

# Virginia State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind and Vision Impaired

## SRC Quarterly Meeting Agenda

Friday, May 8, 2026

9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

DBVI Main Conference Room

[Zoom Link to join virtually](#)

Meeting ID: 160 474 8143

Passcode: 153899

Or Telephone: +1 646-828-7666 US

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- 9:30 a.m.      **Member Networking – OPTIONAL**
- 10:00 a.m.      **Welcome and Call to Order**
1. Roll Call
  2. Adoption of Agenda – *Action Item*
  3. Approval of Feb 20, 2026, Meeting Minutes – *Action Item*
- 10:10 a.m.      **Public Comment**
- 10:20 a.m.      **Commissioner Report – *Dr. Rick Mitchell***
- 10:30 a.m.      **Deputy Commissioner’s Report – *Kathy Malone***
- 10:40 a.m.      **VR Program Update – *Megan Hall***
- 10:50 a.m.      **Renewal of Hearing Officers – *Action Item***  
(Term- October 1, 2026 - September 30, 2027):
- Rhonda Mitchell- 3<sup>rd</sup> of 4 renewals
  - Regina Kane- 1<sup>st</sup> of 4 renewals
  - Kennington Law- 1<sup>st</sup> of 4 renewals
- 11:00 a.m.      **Old and New Business –*Christine Appert***
1. Term Expiration Reminders ending 9/29/26
- 12:00 p.m.      **Break/ Working Lunch**
- 12:10 p.m.      **SRC Member Updates**
- 1:00 p.m.      **Adjourn**

**Department for Blind and Vision Impaired  
State Rehabilitation Council  
Agency VR Report  
May 8, 2026**

**Deputy Commissioner’s Report – Kathy Malone**

**Regional Office Updates**

Bristol	Fully Staffed
Fairfax	Recruiting for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (on hold)
Norfolk	Fully Staffed
Richmond	Fully Staffed
Roanoke	Recruiting for Rehabilitation Teacher
Staunton	Hiring for wage ASL interpreter vacancy
Headquarters	Recruiting for Senior Policy Analyst, Facilities Procurement Buyer (Wage)
Business Relations	Fully Staffed
VRCBVI	Interviewing for Assistive Technology Specialist

**State Plan Goals**

DBVI, with assistance from the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), developed six goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) programs for this state plan cycle. The six goals are listed below, and updates are included in this report.

1. Engage and collaborate with WIOA core partners to coordinate business service efforts to include the blind and visually impaired labor market.
2. Provide comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services to students with disabilities, youth in transition, and adults resulting in the attainment of industry recognized credentials to obtain competitive integrated employment.
3. Conduct outreach efforts to Local Education Agencies and other Community Partners to assist in increasing the number of students with disabilities participating in and benefiting from DBVI offered Pre-Employment Transition programs.
4. Continue to expand the utilization of Supported Employment and Customized Employment services for adults and youth to increase

competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

5. Achieving agency annual performance goals and establishing base lines for the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.
6. Increase collaboration with the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services to provide comprehensive wrap around services to address the needs of individuals who have dual diagnoses.

## State Goal Updates

1. DBVI VR leadership successfully submitted the approved DBVI portion of the Combined State Plan, following an open comment period that yielded no suggestions for changes.
2. During this most recent quarter, DBVI received quarter two (Q2) statistics for Federal Program Year 2025. DBVI is excited to share the following:
  - DBVI served 1,032 participants, including 69 new applicants.
  - Ages 25 to 44 was the largest age group served in the quarter.
  - Rehabilitation Technology services continue to lead as the service category most offered besides Vocational Counseling and Guidance (provided to everyone the agency works with).
  - The number of participants being served under the category of supported employment remained steady at 23 participants.
  - The top 10 careers entered for the quarter include
    1. Computer and Information Systems Manager
    2. Massage Therapist
    3. Education Administration
    4. Medical Records Specialist
    5. English Language/Literature Teacher
    6. Elementary Special Education Teacher
    7. Office and Administrative Support
    8. Educational Career Guidance Counselor
    9. Marketing Manager
    10. Nursing Assistant
3. Outreach across the agency has continued at a fast pace. Employees have been attending conferences, training, Teachers for the Vision Impaired

gatherings, and Community Partner Meetings to continue to educate Virginians about the services the agency offers for individuals' birth through the entire life span.

