

FINAL Retreat Report – October 5, 2017

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC) – 10th Annual Retreat

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (VT SRC)		
Thursday, October 5, 2017	9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Waterbury-Stowe Fish & Game Club 5365 Waterbury-Stowe Road Waterbury Center, VT 05677
Meeting called by	Adam Leonard, SRC Chair at 9:43 a.m.	
Members Present	Rose Lucenti, Olivia Smith-Hammond, Sam Liss, Diane Dalmasse, Sherrie Brunelle, Martha Frank	
Members Absent	Max Barrows, Julia Burakian, Robin Ingenthron, Christopher Kane, Michelle Paya, Brian Smith, Leslie Walker Mitchell and Jessalyn Gustin	
SRC Liaison	James Smith, DVR Budget and Policy Manager	
SRC Coordinator	Rebekah M. Stephens	
Interpreters	n/a	
Speakers/Presenters	n/a	
Guests	Nick Caputo, Ashley Pulaski, Dana Lesperance (Community High School of VT), Leo Schiff (VR) and Hib Doe (VR)	
1. Welcome and Introductions		
10 minutes	Adam Leonard	
Discussion	Introductions done.	
Conclusions	Welcome everyone, to the 10 th Annual SRC Retreat.	
Action Items		
None	Person Responsible	Deadline
	n/a	n/a
2. Committee Reports on 2017 Accomplishments, Goals, Opportunities & Challenges		
30 minutes	Sherrie Brunelle & Adam Leonard	
Discussion		
Sherrie presented the P&P Committee report: The Committee spent 2017 reviewing and making recommendations to bring the manual into compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Six chapters were reviewed, revised and approved for public comment during 2017. A new chapter on Pre-Employment Transition Services was part of the 6 chapters reviewed in 2017. Added per request of Sam Liss at 12/7/17 Full SRC: Sherrie also mentioned an SRC bylaw change that was considered and approved by the Committee (and sent to the full SRC for a vote) and deferred to Sam to explain. See 3. below.		
Adam presented the PR Committee report: The PR committee “focused much of its efforts on understanding VR’s performance in relation to the new standards set forth in WIOA.” During 2017, PR members reviewed the RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration) Technical Assistance Circular on the Common Performance Measures, RSA guidance on what expenses are “considered Pre-Employment Transition Services expenses”, VR’s Consumer Orientation process and the results from the Youth Survey conducted by Vermont Family Network. Julia Burakian was elected the new PR Committee chair.		
Adam presented the Steering Committee report: The Steering Committee had discussions around the dissolution and reinstatement of the AOE Committee, this year’s 10 th Annual Retreat, and planned a “youth themed SRC meeting in June”. This is Adam’s last Retreat as SRC chair. Adam will be leaving the SRC in December as he has served two terms on the SRC.		
Conclusions	Thank you, Sherrie and Adam!	
Action Items		
None	Person Responsible	Deadline
	n/a	n/a
3. Approval of SRC Bylaws Recommended Language Change		
5 minutes	-----	
Discussion	P&P Committee reviewed and recommended a language change to Article VII, Section	

