

Virginia State Rehabilitation Council
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2011

A meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was held on November 15, 2011 at the DRS Headquarters in Henrico, Virginia.

Members Present: Sandra Cook, Matthew Deans, Karen Gregory-Williams, Toney Lineberry (phone), Cheryl Johnson, Sarah Liddle, Ellen McIlhenny, and James Rothrock.

Members Absent: Charles Downs

Others Present: Doug Powell, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired SRC Representative; Elizabeth Smith, Policy and Planning Director; Scott Fraley, Vocational Rehabilitation Quality Assurance Analyst; Barbara Tyson, Staff Support; Rick Sizemore, WWRC Director; AJ Hostetler, Public Relations Director; and Sarah Stanton, Staff Attorney, Division of Legislative Services.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am.

Approval of Minutes: With no changes required, the minutes of the August 8, 2011 meeting were approved as written; the addendum to the minutes includes the submitted SRC Roundtable Reports.

Matters of Public comment: There were no comments for the public.

Chairperson's Report

The Department of Rehabilitative Services hosted the Region III State Rehabilitation Council Learning Community in Richmond on November 9, 2011. SRC Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Liaisons from Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania were in attendance. The meeting was sponsored by the George Washington University Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center (GWU TACE). The next meeting of the Learning Community will be held in April 2012, in conjunction with the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation Conference.

Ms. Cook provided an overview of the SRC Annual Retreat which was held on November 14, 2011 at the Richmond/Henrico Field Office. A presentation on evaluating the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program was provided by Kathy Hayfield, FRS Director, and Barbara Burkett, VR program Analyst; and a strategic planning discussion was facilitated by Rob Froehlich and Pat Tomlinson from GWU TACE. In addition, Matthew Deans, SRC member and VR counselor, provided a presentation on a day in the life of a VR counselor. Dale Batten, Regional Director, provided a tour of the facility. The SRC members provided some feedback on the retreat to assist with planning for next year.

A SRC New Member Orientation was held on November 7, 2011 in Richmond. Ms. Cook encouraged members to review the SRC On-Line Training Series which can be found at www.erehab.org.

On September 30, 2011 Ms. Cook represented the SRC at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Council Life Skills Transition Program and Vocational Training Services Graduation Program. She noted that it would be beneficial for the new members to visit WWRC.

On October 12, 2011 Ms. Cook and Danny DeBoer attended the annual Champions Awards Ceremony to recognize businesses that excelled in hiring VR consumers. The awards luncheon was held at the University of Richmond Jepson Center and was sponsored in part by Dominion Resources, Inc.

Ms. McIlhenny volunteered to represent the SRC at the December meeting of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired SRC.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Rothrock provided the members with an article from the Richmond *Kleos* magazine featuring a DRS VR client and a local business that has excelled in hiring VR clients.

He shared two exceptional "thank you" letters that he received regarding services to two VR clients. One, from a father, complimented WWRC on the outstanding training his son received at WWRC. The other, from a client, commended his counselor, Angela Edmonds, and the Lynn Harris, Farmville Office Manager, for their outstanding assistance in helping him return to work after being seriously injured in an automobile accident. Council members will receive copies of the letters.

On November 14, 2011 the Governor's Commission on Government Reform and Restructuring released their recommendations. One of the recommendations is to create a new agency that would combine DRS, the Department for the Aging, the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the adult services and adult protective services units of the Department of Social Services. The Commissioner provided some background information on what led up to this recommendation. Legislation on the merger is being drafted for the 2012 General Assembly Session for consideration. If passed, the legislation regarding DRS, VDA and DDHH would be effective July 1, 2012. The piece on adult services and adult protective services would have a delayed enactment date of July 1, 2013. The creation of the new agency will not affect the funding streams of the various involved programs and the SRC will continue to fulfill its duties as contained in the Rehabilitation Act. A motion was made by Sarah Liddle, seconded by Karen Gregory-Williams, and unanimously passed to authorize Sandra Cook to send a letter to Governor McDonnell, on behalf of the SRC, about the proposed legislation as not affecting the integrity of the VR program and other programs at DRS or the role of the SRC. The Commission's recommendations can be viewed at www.reform.virginia.gov.

