NH Vocational Rehabilitation
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 20
Concord, NH 03301

Director
Lisa K. Hinson-Hatz

Our Mission
To assist eligible New Hampshire citizens with disabilities to secure suitable employment and financial and personal independence by providing rehabilitation services.

Our Vision
NH Vocational Rehabilitation seeks to become an organization committed to fulfilling the needs of customers by providing continuously improving quality services through an effort of teamwork and professionalism.

*Cover Photo-Jim Hinson
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Message from SRC Chair…. Nancy L. Rollins, M.S.W.

I am pleased to submit the 2016 Annual report on behalf of the New Hampshire State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). This has been a year of change, transition and renewal. The NH SRC has continued to pursue meaningful collaborations and partnerships with disability-focused organizations, employers and vocational rehabilitation customers.

Following the passage of the Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA) in the summer of 2014 and the subsequent release of the Federal regulations this past June, the NH SRC has worked jointly with the New Hampshire Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (NH DVR) to align its focus with these changes. The Council supports NH DVR’s efforts to review and revise policies, procedures and practices to fulfill its obligations under the Federal changes.

The Council has strongly supported the NH DVR efforts with employer engagement. The hiring of, and placement of Business Relations Consultants in District Offices has the potential to enhance outreach, education and placements of individuals with disabilities in diverse and inclusive employment settings. These positions have the potential to bridge receipt of traditional vocational rehabilitation services for individuals while negotiating business and industry needs.

Following an enhanced emphasis on transitional youth under WIOA, the Council supported DVR efforts to expand its work with this population in collaboration with the State Independent Living agency. The Council anticipates reviewing early results of these enhanced services which were implemented this summer.

As a state with a combined state plan, the NH SRC has seen this year as an opportunity to re-vitalize itself through increased community outreach, new organizational memberships and enhanced customer engagement. The Council has made a renewed commitment to inform and educate its membership. Last Spring, I had the opportunity to join my NH SRC co-chair, Chuck Saia at a weekend orientation for new SRC organizations sponsored by the National Council of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). As a result of this orientation, we returned with a renewed commitment to inform and educate our membership on mission, role and responsibility. Additionally we are committed to re-write our by-laws, formalize our membership orientation process, and update member handbooks. We have an NH SRC retreat scheduled in January 2017. We are appreciative of the NCSRC is assisting us with planning and facilitation of this important event.

The NH SRC is committed to working closely with NH DVR. In order for us to fulfill our obligation and mission it is essential to be informed and educated about our task. The Council is committed to increase participation and effectiveness of our Committees in our effort to help NH DVR better serve its customers and the business community.
I do not know where 2016 went…well, maybe I do! We have been busy! We were anxiously awaiting the final federal regulations and they were delivered, as promised by RSA, on June 30, 2016! Our summer activities involved warm summer days, beautiful sunshine and paging through the new program requirements to ensure we know our new directions! We are now in the process of updating all our agency materials (policy, guidance and procedures) to be in alignment with the new law and regulations! We have been working with our school and special education partners on rolling out Pre-Employment Transition Services around the state and we have been developing a new Business Engagement Unit with Business Relations Consultants around the state to serve our business partners.

We have been working closely with our One-Stop partners to look at our process, assessments and procedures to ensure we aren’t duplicating work and we are looking at program improvements for 2017 that can help all our NH citizens.

I have had the honor, since July 1, 2016, of representing NH as the President for the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation. We have been working on a “Vision 2020” Initiative for the past year and a half that will access stakeholder knowledge of the VR program to make program improvements at the local, state and federal level. The VR program will turn 100 years old in the year 2020 and we want to impress our customers (individuals with disabilities and business partners). Our goal is to be “the resource” for matching qualified career candidates with industry employment opportunities within our network of business partners.

Special thanks to Mariellen MacKay, now Representative MacKay (congratulations on winning your seat on 11/8) who gracefully walked us through reauthorization and got us ready for implementation. The SRC was lucky to have you and we will continue our relationship in the coming years!

