

Approved 2/1/18

Minutes –December 7, 2017

SRC Performance Review Committee

<b>SRC Performance Review Committee</b>		
<b>Thursday, December 7, 2017</b>	<b>10:00 am – 12:00 pm</b>	<b>Gifford Medical Center Red Clover Room 44 South Main Street Randolph, Vermont 05060</b>
Meeting called by	Adam Leonard, Interim Chair at 10:00 a.m.	
Members Present	Max Barrows, Sherrie Brunelle, Nick Caputo, Martha Frank, Marlena Hughes, Robin Ingenthron, Christopher Kane, Rose Lucenti, Brian Smith, Olivia Smith-Hammond	
Members Absent		
SRC Liaison	James Smith, VR Budget and Policy Manager	
SRC Coordinator	Debra Kobus	
Interpreters	n/a	
Speakers/Presenters	n/a	
Facilitator	----	
Guests	Diane Dalmasse, Ashley Pulaski, Lee Reilly (Max Barrow's assistant)	
<b>1. Today's Agenda</b>		
<b>2 minutes</b>	<b>Adam Leonard</b>	
Discussion	Sherrie Brunelle moved to accept the agenda as proposed. Rose Lucenti 2nd. There was no discussion. All approved.	
Conclusions	The agenda was accepted.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
none	n/a	n/a
<b>2. Introductions</b>		
<b>13 minutes</b>	<b>Adam Leonard</b>	
Discussion	Members introduced themselves.	
Conclusions	We have a great group!	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
none	n/a	n/a
<b>3. Brief Historical Overview of the PR Committee</b>		
<b>15 minutes</b>	<b>Adam Leonard</b>	
Discussion	Adam provided an overview about the goals and objectives	

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	<p>of the PR Committee.</p> <p>The PR Committee is currently one of two functioning subcommittees that operate to assist the SRC complete its mission. The PR Committee provides feedback to VR about its performance through the objective review and assessment of various performance measures.</p> <p>The PR Committee has used various documents in assessing VR’s performance such as the Needs Assessment, WIOA requirements, Consumer Orientation, and Employer and Employee Satisfaction Surveys.</p> <p>PR is the only committee that takes a regular external look at VR. This honest, unbiased, look at how things are going is very helpful to VR as it provides a friendly, yet critical, eye to VR’s performance.</p> <p>James added that although VR is a public agency and holds public meetings and such, the SRC is the only place where VR can obtain an external view from those that are familiar with and/or using our services. For example, the Order of Selection Process was changed as the PR determined there were some flaws and that led to some changes. It is very helpful to have this perspective.</p>	
Conclusions	Thank you, Adam and James, for the great overview!	
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
None	n/a	n/a
<b>4. Election of New Chair</b>		
<b>15 minutes</b>	<b>Adam Leonard</b>	
Discussion	The PR Committee has received one nomination for Chair – Chris Kane. Adam asked if there were any other nominations from the floor. There were none. Chris was willing to accept the nomination. Adam asked for a vote by consensus to elect Chris Kane the new Chair of the Performance Review Committee. All were in favor. Chris Kane was elected Chair of the Performance Review Committee.	

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Conclusions	Chris Kane was elected Chair of the Performance Review Committee.	
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Update website and other SRC documentation	Debra Kobus	12/12/17
<b>5. Approval of Minutes – June 1, 2017 Committee Meeting</b>		
<b>2 minutes</b>	<b>Chair</b>	
Discussion	Adam asked if there were any proposed changes to the minutes. There were none. Sherrie Brunelle moved to approve. Nick Caputo 2 <sup>nd</sup> .	
Conclusions	June 1, 2017 minutes were approved unanimously.	
<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Upload approved minutes to <a href="http://www.VTSRC.org">www.VTSRC.org</a>	Debra Kobus	12/12/2017
<b>6. Final Review and Vote on Needs Assessment</b>		
<b>60 minutes</b>	<b>James Smith</b>	
Discussion	<p>Adam explained that the Full SRC will need to approve the Needs Assessment, which is updated every three years. However, the PR Committee can propose changes or amendments prior to the vote by the Full SRC.</p> <p>James handed out copies of the draft Needs Assessment. James explained that years ago we hired a contractor to do the Needs Assessment and that always felt unsatisfactory as the contractor really didn't know very much about the program. When the PR Committee was formed, VR thought it was a great opportunity to have an entity constantly reviewing and evaluating needs.</p> <p>There are a lot of different areas where data is gathered that could be used in the Needs Assessment. For example, there is data from at least two Consumer Satisfaction Surveys included in the final Needs Assessment.</p>	

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This committee is not responsible for creating a 50 to 60-page document. VR compiles the document based upon the data it receives surrounding needs. The PR committee reviews the Needs Assessment and provide suggestions to VR for improvement.