The Disability Commission has made its recommendations for legislation and funding to be considered at the General Assembly. Members will be sent a link to review the recommendations of this Commission.

The Commissioner suggested that for the SRC's 2012 Annual Report they might want to feature VR clients who received higher education training and their employment outcomes.

Council Roundtable Reports: Written reports will be submitted to Barbara Tyson to include with the meeting minutes. Sarah Liddle announced that there will be an Independent Living Conference to be held in Richmond in May 2012 and she will see that SRC members receive an invitation. Matthew Deans will give a full report on the Assistive Technology Advisory Council at the SRC January meeting.

Working Lunch: DRS Program Reports

Budget: No report.

WWRC: Rick Sizemore provided a brief background to new members, thanked members for their support with the development of the WWRC Blueprint, and distributed copies of the WWRC 2011 Annual Report.

Mr. Sizemore reported that WWRC has been involved in an extensive effort to prepare for an accreditation visit from the Council on Occupational Education (COE). The Accreditation Team from COE visited the Center on September 20-22, 2011 and went through WWRC with "a fine-toothed comb". At the exit conference, they provided some preliminary feedback, which was positive. An official report is pending and will be distributed when received. Once we have the report, it will be distributed.

FRS Report: No report.

Committee Reports

Internal Affairs: Committee Chair Matthew Deans reported that Mable Fleming, DRS Senior Analyst, presented a draft of the 2012 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the SRC and DRS for the administration of the VR consumer satisfaction survey. The Committee recommended to the full Council that this MOA be approved. A motion was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to approve the signing of the MOA by SRC Chair Sandra Cook.

Elizabeth Smith reviewed the SRC Attachment for the 2011 State Plan. This Attachment contains the recommendations of the SRC and the agency's responses to those recommendations. The SRC will need to develop its new recommendations to be reported in the SRC Annual Report and for the 2012 State Plan. The Committee requested that the following recommendations be added: supporting the expansion of Project SEARCH sites across Virginia; the enhancement of Social Security work incentives counseling for VR clients and enhanced knowledge of these incentives by VR counselors; and for DRS to increase the competitive employment rate for DRS consumers in certain areas of the Commonwealth. The Committee would like to maintain the following current recommendation: coordination between the SRC

and the Statewide Independent Living Council; outreach and services to clients from different cultural backgrounds; and examining and implementing ways to increase public and consumer input for the VR program. Ms. Smith will draft these recommendations to share with Council for their review.

External Affairs: Liz Smith stated that Commissioner Rothrock would be sharing with the Council, during his report, the recommendation of the Governor's Commission on Government Reform and Restructuring to create a new agency that would combine the Departments of Rehabilitative Services, Aging, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the adult services and adult protective services unit of the Department of Social Services.

Liz Smith shared with the Committee the current and upcoming vacant positions on the SRC. The nominations for six current vacancies have been submitted to the Secretary of the Commonwealth. There, however, are three additional vacancies (effective September 30, 2011) that need nominees. Five vacancies will occur effective September 30, 2012; two of the members are eligible for reappointment. Council members are asked to begin identifying individuals to fill these vacancies.

AJ Hostetler, Public Relations Manager, shared the proposed cover for the 2011 SRC Annual Report. The theme of the report will be Path to Transition and will focus on transition services. The Committee also received a draft list of the 2011 SRC accomplishments for inclusion in the Report. Suggested changes to this list should be submitted to Liz Smith over the next two weeks.

Barbara Burkett, VR Program Evaluator, briefed the Committee on the status of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: Dr. Joseph Ashley, DRS Assistant Commissioner for Grants and Special Programs, and Dr. David Dean, University of Richmond, provided a presentation on the Vocational Rehabilitation Return on Investment (VR-ROI) Developing Models for Assessing VR's ROI project. The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) awarded a grant to fund this research project and NIDRR has awarded \$99,722 in supplemental funding to the University of Richmond for Year 2 of the project. The project has an advisory committee that includes Commissioner Rothrock and Danny DeBoer, former SRC member. The VR-ROI will allow for a 5-year and 10-year assessment on ROI for clients who have left the VR program. Dr. Dean distributed handouts on assessing VR's ROI, developing state-of-the science models, and preliminary results for clients with cognitive impairments and mental illness.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

**Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Report
To the
Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)
November 15, 2011**

Since the last SRC meeting, the SILC had two quarterly business meetings. On July 28, 2011 the SILC met at Access Independence, Inc., the Center for Independent Living (CIL) in Winchester, Virginia and on October 27, the quarterly meeting was held at the DRS Headquarters in Richmond. This report covers the highlights of both meetings.