I am excited to work with Nancy Rollins, new SRC Chair, in the coming years. Nancy has extensive knowledge in Medicaid and many other issues that will be critical in making program decisions and employment success!
NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Purpose

Providing Leadership on Behalf of Persons with Disabilities and Guidance to Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Mission

New Hampshire State Rehabilitation Council, through action and advocacy, partners with New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation (NHVR) to strengthen the agency’s operation and effectiveness in the delivery of quality and timely services to individuals with disabilities, as they prepare for and engage in employment and careers.

Vision

By collaborating with key disability related organizations and building strong partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and employers’ groups, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides leadership and advocacy that increases the number of qualified individuals with disabilities who strive to realize their goals of becoming successfully employed. The SRC maintains and widely publicizes the success of this ongoing relationship. This is evidenced by Congressional and State legislative recognition of the cost-effective benefits of the VR program, as they provide consistent financial support for NHVR services.
The SRC’s responsibilities include:

- Reviewing, analyzing and advising in strategic partnership with NHVR services regarding the performance on the VR agency relating to eligibility, including Order of Selection, extent, scope, and effectiveness of VR services and functions that affect an individual’s ability to obtain employment.

- Working in partnership with the state VR program, the SRC develops and reviews state goals established by the VR program, evaluates the effectiveness of the programs and services of the VR agency, and provide a yearly report of progress.

- Providing information and assist with the development of the unified or combines state plan, plan amendments and needs assessments.

- Conducts and presents an annual customer satisfaction survey to assist the agency in making program improvements and to celebrate successes.

- Prepares and submits an annual report on the status of the VR program.

- Coordinate activates with the other Councils in the state (Independent Living, DD Council and Special Education Council) to avoid duplication of efforts and to develop prosperous relationships to assist in our mission.

- Coordinate the establishment and ongoing relationship with the Independent Living Council and Center for Independent Living program.

- Perform other comparable functions to assist the VR agency, consistent with the purpose of the SRC.
## NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Title and Details</th>
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<td>Ann Ackerman</td>
<td>Nashua</td>
<td>Higher Education/Former Customer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Darling</td>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>Business/Provider</td>
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<td>David Dwyer</td>
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<td>Jack Gibson</td>
<td>North Sutton</td>
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<td>Lorna Greer</td>
<td>Whitefield</td>
<td>Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Hatz, Ex-Officio</td>
<td>VR Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay Jean</td>
<td>Dover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Lapointe, Ex-officio</td>
<td>VR Counselor</td>
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<td>Mariellen MacKay, Chair</td>
<td>Nashua</td>
<td>Business/Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charlene Mayo, 1st Vice Chair</td>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>Parent Information Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Ouellette</td>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>NH Council on Developmental Disabilities</td>
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<td>Dorine Pelletier, 3rd Vice Chair</td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>Business/Provider/Former Customer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don Powers</td>
<td>Gilsum</td>
<td>Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Purcell</td>
<td>Merrimack</td>
<td>Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Richards, 2nd Vice Chair</td>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>Advocate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lorrie Ripley</td>
<td>CAP</td>
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<td>Representative Katherine Rogers</td>
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<td>Nancy Rollins</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
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<td>Charles Saia</td>
<td>Governor’s Commission on Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denise Sleeper</td>
<td>Gilford</td>
<td>Department of Health and Human Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Smith</td>
<td>Seacoast Mental Health Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sherry Burbank</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santina Thibedeau</td>
<td>State Director of Special Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Wolfe-Downes</td>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>Business/Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stephen Yerardi</td>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>SILC Representative/Former Customer</td>
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NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Advocacy/Outreach and Marketing
Advocate for NHVR to the State Legislature and the Congressional Delegation. Develop SRC advocacy guideline and internal coordination structure. Develop data to show cost/benefit of the VR program. Develop NHVR success stories. Monitor the committee’s strategic plan accomplishment. Increase the public’s knowledge of NHVR through an SRC outreach program. Develop a SRC Speakers Bureau, deliver presentation sharing BNHVR success stories. Provide SRC input into the customer satisfaction survey and customer needs assessment survey.

Collaboration (Internal and External)
Strengthen collaboration with other organization whose missions are similar to NHVR. Develop SRC collaboration guidelines and internal coordination structure. Outreach to organization whose missions are compatible with that of NHVR and are therefore a partner in servicing individuals with disabilities. Maintain relationships with partner organizations. Provide in-service training for SRC members. Develop candidates for SRC membership.

