

**8<sup>th</sup> Annual Retreat Report**  
**Vermont State Rehabilitation Council**

Thursday, October 8, 2015

9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Seyon Lodge State Park - 2967 Seyon Pond Road, Groton, VT 05046

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This year's Retreat focused on two areas: Building relationships within the membership and setting 2016 priorities. The SRC met in the afternoon to provide brief reports on each Committee and set each Committee's goals for 2016.

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**Retreat Goals:**

- Relationship building within the SRC membership
- Provide overview of 2015 Accomplishments, Goals, Opportunities and Challenges
- Determine 2016 Priorities

**Retreat Participants:**

- Samantha Brennan, SRC member
- Julia Burakian, SRC member
- Diane Dalmasse, DVR Director and SRC member
- Martha Frank, SRC member
- Sarah Launderville, exiting Chair AOE Committee
- Adam Leonard, SRC Vice-Chair and Chair PR Committee
- Sam Liss, Chair P&P Committee
- Leslie Walker Mitchell, SRC member
- James Smith, DVR Liaison
- Olivia Smith-Hammond, SRC member
- Rebekah Stephens, SRC coordinator
- Terri O'Shea, Facilitator

**Relationship Building:**

The morning was filled with exciting activities focused on members getting to know each other a little better. Members participated in an "Ice Breaker Activity: Lost on a Desert Island". The members named one thing they would bring to a desert island. Items ranged from a working toilet to a fully functional yacht. The remainder of the morning was spent building collages out of magazine pictures, glitter, puffy balls and a lot of glue. The activity was very successful in presenting a snapshot of each member's personality.

**Committee Accomplishments, Goals and Opportunities:**

2015 Committee Reports were presented to the Council by Adam Leonard – Vice-Chair SRC and Chair Performance Review Committee, Sam Liss – Chair Policy and Procedures Committee and Sarah Launderville – exiting Chair Advocacy, Outreach and Education. Each report provided a brief overview of the Committee's 2015 accomplishments. Diane Dalmasse and James Smith presented a summary of "Strategic Priorities for DVR". The SRC requested the summary with the intent of aligning the 2016 SRC goals with DVR's priorities for the upcoming year.

The following summary highlights the four DVR 2016 “Strategic Priorities” and each SRC Committee’s 2015 Accomplishments and 2016 Goals.

- **2016 Strategic Priorities for DVR**
  - **Implementation Pre-Employment Transition Services**
    - Supporting staff, especially the Transition Counselors through a major change in role
    - Ensuring services meet the needs of students and lead to good outcomes
    - Developing effective partnerships with schools and other providers to best meet the needs of students
  - **Development of a Unified Plan with the Department of Labor and Agency of Education**
    - Developing systems for collaboration that best meet the needs and interests of DVR consumers
    - Ensuring the interests and needs of people with disabilities are represented properly within a unified workforce development plan
  - **Aligning the DVR program to the new WIOA Common Performance Measures**
    - Looking for strategic opportunities to improve DVR outcomes reflected in the Common Measures such as median wages, job retention and consumer skill gains
    - Avoiding or mitigating possible negative outcomes of measures e.g. creaming or risk avoidance
    - Mitigating administrative burden on field associated with new data collection and reporting requirements
  - **Implementation of AWARE**
    - Implementing AWARE in a way that supports staff and excellent customer service
    - Support staff through a major change process
    - Ensure the tool is adapted in a way that is consistent with our four strategic themes
      - Organizational Effectiveness
      - Prepared Job Seekers
      - Valued and Empowered Employees
      - Collaborative Partnerships
- **Policy and Procedures:**
  - **2015 Accomplishments:**
    - Refrained from revising additional chapters – waiting for finalized WIOA regulations
    - DVR finalized all recommendations made on the following Chapters:
      - Chapter 107, “Ticket to Work”
      - Chapter 202, “Eligibility”
      - Chapter 203, “Individual Plan for Employment”
      - Chapter 205, “Post-Employment Services”
      - Chapter 207, “Authorization and Approval of Expenditures”
      - Chapter 208, “Expenditures in Status”
      - Chapter 301, “Counseling and Guidance”

- Chapter 305, “Personal Services”
- Chapter 310, “Supported Employment”
- Chapter 311, “Training”

**2016 Goals:**

- Continue revisions of DVR Policy & Procedures Manual to conform to WIOA
- Ongoing Discussion – “Consumer, Client, Eligible Individual & Applicant Language” in DVR Policy & Procedures Manual
- Discussion – “What is Policy vs. Guidance”
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) will need a Chapter
- Stay informed around AWARE and how it will effect policy

▪ **Performance Review:**

**2015 Accomplishments:**

- Discussions around criminal records and the negative impact on employment
  - Discussion around expunging of criminal records
  - Determined the SRC Advocacy, Outreach & Education Committee would be the best venue for further exploration of this topic
- Reviewing feedback from last year’s SRC/DVR annual retreat
  - Particularly “VR staff lacked line of sight on what was happening within the SRC”
  - Developed and distributed an SRC newsletter to DVR staff
- Extensive discussions around Order of Selection (OOS)
  - Possible changing of OOS system
  - Expenditures for Category 3 and Category 1 cases are similar

**2016 Goals:**

- Monitor AWARE roll out
- Look at Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) periodically
  - Discussion around - Guidance vs. Policy
  - Monitor budget (5% for PETS and how it is being spent)
- Monitor roll out of New Common Performance Measures
  - Determine PR Committee role in setting goals around new Performance Measures
- Order of Selection
  - Continue with current process?
  - What will a change look like?

▪ **Advocacy, Outreach and Education:**

**2015 Accomplishments:**

- Discussed national advocacy issues
- Discussed Medicaid for Working People with Disabilities (MWPD)
- Discussed the Career Access Project
- Extensive discussions around corrections and the barrier it creates to employment
- Discussion around basic Americans with Disability Act (ADA) training for DVR and VABIR counselors

- Met with David Sagi, DAIL ADA Program Manager
- Spent a day at the Statehouse in the Card Room
  - Sam Liss, Spencer Lemons, Amanda Cole (DVR) and Laurie Brown (DVR) manned the table
- Discussion around Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS)
  - Hugh Bradshaw, DVR Employment Services Manager, joined the AOE Committee for this discussion
- Connected between the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the Governor’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (GCEPD)

**2016 Goals:**

- Find a New Chair for the Committee
- Be mindful/monitor budget around Medicaid
- Make sure ground is not lost with new WIOA regulations
  - Create a plan to ensure ground is not lost
    - Legislature
    - Elections
    - Congress (SSDI)
  - Keep an eye towards preserving the culture and values of DVR
- Discuss the use of Social Media and DVR
- Take a look at SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) work requirement
- Ongoing monitoring of national implementation of Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS)
- Take a continuing look at the Career Access Project

▪ **Steering/SRC:**

**2015 Accomplishments:**

- Set agendas for SRC meetings
- Continued to recruit new members for the SRC
- Monitored impact of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act on DVR
  - Scheduled presentations for the full SRC
    - Impact of Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) on DVR
    - New Common Performance Measures
- Planned and implemented an Annual Retreat that allowed “opportunities for the SRC members to connect”

**2016 Goals:**

- Preserving cultures and values of DVR and services to individuals with disabilities as WIOA rolls out
- Take a look at the continued inclusion of the Assistive Technology Advisory Council in the SRC schedule
- Discuss use of social media by DVR

Respectfully submitted for approval on October 26, 2015 by Rebekah M. Stephens, Coordinator, VT SRC