Mr. Shaun Utt, from Pulaski, began serving as the SILC chair at the October 2011 meeting.

As one of the designated state units to the SILC, an ongoing agenda item will be a quarterly report by the Commissioner of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI). In July Commissioner Hopkins, reviewed the DBVI programs which provide independent living (IL) services, the agency's commitment to IL, and the agency's utilization of a holistic approach for individuals of all ages ("cradle to grave"). He invited the SILC to consider DBVI for future meetings after construction is finished on campus.

Responding to an RSA review request, the SILC has approved a working definition for the specific terms of minority, unserved, and constituency groups. The term 'underserved' has not been defined by the SILC due to the ambiguity of the term within the independent living system. The need for this specific definition will continue to be addressed by the SILC.

Complying with an objective in the current State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL), a SILC recruitment letter was sent to individuals previously identified from public forums held in areas of the state unserved by a CIL. The letter encouraged those interested in independent issues to submit their name to the Secretary of the Commonwealth (SOC) for appointment consideration to the SILC. The SILC Chair will be sending a letter to the SOC encouraging the appointment of individuals to the SILC who would represent areas of the Commonwealth that are currently unserved.

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) presented to the SILC their decision not to pursue the Department of Justice (DOJ) accessibility certification for Virginia. As pursuit of the DOJ certification is an objective in the current SPIL, the SILC is requesting the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy to review the information presented to gain objective background information to assist the SILC in understanding the decision as presented by DHCD.

The Piedmont Independent Living Center in Danville has dissolved. A contract to establish a satellite CIL in the area was awarded to the Blue Ridge Independent Living Center as of July 15, 2011. There are currently 15 CILs and 5 satellites throughout the Commonwealth.

Catherine Harrison has been chosen as the new Director of Community Integration (OLMSTEAD). Olmstead in Virginia is involved in monitoring of the DOJ findings and negotiations: regular activity on monitoring Money Follows the Person (MFP): updating the current Strategic Plan: and the launching of a new Olmstead website – www.olmsteadva.com.

The Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living (VACIL) is working on the legislative agenda and will be requesting full funding (\$250,000) for the two longest-standing satellite Centers (New River and Petersburg). In addition, funds amounting to \$80,000 for each of the other two satellites (Loudon and Middle Peninsula) will be included in the request. VACIL will also ask for an increase of funding for the state-funded DRS Personal Assistance Services Program. The Department for the Aging received a federal grant for options counseling, and seven CILs received funding. One CIL staff has been hired and the position is shared with the local Area Agency on Aging. VACIL met with Jason Rachel of the MFP to discuss unserved areas of Virginia.

At the October meeting, Maria Everett, Executive Director of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) office, presented an overview of the FOIA as it applies to the SILC membership and answered many questions posed by the members.

Mr. J.D. Jenkins, Public Education Coordinator at the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFFP), was a guest speaker at the October meeting. He will be working with the SILC and the CILs to make the public information presented by the VDFFP adaptable, relevant, and accessible to the various populations with disabilities in the state.

The SILC will be participating in a Statewide Independent Living Conference to be held at the Hilton in Short Pump, May 1-3, 2012.

An annual report, previously used for public relations, will be replaced with a “State of the SILC” transmittal to be developed for distribution to various public and private entities.

The final report of the *Blueprint for Livable Communities* is available on-line. The advisory council has been disbanded.

SILC meeting schedule for 2012

- **February 8-9 in Richmond**, coordinating with IL Day at the General Assembly
- **April 30 in Richmond**, partnering with the IL Conference to be held May 1-3, 2012
- **July 25-26 in Roanoke** at the Blue Ridge Independent Living Center
- **October 24-25, Peninsula Center for Independent Living in Hampton** partnering with the Center’s Disability Awareness Conference

Respectfully submitted by:
Sarah A. Liddle
SILC Liaison to the SRC
October 31, 2011