Medicaid Managed Care
Participate in and review information relative to NH managed care programs to advocate for individuals with disabilities.

Policy
Participate in and review the development of VR policies. Monitor Order of Selection and review policy manual regulations.

State Plan
Participate in, review and monitor the development of the State Plan and monitor the multi-agency State Plan.
NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Recap of the SRC’s Year – Highlights

### October 2015
- Presentation of the NHVR state plan portions of the NH Combined WIOA plan
- Discussion of the NPRM draft regulations and the comments made by NHVR to RSA
- NHVR staff contributed to the employment success of 1,044 individuals with disabilities for fiscal year 2016
- Mapping the course for the SRC in 2016

### January 2016
- Discussion and summary to the SRC related to the focus areas developed at the SRC retreat in September.
- CSAVR conference in April will be attended by both NHVR staff and SRC leadership (Nancy Rollins and Chuck Saia)
- Established FY 2016 Standing Committees

### April 2016
- Presentation by Jim Hinson relative to the Business Engagement Unit in development in the agency
- Presentation by our Special Education partners on the grant opportunities we share in the state
- Elections to occur at the June 2016 meeting

### June 2016
- Discussions related to a new to review and amend the SRC by-laws and committees to align with WIOA changes and agency needs
- Elections postponed due to lack of meeting attendance

### October 2016
- Election of new SRC chair
- Member orientation session and retreat planned for January of 2017
Vocational Rehabilitation is a joint State/Federal program that assists eligible individuals with disabilities to become contributing members of their community. To this end, New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation supports the following programs and priorities

- Rehabilitation Services
- Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Independent Living
- Disability Determination Services
- Transition School-to-Work
- Supported Employment

**Working with People with Disabilities........**

*During Federal Fiscal Year 2016, NH Vocational Rehabilitation .......

- Helped **1,044 individuals** with disabilities gain employment
- The average hourly wage was **$12.89**
- Total earnings of these employees in the first year was **$20,737,114**
- The average hours worked per week was **28**
- The average weekly salary was **$393**
- The average annual salary was **$20,411**

Federal and state taxes paid by these employees (estimated): **$4,147,423**
People with disabilities can work and take advantage of the opportunities available to the citizens of New Hampshire. Yet they face barriers unique to their situation, barriers that prevent them from achieving their goals. Vocational Rehabilitation assists persons with disabilities to achieve their employment goals through the provision of services to address those barriers.

Who Are Our Customers

During Federal Fiscal Year 2016, NH Vocational Rehabilitation....

- Worked with 6826 eligible clients
- Received 2,264 new applicants

Types of Disabilities

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<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Retardation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blind or Visual Impairment</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deafness</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain Injury</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>24%</td>
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NH Vocational Rehabilitation
FY 2016 in Review
October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016

In Fiscal Year 2016:

- NHVR assisted 176 individuals with a Supported Employment goal in achieving their successful outcome.
- NHVR assisted 374 students with disabilities in writing a new Individual Plan for Employment.
- NHVR assisted 17 individuals in completing their Individual Plan for Employment in Self-Employment.
- NHVR recognized five NH businesses at our 8th Annual Employment Leadership Awards (examples later in the report).

Average Earnings
.. for Federal Fiscal Year 2016, the Average annual earnings of customers before and after rehabilitation.

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<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
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<td>$9,087</td>
<td>$20,411</td>
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No one should be deprived of an opportunity to recognize and realize his/her talents and potentialities because of a disability.
NH Vocational Rehabilitation
FY 2016 in Review
October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016

Types of Jobs

During Federal Fiscal Year 2016, 1,044 clients gained employment.

Sources of Revenue

During Federal Fiscal Year 2016, NHVR received:

- Federal Funds: $11,129,085
- State Funds: $2,947,017
- Program Income: $3,326,296

Total: $17,402,398
The annual assessment of customer satisfaction was completed by RKM Research and Communications, Inc. on behalf of the Agency and the SRC.

A total of 440 surveys were completed as part of this endeavor.

The average American Customer Satisfaction Index Score (ACSI) among all VR customers surveyed was 78.

Results were provided by RKM Research and Communications to the SRC with opportunity for question and comment.