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1. 2 nd sentence of the SRC Bylaws. The recommended language reads, “The Chair or Vice-Chair shall be a person with a disability or a parent or another immediate family member of a person with a disability.” No discussion. Adam Leonard called for a vote. 5 ayes. No nays.			
Conclusions	Language approved.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Incorporate new language into SRC Bylaws		TBD	10/31/2017
4. Order of Selection			
5 minutes	James Smith		
Discussion	James did not have the numbers today. He proposed an email vote. SRC agreed.		
Conclusions	James will send out email to full SRC tomorrow. SRC members will vote within a week.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Send OOS information to full SRC		James Smith	10/6/2017
SRC to vote and respond directly to James Smith via email		Full SRC	10/13/2017
5. Presentation – Full Draft 2017 VR Needs Assessment			
45 minutes	James Smith		
Discussion	James provided a quick overview of the process of writing the Needs Assessment. It is done every 3 years. The Needs Assessment provides a broad picture of how VR is doing, based on the available data. The presentation consisted of a PowerPoint. James handed out hard copies of the presentation. VR pulled data from “population data from the American Community Survey, national data from federal agencies like RSA, Vermont VR program data from the 911 database, data from other state agencies, consumer satisfaction survey data and other miscellaneous sources.” This is the first Needs Assessment since the initiation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Common Performance Measures. VR is still in the process of establishing baselines for the Common Performance Measures. As a result of WIOA, 15% of VR’s federal award must be spent on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and 14 VR counselors and 14 VABIR employment specialists were reassigned to Pre-ETS work. In 2017, VR lost \$4.5 million of its re-allotment award. As a result, of this funding cut, VR had to reassign or freeze hiring for 10 VR counselor positions and 18 VABIR Employment Consultant positions. VR also reduced case services by \$500,000 and \$700,000 in JOBS and DS supported employment services. The data shows that “In Vermont the number and percentage of people with disabilities working full time has increased” and “VR is number one in the nation in VR applications per million population”. However, active caseload numbers dropped in 2016. “Reduction in 2016 is likely the result of Pre-ETS implementation that reassigned 14 VR counselors to work exclusively with students.” “Implementation of Pre-ETS has greatly increased the proportion of youth served aged 18 or younger.” “The biggest impact appears to be for adults ages 35 to 55 who went from 39.7% to 30.4% of the caseload.” Case closures from FFY 2012 to FFY 2016 have also shown changes. “There was a significant decline in FFY 2016, most likely the result of Pre-ETS implementation.” “The estimated number of successful employment closures for FFY 2017 is 1,350.” “55% of DVR consumers are closed at minimum wage or 110% of minimum wage. The trend is towards a higher proportion of closures at or close to minimum wage.” “This might reflect: Vermont minimum wage increases” or “A shift to a younger caseload who are more likely to be in entry level employment.” VR is changing its focus to getting people careers instead of just a job. The Career Pathways initiative is the next big thing for VR. Education and training of consumers will be a large focus of this initiative. “With about 50% of consumers closing working 30 hours per week or more.” “Still an area to look at considering WIOA Common Performance Measures focus on median wages.” About 1/3 rd of VRs caseload is on SSI. A consumer’s need to keep benefits and the hours they work are related. According to the data, “The average weekly wages at closure are increasing.” “The increase is likely related to minimum wage raises.” Consumers that need hearing aids, generally come to VR employed. That employment is generally, above minimum wage. VR does not have an income threshold for consumers. 45% of consumers served by VR are in the psychiatric disability group, 25% cognitive and 20% physical. “Individuals with psychiatric disabilities show the greatest gain in earnings from application to closure.” In contrast,		

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<p>“individuals with psychiatric disabilities are less likely to achieve VR successful closure but when they do they experience the greatest impact on earnings.” “Change in education level, this will be an important benchmark under the WIOA Common Performance Measures: Credential Attainment.” “This data probably does not reflect true change because old VR case management system made the data collection difficult.” AWARE will provide better data. “During the 2016 – 2017 school year, there were 5,390 students served through Vermont high schools who are either on an IEP or 504 plan.” Per the data, “there are approximately 8,600 youth (16 to 20 ages) with disabilities in Vermont.” This is a broad estimate from “extrapolating” the data from available sources. “Youth with disabilities are much less likely to be employed than their counterparts without disabilities at both the national and state level.” “It is well documented that early work experiences for students and youth are the best predictor of future employment.” The data “suggests that DVR is serving up to 35% of the eligible population (students & youth/ 14 – 24 age).”</p>			
<p>Added per request of Martha Frank 12/7/17 Full SRC Meeting:</p>			
<p>Discussion took place to include the Youth Risk Survey that takes place every two years. Currently there are no questions that address youth with disabilities and Martha Frank informed the SRC that she would like to advocate for changes to address the omission on the survey. Stressed importance of looking at this sub population and how if our state was informed, it would impact current data and possible future funding allocation. Also referenced what states currently do have this on their survey and how powerful the data in Rhode Island looks.</p>			
Conclusions		Great information. Thank you, James!	
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
None		n/a	n/a
<p>6. Discussion – 2017 Needs Assessment: Goals and Priorities</p>			
45 minutes		-----	
Discussion		The discussion of the Needs Assessment was on-going throughout the presentation. Members had a few additional comments. The population in Vermont is aging; should the Needs Assessment include a specific strategy for assisting the “senior” population? VR responded that there is no specific target goal, currently, for this population. However, VR does have an individual is who looking at a plan for this population. It was concerning that 55% of the VR closures are making minimum wage. A target to cut that number in half would be a great goal for VR. VR’s loss of funding and available staff has impacted services. It would be a good idea to make sure that not any one disability group is impacted more than another group.	
Conclusions		Great input!	
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
None		n/a	n/a
<p>7. Director’s Report</p>			
20 minutes		Diane Dalmasse	
Discussion		AWARE is now live and the data transfer is almost complete. The VR budget is still uncertain. VR may be fined a maintenance of effort penalty in FY 2019. Career Pathways is the next big initiative for VR. Education and training of consumers will be the focus. VR is working with the Public Assets Institute to start a campaign like “Changing the Story”. VR has been working with Mathematica to make progressive employment an evidence based practice. Linking Learning to Careers has been launched. VR has a new website www.vocrehab.vermont.gov . Spirit of the ADA Awards ceremonies are scheduled for this month around Vermont.	
Conclusions		Thank you, Diane!	
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
None		n/a	n/a