**Highlights of this year’s Needs Assessment** – the first couple of pages of the Needs Assessment provides some context:

“Specifically, the Rehabilitation Act (1973) as amended under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), requires the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Vermont State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to jointly conduct a needs assessment every three years.

The assessment is intended to form the basis for the DVR annual State plan and strategic planning activities. The development of this needs assessment in partnership with DVR is one of the primary responsibilities of the SRC. VR is required to assess the needs of those with disabilities in the State of Vermont.

Federal regulations require that:

The State plan shall include the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council every three years, describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the vocational rehabilitation service needs of:

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
- Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment

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system.

The report must also include:

- An assessment of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and
- An assessment of the rehabilitation needs of youth and students including:
  - Their need for pre-employment and other transition services; and
  - The extent to which pre-employment and other transition services provided under this Act, are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

This report includes data from a variety of sources, including DVR’s Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) reporting database, information from the United States Census Bureau, the American Community Survey, as well as surveys conducted by DVR.

Vermont DVR has twelve district offices that provide employment services to individuals with disabilities and one central administrative office. Vermont DVR follows all federal requirements for determining eligibility, assessment, developing an Individual Plan for Employment, training and other employment preparation services, placement services, and post-employment support.

Additionally, DVR provides transition services to youth; a program for youth with severe emotional/behavioral disabilities and corrections involvement; assistance with Social Security disability benefits applications; the Vermont Assistive Technology and Reuse Program; and assistance to individuals with disabilities who are offenders or who are veterans.

DVR also funds supported employment services to designated agencies serving individuals with severe and persistent psychiatric disabilities and individuals with developmental disabilities.

DVR has a solid record of performance, with successful closures exceeding 1,500 in the most recent Federal Fiscal Year (FFY 16). Vermont DVR also rates high among national vocational rehabilitation programs:

- Number one in New England and in the nation for new VR applications per million population;
- Number one in New England and in the nation for VR employment outcomes;
- Number one in New England and in the nation for Ticket to Work participation;
- Number two in New England and number 8 in the nation for percent of VR clients on Social Security disability benefits with employment outcomes.”

A question arose as to what VR’s employment outcomes were? James said that in the past, employment outcomes were measured by rehabilitation outcomes which consisted of a person working for a minimum of 90 days with stable employment. Diane said this measure has gone away with the implementation of the Workforce Innovative Opportunity Act (WIOA) to new performance measures that are more quantitative.

James said that the report discusses the two largest changes in VR’s environment over the past few years:

- The first being the implementation of WIOA which really made some significant changes to the VR program with the biggest being the requirement of having to spend 15% of VR funding on students in high school.
- The second being the loss of reallotment funding which resulted in about a 20% reduction in the VR program.

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It was important to convey that the VR program is shrinking/contracting. The report then touches upon the new performance measures.

An error was brought to James' attention: see **Table 2 on page 6: All Closures in FFY2016**. It appears a zero was added to the Total Count number in error (count 37,980 vs 3,798).

**Note error in data labeling at bottom of page 9.**

James directed everyone to page 9 where data shows that the amount of time between when a person initially applied for VR Services and a Closure is recorded decreased.

In 2011 the average time from application to closure was just over 16 months. In 2016 the average time was just over 13 months. We believe there are a number of factors that have contributed to this change:

- The improving Vermont job market
- WIOA timelines that require development of an employment plan within 3 months
- Impact of improved employer outreach under Creative Workforce Solutions
- VR efforts to move individuals who are ambivalent through progressive employment and motivational interviewing
- Better caseload management

Progressive employment is a way for people and employers to try out an employment situation before committing to it. For example, let's imagine that someone with limited employment experience desires to work in a veterinary's office. VR arranges for a progressive employment position with a local VET and pays the interested person a small stipend to try out the job. Progressive employment allows a person to see if they want to perform the work and lets the

employer decide whether this person may be a good fit allowing for a soft entry. In addition, it allows an employer to let VR know if the person is cut out for that type of work.