No recommendations from the Council were made as a result of this opportunity.
The SRC Continues to develop linkages and forge productive relationships with a number of Councils and Boards, including:

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee
- Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Advisory Committee
- Governor’s Commission on Disabilities (GCD)
- Granite State Independent Living
- Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
- Client Assistance Program
- Parent Information Center
- Developmental Disabilities Council
- Bureau of Developmental Services, Dept. of Health and Human Services and the Bureau of Mental Health Services
Success: overcoming hurdles

NH Vocational Rehabilitation has helped over 100 people with disabilities pursue self-employment

By DEBORAH A. OSGOOD
Published: November 13, 2015

Most things in life worth attaining come at a price. It may be hard work, patience, money or a combination of a lot of different factors. Sometimes it’s a little outside help that’s the critical catalyst making all the difference. This is particularly true in business.

Nancy Dixon began her career as a mother and volunteer for the local school system. With a passion for working with children, she ultimately became a full-time special education tutor and aide until, after 15 years, she found herself having to go on disability due to a severe form of Rheumatoid Arthritis.

As her capacity to work continued to decline, she turned to NH Vocational Rehabilitation (NHVR) to investigate other career options. In addition to learning about programs tailored to helping individuals with disabilities pursue traditional employment, Nancy learned that NHVR offered training to support pursuing self-employment. With a lifelong dream of writing children’s stories, Nancy enthusiastically signed up!

The NHVR self-employment program offers a step-by-step, methodical approach to guide individuals with disabilities through a process of identifying a valid business idea, testing the market and launching their own venture.

Recognizing increased trends toward self-employment as a vocation, NHVR contracted with the Knowledge Institute for Small Business Development (KISBD) to develop two different programs for its customers. There is a program designed to help NHVR customers pursue part-time self-employment and a program to support full-time business pursuits.

One of the core strengths of the NHVR self-employment program is its capacity to engage other resource providers across the state that focus on supporting venture start-up and growth. This includes SCORE, the NH Small Business Development Center and
the NH Employment Security Pathway to Work program. In fact, there are over 400 programs in New Hampshire tailored to delivering free and low-cost small business assistance through a consortium of public/private organizations. These programs can be found online at the Business Utility Zone Gateway (buzgate.org).

By facilitating connections with established small business assistance agencies across the state, the program leverages the specialized skills and knowledge of NHVR counselors without requiring them to become business development experts.

In just under two years, NHVR has helped over 100 individuals with disabilities pursue self-employment as a viable vocation for attaining both income and quality of life objectives.

**Thanks to the NHVR** self-employment program, Nancy has launched a whole new career that remains true to her passion for helping children. With limited use of her hands and neck, she has used voice recognition software to author a series of children’s books that deal with common challenges that kids face in everyday life, through the eyes of a curious cat named Ragdoll.

“The Cat in My Closet: Ragdoll’s Trip to the Vet” is the first in a series of six children’s books devoted to how a kitty views and copes with change. Ragdoll and the two people she lives with, Les Dear and Nan Hon, become a family that is bonded by the trials of one very confused kitty. By seeing how Ragdoll learns how to handle the unexpected, along with Les Dear and Nan Hon, children are guided to trust the adults who love and care about them.

The second story, “The Cat in My Closet: Ragdoll’s Trip to Newfoundland,” is currently in draft form. These books are designed for children ages 5 to 8, but people of all ages will find them fun and entertaining.

Nancy’s books are available in soft cover, through Amazon.com. You can contact the author at ragdollbooksnh@gmail.com.

*Deborah A. Osgood is co-founder and CEO of the Exeter-based Knowledge Institute for Small Business Development.*

This article appears in the *November 13 2015* issue of New Hampshire Business Review

As an update to this story, as of November 2016, Dr. Osgood and her self-employment system presented to the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation at the fall conference. Her success with our two tiers of self-employment support has assisted many individuals find their true calling or move in a more traditional employment route.
The NH SRC once again supported and celebrated NH Vocational Rehabilitation’s sponsorship of the 2016 Employment Leadership Awards.

The Employment Leadership Award is presented each year to New Hampshire employers who recognize the skills and contributions that people with disabilities bring to the workforce and who have adopted inclusive policies and hiring practices that allow people with disabilities to fairly compete for employment.