4. In the past quarter, there continued to be an emphasis on staffing cases who could benefit from Supported Employment and Customized Employment. Although the Agency is increasing the number of participants identified that could benefit from the specialized services, DBVI will continue to identify participants in order to increase the use of these critical services.
5. During the first 100 days of Governor Spanberger's tenure, DBVI has continued to work with Virginia Works and the other Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act Title partners to home in on continuing to make Virginia the number one place for business and employment. The agency is working with Virginia Works Leadership to refine the information to be presented in plain language that is easily understood for all, focusing on working towards Governor Spanberger's focus of making Virginia affordable. VR Leadership continues to participate in the Moonshot Committee Meetings which focus on one particular area of concern related to employment in the Commonwealth. The committee that VR Leadership sits on is working on a more streamlined approach for serving Virginia's Veterans.
6. As a part of the Combined State Plan Development process, DBVI worked with its sister agency, The Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, to present measurable and achievable metrics related to the common performance measures.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation Administration Updates – Megan Hall**

- VR Leadership attended the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation and the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind conferences.
- VR Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services presented a breakout session with SRC member and Founders Mark founder, Ms. Kendall Morris regarding the great outcomes that the Agency has seen following the Entrepreneurship Development for Gainful Employment (EDGE) student program.

The Agency is currently providing oversight for this program again this year which will result in the students presenting their business ideas and any mockups of products at James Madison University later this summer.

- There was a significant amount of information provided surrounding the Randolph Sheppard program specifically some legal actions that are currently taking place on the National level regarding waivers that were granted by the Army to release the requirement that they contract with blind vendors. There was also quite a significant discussion regarding “passive” vs. “active” vendor participation. VR leadership recorded some of the sessions and has offered to share the information with Virginia Enterprises for the Blind when time permits.
- In an effort to look into efficiencies and re-structuring, DBVI moved the oversight of the use of the case management system, AWARE, under the DBVI Office of Strategic Initiatives. This allows DBVI to align all forms of data in a centralized location as a part of the Agency’s participation in the Commonwealth-wide Data Trust overseen by Virginia Works.
  - As a part of the restructuring, DBVI is working with the developer of the case management system to review features, update the service categories, streamline the required Federal reporting process, etc. Agency case managers have been a part of the conversation, which has been much appreciated by the staff.
- During the week of May 4<sup>th</sup>, DBVI’s Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services will attend the final training session related to The Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services Career Pathways 5-year grant. For the past 5 years, VR leadership has served on the Career Pathways Advisory Committee with the opportunity to provide DBVI’s perspectives on the initiatives that the grant enacted. The most notable achievement of the grant was the development of the Commonwealth Certificate of Disability that career seekers with disabilities are able to pair with their state government job applications much like the Schedule A letter paired with Federal applications in the past.

### **Business Relations Unit Updates –**

**Cindy Roberts, Diane McBride, Karen Kahn, Gary Joyce, Tina Hawley-Blount**

- During this quarter, all members of the DBVI Business Relations Team were back from leave and hit the ground running.

- Consultations surrounding supported employment and customized employment opportunities have been occurring rapidly.
- Paid Work-based Learning opportunities are ramping up as the Agency moves further towards the summer months.
- The Director of Business and Corporate Initiatives was contacted by CVS leadership and presented with the opportunity to receive a \$10,000.00 grant to be used to increase participant's training and level of to enter the world of Cyber Security. The Agency is excited to host executive leaders from CVS on campus in the week of May 11<sup>th</sup> where the national executives will tour the Skills Lab, speak with current Skills Lab students and participate in an emersion experience in blindness which will be presented by Richmond Regional Office staff.
- Also, during the month May, DBVI Business Relations Staff will partner with staff at the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind to host the annual "Elevate Your Career" program. This program focuses on targeted employment training, mock interviewing and feedback opportunities, speaking confidently about their work experience and selling themselves during the interview process. The capstone of the event will be a reverse career fair on campus where employers will be meeting with each participant, learning about their experience and will offer interview opportunities to those participants who might fill a critical gap in their staffing.

