane Dalmasse	
Discussion	Diane is so pleased with the initial roll out of the motivational interviewing training. This training has been well received by staff. Diane attended the Barre job fair this morning. This is the event's 5 th year. 62 businesses attended this year. Community Kitchen, a local culinary program, did the lunch. 750 people attended this job fair last year. Hugh Bradshaw and I are off to Washington this weekend. Hugh and Diane will be meeting with all of the delegations together. S1356 is still on the table. A huge SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) grant is on the table for supported employment. This grant would bring \$800,000 into the State over a 5 year time period. VR added 3 new people to central office – a VR Fiscal Analyst, a Transition Coordinator to work with Renee Kievit-Kylar and a Planning and Evaluation Unit staffer. 3 weeks ago, VR made the difficult decision to cancel the contract with S3 Technologies. S3 Technologies was contracted to build VR's new computerized case management system. Unfortunately, S3 Technologies was not meeting their contract requirements. VR is taking a look at an off the shelf product called AWARE. This software has been built specifically for use by DVR agencies. Maine has been using it for 2 years. An RFP will probably need to be done, as there are a couple of off the shelf products that could be chosen. It will take some time to go through the RFP process and then the product will need to be customized for use by Vermont DVR. There was a great meeting on Tuesday between VR and DOL regional managers. They are working on enhancing coordination between the agencies. The Focus Groups being conducted by Market Decisions are set to begin over the next couple of weeks. The new in house EAP program has been launched. This should save DVR money and provide better service for consumers. Beginning July 1, 2014, each VR office will now have a credit card for consumer purchases.	
Conclusions	Very informative director's report. Thank you, Diane.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a

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9. Round Table		
10 minutes	-----	
Discussion	Neal Meier shared that he is a member of the Governor’s Committee on Employment for People with Disabilities. The Committee has developed a power point presentation that goes through all the myths about employing people with disabilities. Neal shared that he is also on the SILC (Statewide Independent Living Council). The SILC is working on an online website called “Accessible Adventure”. Individuals can go on the site and rate restaurants, movie theatres, etc on accessibility. Neal shared that he is also the senior advisor for “Children of the Earth”. Alaina Clements shared that it was a productive PR meeting this morning. James Smith is very happy that the SRC has approved the needs assessment. Adam Leonard shared that the PR Committee met with Alicia Wein this morning and learned about motivational interviewing and received an in-depth overview of the VR training program. It was really good information. Samantha Brennan is getting her bearings in the SRC. On a sad note - Villanova lost. Patti Shane shared that the Agency of Education has now moved its offices to Barre. The new offices are nice. April Tuck informed the SRC that as part of her current employment she is taking a closer look at individuals that have not disclosed their disabilities to employers. She is working with union and management to address this issue. Allen Evans serves on the Recycle Board and a new facility has opened up in Barre. The Recycle Board gave away \$100,000 in repurposed furniture and household items to disadvantaged families. Ellen Vaut enjoyed hearing from Alicia Wein this morning during the PR Committee meeting. She also enjoyed Karen Schwartz’s presentation on the VTDDC. Anthony Williams shared that he has seen some movement in his caseload due to the new mandated work requirements for Reach Up. His clients seem more motivated to find employment. This is a positive thing. Whitney Nichols shared that he has been following up with the Legislature on his Medicaid issue. He also recently qualified for an iPad.	
Conclusions	It was a great meeting. A lot of great things are happening amongst our members.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a
10. Other Business		
10 minutes	-----	
Discussion	Allen Evans suggested that the topic, “If the minimum wage goes up in Vermont how will it affect people’s benefits?” be put on a future SRC agenda for discussion.	
Conclusions	Council members agreed.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Put topic “If the minimum wage goes up in Vermont how will it affect people’s benefits?” on future SRC agenda	Rebekah Stephens	TBD
11. Adjournment		
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Discussion	Adam Leonard made motion to adjourn. Alaina Clements 2 nd .	
Conclusions	Meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Draft minutes respectfully submitted for approval	Rebekah Stephens	5/2/2014
Draft minutes emailed to all Committee members	Rebekah Stephens	5/2/2014
Draft minutes uploaded to www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	5/2/2014
Minutes approved	Full SRC	6/5/2014
Approved minutes uploaded to website www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	6/13/2014