Award recipients this year represented a wide range of New Hampshire employers from privately owned small businesses, to industries representing manufacturing, restaurant & hospitality, education, healthcare, pet care, and insurance.

Each of these New Hampshire Businesses makes recruiting, hiring, retaining and promoting people with disabilities a top priority. We are fortunate to have each of them in our communities and grateful for their efforts to create opportunities that assist people with disabilities in obtaining competitive integrated employment.

The 2016 Employment Leadership Award winners were featured in a special section appearing in the September 2016 issue of Business NH Magazine and were formally recognized at the Eighth Annual State-wide Employer Recognition Ceremony.
2016 Employment Leadership Awards

WE ARE SUCCESS
Let’s work together.

HMSHost, Manchester; Homewood Suites by Hilton; Gateway Hills, Nashua; LTC Partners, Portsmouth; Saint Anselm College Dining Services; Golfstown; and Warwick Mills, Newport are the recipients of the New Hampshire 2016 Employment Leadership Award for recognizing the skills and contributions that people with disabilities bring to the workforce. By adopting inclusive policies and hiring practices that allow people with disabilities to fairly compete for competitive integrated employment, they are leading the way in diverse workforce development.
NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Throughout the year and as part of the State Planning Process the SRC provides advice and recommendations to the Agency in order to improve services. This year the recommendations provided to the Agency are listed below along with the Agency’s responses.

| Comment | A couple of Council members noted that they thought there would be more about Pre-employment transition services within the state plan, and that transition would be a bigger emphasis within the plan. |
| Response | The overall goals within transition, working with students and youth with disabilities remain an emphasis within WIOA. The agency is working with many new strategies to increase the college and career readiness of our student customers. The agencies transition unit staff is working to increase all outcomes in this area. |

| Comment | One Council member asked if this plan reflected the Agency’s new strategies and tactics under the new WIOA law. It was noted by a couple of members that they did not see a plan for the 4 years going forward. |
| Response | The four year plan of strategies and collaborative solutions will develop from the overall states strategic goals as outline by our SWIB/NHVR will be a partner in successful strategies to meet the needs of our students and adults with disabilities. |

| Comment | One Council member asked about the sections relating to relationships with employers noting that this always has been a key component of the Agency’s work/ They specifically asked does the Agency want to include credit for what the Counselors/Agency is already doing; b) what plans are currently being made; and c) what are the areas that will need adjusting? Also it was suggested that the Agency consider including information about work and training that counselors have done, e.g., taken advantage of the ACRE training. |
| Response | The work that already occurs within the agency relative to business relationships is significant. Many of the future strategies include the Neoserra system (to be expanded and utilized by the IBT), the utilization of the Talent Acquisition Portal (national database of business opportunities and customers with talent to each opportunity), expansion of agency business engagement team members to serve more areas of the state and other collaborative approaches. |
**Comment:** Once Council member recommended that the Agency review the information on the SRC/SILC. Is this current information? One example referenced was page 171 of the draft – these sections talk about monthly newsletter/resources. The person who was doing this left position in April/May and it remains vacant. This is not currently happening. The Council member recommended that the Agency review section for accuracy

**Response:** The agency has reviewed and amended outdated language.

**Comment:** Council members did not feel that the draft information responded clearly to that section under Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds and asked for further clarification on how the Agency was responding to areas (2) (A) and (2)(B).

**Response:** The agency will seek clarification from RSA and will incorporate final regulatory language into agency policy and state rules.
NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Contact Us

Call: 603-271-1428

Fax: 603-271-7095

Write:
Chair, State Rehabilitation Council
NH Vocational Rehabilitation
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 20
Concord, NH  03301

Website:
http://education.nh.gov/career/vocational/advisory.htm

Attend a Meeting or Public Forum:
The State Rehabilitation Council meeting and Public Forums are open to the public. SRC meetings are generally held in October, January, March and June. Public forums are generally held in February or March. The meeting locations, dates and times are posted on the SRC webpage.
http://education.nh.gov/career/vocational/advisory.htm

Apply for Membership:
If you are interested in becoming a member of the SRC, you can contact Elizabeth Howlett, SRC Liaison at 603 - 271-1428.