

NH State Rehabilitation Council

NH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

MEETING MINTUES

January 27, 2022

21 South Fruit Street, Room 100, Concord, NH and

ZOOM Teleconference Meeting

Attendees: Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Vice-Chair, Lorrie Ripley, Holly Cadwallader, Dawn Breault, Courtney Lockwood, Brent Cote, Andrea Kaneb, Maureen O'Donnell, Ben Adams, Natalie Fortier, Jessica Brennan, Brandy Pappas, Lisa Girrard

Members Excused: Christopher Purington, Lauri Jean Pevear, Kimm Phillips, Carrie Dudley

Staff: Lisa Hinson-Hatz, Sue Roma Ella McAllister, Dan Frye, Jim Piet

Guest: Tobey Partch-Davis and Kelly Nye Lengerman from the Institute on Disability, UNH, Kelly Haines, UmB

Interpreters: Lauri Meyer, Jola Lindstrom and Denise Garcia

The meeting of the SRC was called to order by Vice-Chair Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre at 1:03 pm. Chair Purington has been excused from this meeting due to a personal issue.

A roll call was made of those present and the agenda was reviewed.

Report of the Director: Lisa Hinson-Hatz welcomed all who were in attendance today. Her update includes:

- **Staffing & Personnel:** Currently the agency has one open Rehab Counselor position that we are looking to fill as an opening in our Keene office is occurring soon. We are also recruiting for a full-time, temporary Administrator position that will oversee all transition activities. This position is termed temporary presently but it is hoped that it can be worked into the budget in the next budget cycle.

Interviews are happening for a full-time, temporary contract manager. This position will assist the DOE in putting together contracts that go to Governor and Council, as well as managing them once approved.

A Program Assistant has been hired for Central Office. She will begin on February 11th and will provide administrative support to the Director and offer program assistance to other members of the VR Central Office.

Two new rehab counselors, one in SBVI and the other in Nashua, have been hired and begin on March 1st.

- **Marketing Update:** We have reworked all of our marketing materials and are in the process of sending out the final product to Graphic Services for printing. All materials will be available in electronic format as well. These materials will be shared with the SRC once received.

Also, as part of the marketing initiative, the agency finally has a Facebook page (VR NH) and looks forward to all members of the SRC following this page. The page will be managed by Terri

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Tedeschi of our Business Relations Unit. The page becomes active the end of February or beginning of March.

An RFP for an advertising and campaign management contract to include videos, print advertising, radio spots and other professional productions has been released and the agency plans to score the received proposals next week.

- **Transition:** The agency recently released two RFP's for a summer transition program. Responses are due on February 4th and will be scored the second week in February. Lisa is excited to see what ideas come in from the proposals.
- **Quality Assurance:** Work continues on the Quality Assurance contract with *The Stephen Group*. Phase 1 is complete and we are wrapping up Phase 2 (Comprehensive Mapping). 53 mapping meetings were held between VR staff on all levels and the Stephen Group where processes on eligibility, budget, and all the gaps that were identified in the state audit were mapped. Phase 3 will begin shortly where we will develop policies and internal controls based on recommendations coming out of the work in the previous phases.
- **Referral Portal** - Lisa is proud to announce that VRNH has developed an on-line referral system on its website where individuals can refer themselves or others for VR services. The portal also allows customers to edit some of their personal information. The link for the portal: <https://www.education.nh.gov/howe-are/deputy-commissioner/bureau-of-vocational-rehabilitation/apply>

UNH 4U/Bridges Program: Tobey Partch-Davies from the Institute on Disability was present today to given SRC members an overview of the UNH 4U and Bridges Program.

UNH 4U is an inclusive two-year program on UNH's Durham's campus. Its mission is to build capacity for an authentic higher education campus life experience for young adults with intellectual disabilities that can result in credential attainment, integrated employment outcomes, increased independence and a higher quality of life outcome. The programs core program components include: Academic enrichment, Independent living, career pathways and social development. A semester consists of 11 credit hours or 33 hours. The program is person centered and fully inclusive offering a residential option to students if they choose.

The Bridges Program is a virtual series of courses designed to prepare young adults with intellectual disabilities with important takeaways, including self-discovery, occupational/academic direction, advocacy, confidence with technology, social connections and furtherance of college and career plans. Bridges is required for all accepted UNH-4U students. Learners earn digital badges for achievement of the series in four levels: foundational, intermediate, advanced and competency. Examples of badges that have been awarded certificate requirements can be found at: [Digital Badges with UNH Professional Development & Training | Professional Development & Training](#)

At the current time, only persons with intellectual disabilities are eligible to apply for this program. In the future, The Institute on Disability hopes to expand the program to other disability groups. The long range goal is to expand higher education to more people.

Update on Customer Satisfaction Survey: Kelly Haines, Senior Research Associate/Program Manager from the Institute for Community Inclusion of the University of Massachusetts was present today to give an update on both the Customer Satisfaction Survey and the CSNA. Since the last update at the SRC Retreat in November, ICI piloted with a small group of 100 VR customers served from 2019 to 2020. The full survey of approximately 4500 customers was launched in December. In order to reach the maximum number of persons, contact is being attempted by email, phone and as well as mail. It's been an active project for about 6 weeks, and to date

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372 completed responses have been received (8%). This is lower than hoped for but looking at the data ICI is getting a good range of responses. Next week will be the final push for returning them, with the window closing in about 2 weeks. In February, ICI will reach out to the next group of individuals closed in 2020 and 2021. ICI is hoping for at least a 20% return rate, or 600 complete surveys.

CSNA: Over the several past months, ICI has been gathering data, including census and demographic info to be used as part of the project. In the coming weeks, they will be contacting all stakeholders and individuals with disabilities to get their point of view about populations unserved and underserved, as well as timeliness and activity between VR and the CRP's it works with. Future plans include contact with other disability groups who are not being served and conducting a small number of forums with business groups to get their input.

Updates to both the CSS and CSNA will be provided at the April SRC meeting.

REPORT OUT FROM COMMITTEES:

Membership - Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre reported that the committee last met on January 14th where they provided an orientation for new and existing members to learn more about the SRC. They had good participation and discussion of how members of the SRC can be more of a resource to the agency by becoming more engaged in providing feedback. Future plans include reviewing the by-laws to see if revisions are warranted and reaching out to more persons to become members of the SRC. Isadora invites any member interested to join the Membership Committee.

Policy – Courtney Lockwood reported that the committee reviewed several policies back in October including Waiver, Vehicle Mod and Financial Participation of Costs. There most likely will be another meeting before the full SRC meeting and will update more then.

State Plan: Lisa Gerrard updated. The committee last met in December after the public comment period. Only one public comment was submitted on the VR side of the WOIAA. The draft was submitted to the Office of Workforce Opportunity on 1/10/22 for inclusion in the NH Combined State Plan revision and is awaiting approval from the feds. For the time being, our piece is done.

There was discussion of VRNH still being in an order of selection due to struggling with staffing issues and the after effects of COVID. All categories are open, however.

The State Plan Committee is looking for more members to join. Interested persons should contact either Brent Cote or Lisa Gerrard for more information.

Seeing no further business to discuss, a motion was made, and approved to adjourn the meeting at 2:49 p.m.

The next meeting of the SRC will be:

April 28, 2022

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Room 100 Walker Building & ZOOM option

21 South Fruit Street, Concord, NH, 03301