### **Student Team Updates –**

### **Tish Harris, Caroline Rammacher, Becky Keller and William Sutton**

- In March, over 100 parents, students and Agency staff attended the Spring into Success student program in Hampton, VA. Students learned about their "superpowers" (what they excel at) and how a career related to those strengths would lead to greater employment satisfaction and longer-term careers. While students were learning about themselves, parents were learning critical information surrounding their student turning 18 and what changes, post-secondary training, credentialing and employment opportunities, supported employment and customized employment, Rehabilitation Technology, etc. The culmination of the event was a Sunday Skills Day where students were able to navigate by taking a water ferry over to the main port of Hampton and attending a guided walking tour at a local museum. Students were encouraged to practice their Orientation and Mobility Skills, exercise their learned self-advocacy skills when interacting with museum staff, understanding the importance of time management, etc.

- Towards the end of March, 16 students attended Blind Design for its final year. Students were taught architectural structure, design components, properties of sound, and hard/soft surfaces in relation to universal design by Virginia Tech Architectural students. DBVI students learned about architecture from a perspective of vision loss from Chris Downey (“the blind architect”) who shared his lived experience of leaning into architecture as he lost his vision. The capstone of the program was for the students to utilize their new learning in designing and creating their own living or working space to be presented to Virginia Tech students an Architectural professor.
- Through a collaboration between the DBVI student team, DBVI business relations team and Massanutten resort, 6 students were offered the opportunity to interview for summer internship positions related to their chosen vocational goals. The interviews have taken place, and the students are awaiting word regarding their summer employment. This pilot project will be replicated year after year to offer students who are aging out of student programming to transition to adult VR services more seamlessly.
- Cyber Space 2026 will occur last week in June. This student program focuses on employment and skills related to the field of Cyber Security. The students work with Cyber experts from Enterprise KC and Palo Alto to practice and learn coding, what it means to be an ethical hacker, how to break through state-of-the-art firewalls, etc. The capstone of the event is for each student to code their own website and present their final project to family, friends and the community at the Cyber Celebration. Many thanks to VRCBVI for their partnership surrounding housing and board. The students stay on the VRCBVI campus, eat in the cafeteria, and participate in fun learning activities in the evening. This weeklong program is a favorite among students!

**Virginia Rehabilitation for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) –  
Melody Roane**

- On Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>, VRCBVI held a wonderful Ability Fest event. The theme for this year’s event was Spring into Action: Discover What’s Possible. The event was attended by over 100 individuals with almost 50 vendors participating to provide individuals with information regarding critical community resources that are available to them.

Throughout the day, participants learned about the skills of blindness training offered through VRCBVI, information regarding Entrepreneurship and engaged in fun learning. VRCBVI is grateful to the individuals and community partners who joined them for the high energy event. Stay tuned for more information regarding the Fall program coming later in the year.

- VRCBVI has continued marketing and accepting applications for the Learning Independence, Feeling Empowered (LIFE) Program. VRCBVI has accepted the first set of students and is working with 14 more to complete their application packets for admission consideration. Marketing and Outreach efforts ramped up throughout this quarter, and the center expects to be able to fill all 22 available student spots this year. The LIFE Program is a four-week opportunity for students who are blind or vision impaired to learn the skills that will empower them to be independent, to participate in confidence-building activities such as whitewater rafting and improvisation training, and to test their job-readiness skills by participating in a Work-based Learning Experience. The program can accept up to twenty-two participants. VRCBVI is anticipating another action-packed summer filled with accomplishments and high expectations.
- VRCBVI has continued moving forward with the first cohort for the Work-Based Learning Experiences for Adults attending the center this training year. Four students selected were selected for this pilot cohort and are meeting regularly with the VRCBVI Program Recruitment and Outreach Specialist to discuss their employment goals and their current skill levels. These experiences are paid, and the Program Recruitment and Outreach Specialist along with the students' Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors remain in close contact to provide any support necessary to ensure that the student achieves a successful outcome.