

APPROVED 2018.01.03

Minutes – November 2, 2017 SRC Policy and Procedure

SRC Policy and Procedure Committee		
Thursday, November 2, 2017	9:30 am – 11:30 am	VABVI, 60 Kimball Avenue, South Burlington, VT 05403
Meeting called by	Sherrie Brunelle, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:45 am	
Members Present	Sam Liss, Michelle Paya	
Members Absent		
SRC Liaison	James Smith, DVR Budget and Policy Manager	
SRC Coordinator	Debra Kobus	
Interpreters	n/a	
Speakers/Presenters	n/a	
Guests	Calla Papademas	
1) Approval of Today's Agenda		
2 minutes	Sherrie Brunelle	
Discussion	Add to the agenda a discussion of the Policy and Procedures Committee's Start Time in 2018. Sherrie made motion to accept. Sam Liss 2 nd . There was no further discussion. Calla abstained. All committee members approved.	
Conclusions	Motion passes - today's agenda accepted with addition - see under 9) Other Business.	
Action Items		Person Responsible
None		n/a
Deadline		n/a
2) Approval of Minutes – September 7, 2017 Committee Meeting		
3 minutes	Sherrie Brunelle	
Discussion	The September 7, 2017 minutes were reviewed. Sam Liss moved to approve. Sherrie Brunelle 2 nd . There was no further discussion. Calla abstained. All committee members approved.	
Conclusions	Motion passes - minutes approved.	
Action Items		Person Responsible
Upload approved minutes to http://vtsrc.org/members/meeting-minutes/procedures-policy-committee/		Debra Kobus
Deadline		11/7/2017
3) Update – Resignation of Leslie Walker Mitchell		
5 minutes	Sherrie Brunelle	
Discussion	The group discussed Leslie Walker Mitchell's need to resign from the SRC because of a new position that she has taken.	
Conclusions	The group thanked Leslie for her past service and she will be missed.	
Action Items		Person Responsible
Update member listing, website, etc.		Debra Kobus
Deadline		n/a
4) Update on Vote—Pre-ETS Chapter		
2 minutes	James Smith	
Discussion	Sherrie informed the committee that an email vote was taken and the chapter was approved by a majority of the Policy and Procedures Committee members. James will post an ad with a location (State Complex) about a public hearing that will be scheduled for December 4, 2017. The notice will direct people to the chapter and how they can participate in the public hearing if they so desire. There will be an interpreter available onsite during the public hearing.	
Action Items		Person Responsible
Post notice for Public hearing on Pre-ETS Chapter on VR website and then in the newspaper a week or two after that http://vocrehab.vermont.gov/news/request-public-comment-changes-policy-and-procedures-manual		James Smith
Deadline		Prior to Public Hearing Date of December 4, 2017 – see action items
5) Update—10th Annual Retreat Priorities (Policy and Procedures Committee)		
7 minutes	James Smith	