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8. Final Wrap Up – Committees' Top 3 Priorities/Next Steps for 2018			
25 minutes	Full SRC		
Discussion	The Committees met during the Retreat to discuss priorities for 2018. AOE Committee		
1. Restructure AOE Committee (consider meeting for one hour, focus Committee activities around planning of specific projects/events). 2. Plan to have the SRC coordinate with the youth core teams (invite VR regional managers and geographically relevant legislators, SRC members and BAMS to youth core team meetings, and maybe invite students to youth core team meetings to share their stories. Diane Dalmasse volunteered Tara Howe as the VR contact around this idea). 3. The Disability Summit will continue to remain on the back burner.			
The SRC will need to vote to re-establish the AOE Committee. Policy & Procedures Committee – 1. In-depth discussion on car repair guidelines (need to make guidelines clearer). 2. Develop clear guidelines around self-employment (include discussions around post-secondary education and training policy as it relates to self-employment, when VR is to get involved, and how is VR to get involved i.e. assistive technology or tuition support). 3. Develop chapter on Career Pathways. 4. Develop a chapter on Consumer Rights and Denial of Benefits. Performance Review Committee – 1. Assess the matrix that Vermont has with other states regarding Needs Assessment. 2. Look at the Youth and Employer Satisfaction surveys (look at how each population is accessing VR services). 3. Look at the VR data after removing data related to VR hearing aid consumers. 4. Review the baseline and setting the priorities for 2018 (get a better understanding around how goals and measures will be met and how things will look moving forward). 5. Hear more on AWARE in 6 months and then a year out (hear from field staff, what is working or not, impact of AWARE on services provided by VR from the perspective of consumers and staff).			
Conclusions	Include vote to re-establish AOE Committee on December SRC agenda.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Include vote to reestablish AOE Committee on December SRC agenda		TBD	11/24/2017
9. Round Table			
15 minutes	Full SRC		
Discussion	Adam Leonard thanked James Smith for the Needs Assessment presentation. The presentation of the information was clear and easy to digest. Thank you everyone for bringing food for the potluck. The combination of the meeting and Retreat worked well. Hib Doe thanked the SRC for inviting him. He appreciates all the work the SRC does on behalf of VR. Diane Dalmasse found it very helpful to have Hib Doe and Leo Schiff at today's meeting. It may be a great idea to rotate a couple of managers to sit in on the SRC meetings going forward. They bring a nice perspective. Dana Lesperance appreciated what he heard today. Sam Liss thanked Diane for bringing the fruit platter. It was a productive meeting. Rose Lucenti found the Retreat very informative and relaxing. She appreciated the meeting. Nick Caputo enjoyed the meeting. He gets a lot out of the meetings. Ashley Pulaski felt it was a wonderful potluck. Appreciates the information and learns so much at these meetings. Sherrie Brunelle loves the connections she makes in these meetings. Looks forward to future meetings. James Smith enjoyed the Committee reports. The volume of work that gets done by the volunteers of this Council is fabulous. Leo Schiff appreciates the opportunity to be here. Appreciated the different perspectives.		
Conclusions	A fine Retreat.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
None		n/a	n/a
10. Adjournment			
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Discussion	No discussion.		
Conclusions	Adjourned at 3:10 p.m.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline

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Draft Retreat Report respectfully submitted for approval	Rebekah Stephens	11/4/2017
Draft Retreat Report uploaded to www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	11/4/2017
Draft Retreat Report emailed to all Committee members	Rebekah Stephens	11/4/2017
Retreat Report approved	Full SRC	12/7/2017
Approved Retreat Report uploaded to website www.VTSRC.org	Debra Kobus	12/15/2017