Max wants to make sure that sensory over-stimulation issues at work sites are taken into consideration during progressive employment plans.

On page 12, Chart 4 demonstrates the rehabilitation rate by disability type. Historically people with sensory disabilities have a very high success rate and folks with psychiatric disabilities present the most challenging and this rate continues to hold true.

James referred the group to page 15 where Chart 7 shows the difference between earnings at application and earnings at closure by disability type. Folks with psychiatric disabilities have the biggest increase and folks with sensory disabilities have the smallest. What we have learned is that folks with sensory disabilities come to us employed and are looking for AT or a hearing aid requests, where folks with psychiatric disabilities come to us with the lowest wages but receive a greater amount of services which result in the largest increase in earnings.

On page 21, data shows that youth (between the ages of 16-20) without disabilities are employed at rate of just under 43% and folks with disabilities are employed at a rate of 28%.

Nine major findings that drives some of our next steps begins on page 39. These findings largely came out of the discussion that occurred at the October Retreat.

***1. The need for increased attention to the employment needs of the mature worker.***

James said that although we are expecting to see a need for increased attention to the employment needs of the mature

worker, VR has not seen it as of yet. Sherrie wondered if there should be more outreach of some sort. Diane said that one of the issues with the program is the income level is extremely low creating a whole range of mature workers that are not eligible for services. It is good that we are going to focus more on this program.

***2. DVR needs to identify and implement strategies to increase consumer hourly wages at closure.***

In FFY 16 55% of individuals were closed earning less than 110% of minimum wage. While this can partly be explained by the concurrent increases in the state minimum wage in 2015 and 2016, it is still an area of concern. The minimum wage in Vermont was \$9.60 in 2016. This compares to a median hourly wage for all occupations in Vermont of \$18.23 for 2016. While entry level employment is appropriate for some consumers, DVR should be looking at ways for individuals to move up the career ladder into higher wage employment.

***3. DVR consumers need opportunities to gain industry recognized credentials in middle skills professions.***

James said that number 3 ties to number 2 in that DVR data suggests that consumers who gain industry recognized certifications such as Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA) or Commercial Driver’s License, are closed in higher wage employment. Such middle skill certifications are often the quickest way to help individuals move from entry level employment to higher paying employment with genuine career prospects. There is a high demand from employers for individuals with these types of certifications. Historically, DVR has set aside case service funds to support consumers in certification programs and it maybe something we want to look at a more expanded way as we look for credential attainment and medium wages long term. We know that if you have an industry recognized credential you are more employable.

***4. The implementation of Pre-ETS has shifted the DVR***

*caseload to serve a higher proportion of younger people.*

James said that now that we have to spend 15% of our money on high school services the whole age of the population we serve has skewed lower. Marlena asked what is the definition of a high school student with a disability. James said that a high school student with a disability is defined as being in high school (or a correctional institution) with an IEP or 504 plan (14-21 years of age).

Diane said that PRE-ETS work is complemented by our Linking Learning to Careers grant that provides career consultants to work with students.

James said that VR needs to make sure our services are effective with young people and at the same time make sure we don't ignore or downplay older people's needs.

The whole purpose of the Needs Assessment is to identify potential issues. And once the Needs Assessment is approved it informs the State Plan as to where we set goals and priorities for the next fiscal year (due in March 2018).

***5. The loss of re-allotment funding requires DVR to plan and manage services with reduced resources.***

As previously noted, the loss in reallotment funds resulted in significant cuts to the DVR program in FFY 17. DVR has managed those reductions while retaining the core of the program. Going forward DVR will develop and implement strategies to offset this loss through:

- Partnerships with other programs and state systems to sustain employment services for people with disabilities
- Increasing program income through Ticket to Work and other opportunities
- Looking for federal and state grant opportunities to pilot new service models

DVR will also need to continually assess the assignment of

resources and their impact on consumer services and outcomes. With limited resources it is especially important DVR invest funds in activities that are most likely to result in high quality employment outcomes.