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Discussion	<p>Members expanded upon their 2018 priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">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.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.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.Priority: Develop a chapter on Consumer Rights and Denial of Benefits. Discussion of this topic is scheduled later in the meeting. 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:<ul style="list-style-type: none">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-
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	<p>secondary training and education policy since VR must start reporting on this metric. James will draft up guidance for the January meeting.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>											
Conclusions	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 3 rd Car Repair , Michelle seconded. No further discussion. Calla abstained. All committee members approved.											
Action Items	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Person Responsible</th> <th>Deadline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Provide research on the single (individual) service question as it relates to means testing</td> <td>Sherrie Brunelle</td> <td>January 3, 2018</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consult with the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to see if they would be willing to draft up a letter on Denial of Benefits under Consumer Rights and report back.</td> <td>Sherrie Brunelle</td> <td>January 3, 2018</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Provide a Post-Secondary Training and Education Policy Draft</td> <td>James Smith</td> <td>January 3, 2018</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Person Responsible	Deadline	Provide research on the single (individual) service question as it relates to means testing	Sherrie Brunelle	January 3, 2018	Consult with the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to see if they would be willing to draft up a letter on Denial of Benefits under Consumer Rights and report back.	Sherrie Brunelle	January 3, 2018	Provide a Post-Secondary Training and Education Policy Draft	James Smith	January 3, 2018
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6) Approval – P & P Manual Update – Guidance on when to open post-employment case vs a new VR case												
20 minutes	James Smith											
Discussion	<p>James handed out to committee members a draft on guidance about when to open a post-employment case vs a new VR case. James explained that post-employment services are limited. The advantage of providing post-employment services is if something comes up, for example a car repair, we don't have to go through the whole eligibility process with the person. With the implementation of AWARE (electronic case management system) things have become much more structured and consistent. With a service such as the need for a car repair, our instinct is to open a new case. This is still the case if the services are complex or if we are going to spend more than \$1,000 or if the service will last more than 1 year. VR counselor's need direction on timelines for closing cases which would be especially helpful for those in the field. Sam sees some fuzziness in the guidance and believes it should be fleshed out a bit. There are some instances where this determination will be decided by those in the field. However, James does not feel there is a lot at stake because if a counselor does make a mistake, the consumer still gets the service, but we just wouldn't be able to record it.</p> <p>James said to clarify things, he will add to the guidance that if the service is going to result in a new credential, then it must be a new VR case because you can't report on a post-employment service. Benefits counseling is one of the most obvious services that would be needed. The wonderful thing now with AWARE is that a Benefits Counselor can access all the information in the case with the consumer.</p> <p>Sherrie asked if we lost Benefits Counselors. James said we did lose about 10 VR counseling positions, downsized the benefits counseling team to 4, and are providing services remotely through Skype. We are hopeful that we will be able to put back one of the counselors. Sherrie asked how about those that do not have the ability to participate through Skype? James said this is not an absolute – we can still arrange a face to face meeting in those instances.</p> <p>James will take these few changes and incorporate them into the draft. James will then send the revised draft out by email to the committee members for a vote.</p>											
Conclusions	Sam made a motion that James will revise the language and that a vote will be taken by email. Michelle 2 nd . No further discussion. All committee members approved with Calla abstaining.											
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Edits circulated by email with a vote by committee members	James Smith	January 3, 2018
7) Discussion – Chapter 310: Supported Employment		
45 minutes 10:50	Sherrie Brunelle	
Discussion	<p>Chapter 310: Supported Employment with in-depth review and discussion on the broader context of the chapter (see January 5, 2017 minutes). Sherrie said that she is still not quite understanding how this program is supposed to work, which is why she has brought it back into discussion and has asked James to walk us through this.</p> <p>James said the concept was that Supported Employment was to act as an extension to the VR program to assist individuals with the most significant disabilities that require ongoing support services. The VR program would not be affected because VR services are time limited. Originally, VR could not open a Supported Employment case unless there was a non-VR funding source for those ongoing supports (being extended services). VR was not allowed to provide extended services (just for youth). In the development of the Supported Employment Program by the State, VR naturally partnered with the Developmental Disabilities System because that system had funding and was a cradle to grave service through Designated Agencies (DA's). We could provide funding for the upfront training and placement costs and that system could provide the ongoing supports. We also partnered for many years with the Community Rehabilitation Treatment Program which could provide lifelong service and finally partnered with the Children's Mental Health Program around youth with emotional behavioral disabilities because they possessed an ongoing funding source through Medicaid case management.</p> <p>James said the only funding VR receives for Supported Employment is from Title 6b. Title 6b is a grant (totaling \$290K) that doesn't require matching funds. Title 6b is now split in two and we must spend 50% on youth and the other funding on any one else. This grant is a tiny amount of money. VR is currently investing (\$1.7m inclusive of Title 6b funding) more in Supported Employment for short term services because VR values the service. The current Federal budget proposes cutting all the Title 6b funding.</p> <p>VR can pay for short term supported employment service but cannot if there is no long term supported employment funding available. Sherrie stated that there are many people that fall into that category. If VR cannot provide those services, perhaps those constituent groups should respond to this issue. James said that over the years we have tried various efforts to address this issue without success.</p> <p>Michelle has been looking at the different roles held by VR and Supported Employment and would like to look at our combined resources to try and reduce redundancies, for example obtaining signatures with VR present. James said that unfortunately our regulations are clear that we cannot delegate our duties out. James said that part of the reason VR got so strong with the language is that we wanted to adhere to our responsibilities as required by the Federal grant. Sam said it is important to flesh out and discover areas where redundancies are located and eliminate them if appropriate. Michelle said that maybe we should creatively look at the grant process and funding areas. James said the VR program is specifically prohibited from delegating away our responsibilities.</p> <p>Sam asked if Michelle and Sherrie had a better understanding of Supported Employment now. Sherrie said there could be more consistency with the use of term consumer. Michelle saw an area on page 4 that could be removed. Sherrie asked if there could be a better way of structuring this guidance to add some separate paragraphs and clear directions around different Supported Employment issues. Sam said that there seems to be a lot more fleshing out of this chapter that needs to be done but doesn't think we can start rewriting this chapter until we get some concrete ideas on how to do this; specifically, we need to have a greater understanding of VR's role and the DA's role. Sam asked that Michelle come back with some concrete suggestions on where we can make changes that help VR counselors in using the manual.</p>	
Conclusions	<p>More fleshing out of the chapter needs to be performed. Michelle will look at the chapter to see what revisions she might suggest. James will provide Michelle with the specific VR regulations he is referring to.</p>	

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Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Review Supported Employment Chapter as it relates to DA's		Michelle Paya	Open
Provide VR Regulations to Michelle as it relates to Supported Employment		James Smith	1/3/2018
8. Discussion – Possible New Chapter: Consumer Rights			
25 minutes	Sherrie Brunelle		
Discussion	Discussion of a possible new chapter for the Policy and Procedures Manual – Consumer Rights		
Conclusions	Sherrie will consult with the Client Assistance Program in drafting a first chapter of Consumer Rights.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Sherrie will consult with the Client Assistance Program (CAP) in drafting a first chapter of Consumer Rights and will report back.		Sherrie Brunelle	January 3, 2018
9. Other Business - Discussion of Adjusting the Policy and Procedures Committee's Start Time in 2018			
5 minutes	Sherrie Brunelle		
Discussion	Discussion occurred about adjusting the Policy and Procedures Committee's Start Time in 2018 to 10:00 am to assist committee members who must drive long ways.		
Conclusions	Sherrie made motion to accept. Sam Liss 2 nd . There was no further discussion. Majority approved with Calla abstaining.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Discussion about the P & P start time change will be presented to the Steering Committee that follows		Sherry Brunelle	November 2, 2017
10. Adjournment			
0 minutes	Sherrie Brunelle		
Discussion	Sam Liss moved to adjourn. Michelle 2 nd . Majority approved with Calla abstaining.		
Conclusions	Adjourned at 11:30 a.m.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Full Draft minutes emailed to Committee Members		Debra Kobus	12/1/2017
Full Draft minutes uploaded to http://vtsrc.org/members/draft-minutes/		Debra Kobus	12/1/2017
Minutes approved by Committee		Committee Members	1/03/2018
Approved minutes uploaded to http://vtsrc.org/about/meeting-minutes/		Debra Kobus	1/08/2018