***6. DVR must develop strategies to meet and exceed the outcome targets under the Common Performance Measures.***

The WIOA Common Performance measures significantly change the way DVR is measured. The emphasis on career development, credential attainment, and measurable skill gains, will require DVR to consider changing current practice. As previously noted, DVR will be looking at strategies to increase wages and assist consumers in obtaining industry recognized credentials. In addition DVR will look at how to help consumers develop a career path.

***7. DVR should consider developing job coach capacity for adults and youth with severe disabilities who are not eligible for existing supported employment programs.***

James said we have been experimenting with part time job coaches and it has been very successful and could potentially meet the needs of some of those folks. Unfortunately, we are potentially losing the funding source for those services.

***8. The need for sector-based training and collaboration with technical centers.***

Training programs, particularly for youth who are not planning to go to college, are inconsistently available across the state. Technical Centers connected to high schools sometimes offer adult training and some have been willing to work with employers to develop sector-based training programs. A more systematic approach to training would ensure that employers are able to hire skilled workers for available positions within their companies.

***9. The need for a comprehensive quality assurance system incorporating the new AWARE case management system.***

James said that now we have a functioning powerful case

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	<p>management system (AWARE) which should be very helpful in being able to provide answers to many questions. Previously, answers were limited by our prior data system. Aware will allow us to look more deeply at our services and case load. We should be able to compare different counselor approaches much more effectively.</p> <p>Adam asked if there were any additional changes that need to be made to the draft Needs Assessment before we bring it for a vote to the Full SRC. There were none. Adam asked if there was a motion to approve the draft Needs Assessment and recommend approval to the Full SRC. Brian made a motion to approve. It was seconded and there was no further discussion. All were in favor. Motion approved.</p> <p><b>Items to Parking Lot:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• #'s breakdown by disability</li><li>• More nuance data needed of the broader categories within cognitive disabilities</li><li>• Look at the psychiatric disability referrals made to CAP by VR and discuss the implications of those numbers and how we can improve outcomes for these individuals.</li></ul> <p>(Sherrie explained what CAP is – The Client Assistance Program is a federally mandated program through WIOA to support consumers that are needing support and in helping individuals to access services that they might qualify for. Clients not agreeing with decisions made by VR would come to CAP and we would look at the situation and explain the reasoning behind the denial or advocate on behalf of the consumer.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Folks on SSI and SSDI – sub analysis</li><li>• Looking at Pre-ETS VR students with a state by state comparison (even if not completely comparable)</li><li>• More data about Tech Centers, certifications, and people achieving outcomes</li></ul>
Conclusions	The PR will recommend approving the Needs Assessment to

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	the Full SRC.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
The PR will recommend approving the Needs Assessment to the Full SRC.	Adam Leonard	Today – Full SRC Meeting
7. Other Business		
5 minutes	Chair	
Discussion	None.	
Conclusions	None.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
None	n/a	n/a

8. Adjournment		
0 minutes	Chair	
Discussion	Max moved to adjourn. Sherrie 2nd.	
Conclusions	Adjourned at 12:00 pm	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Full Draft minutes uploaded to <a href="http://www.VTSRC.org">www.VTSRC.org</a>	Debra Kobus	01/06/2018
Full Draft minutes emailed to all Committee members	Debra Kobus	01/06/2018
Minutes approved	Committee Members	02/01/2018
Approved minutes uploaded to website <a href="http://www.VTSRC.org">www.VTSRC.org</a>	Debra Kobus	02/06/2018

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Parking Lot		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #'s breakdown by disability</li> <li>• More nuance data needed of the broader categories within cognitive disabilities</li> <li>• Look at the psychiatric disability referrals made to CAP by VR and discuss the implications of those numbers and how we can improve outcomes for these individuals.            (Sherrie explained what CAP is – The Client Assistance Program is a federally mandated program through WIOA to support consumers that are needing support and in helping individuals to access services that they might qualify for. Clients not agreeing with decisions made by VR would come to CAP and we would look at the situation and explain the reasoning behind the denial or advocate on behalf of the consumer.)</li> <li>• Folks on SSI and SSDI – sub analysis</li> <li>• Looking at Pre-ETS VR students with a state by state comparison (even if not completely comparable)</li> <li>• More data about Tech Centers, certifications, and people achieving outcomes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Further Group Discussion generated from Needs Assessment Review</b></p>	<p><b>From 12/7/2017 Minutes</b></p>