

# NH State Rehabilitation Council

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## NH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL RETREAT

### MEETING MINTUES

November 4, 2021

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

### ZOOM Teleconference Meeting

**Attendees:** Christopher Purington, Chair, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Vice-Chair, Lorrie Ripley, Courtney Lockwood, Brent Cote, Andrea Kaneb, Maureen O'Donnell, Ben Adams, Lisa Gerrard, Kimm Phillips, Lauri Jean Pevear, Carrie Dudley, Holly Cadwallader, Natalie Fortier

**Members Excused:** Dawn Breault

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

**Guest:** Kelly Haines, Melissa Alford, Susan Foley, Ngai Kwan, Russell Thelin from ICI, University of Massachusetts, Anne Banks from CCSNH.

**Interpreters:** Paula Collins, Julie O'Meara and Denise Garcia

The meeting of the SRC Retreat was called to order by Chair Christopher Purington at 12.07 pm.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the SRC meeting of September 24, 2021 were approved with one member abstaining.

**YOUTH APPRENTICESHIPS:** Chair Purington introduced Anne Banks, Youth Apprenticeship Grant Manager at the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH). Ms. Banks came to the SRC today to give members an overview of the program. In 2020 CCSNH received grant funds through June of 2023 to focus on career pathways for students in advanced manufacturing, automotive technology, biomedical technology, business and finance, healthcare and in the hospitality industry. There are five components of registered apprenticeship, partnered between business, schools and the Department of Labor.

- Business driven
- On the job training
- Classroom education
- Progressive Wage – built in wage increases
- National Industry Certification by the Department of Labor.

The Youth Apprenticeship program allows students to begin an apprenticeship program while still in the final years of high school. Early college courses, for credit, are offered through the Running Start program. Free mentor training is offered for companies participating in the program. The benefits for employer participation are many including developing a list of qualified employees within their industry. Students get a chance to learn the skills local industries are looking for in future hiring.

More information can be found on the CCSNH website: [www.apprenticeshipnh.com](http://www.apprenticeshipnh.com)

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**Report of the Director:** Lisa Hinson-Hatz welcomed all who were in attendance today and gave the Council agency updates:

- **Staffing & Personnel:** The agency is currently recruiting for VR counselors in our Berlin, Portsmouth, Nashua and SBVI offices, as well as a Rehab Technician in Concord and Portsmouth.
- **Financial:** Program income ending on September 30, 2021 for last year was \$2,261,040. Unfortunately, as RSA did not give the VR agencies an extension for unspent funds due to COVID, NH is returning \$4,500,000 back to the treasury. FY-22 grant dollars received so far under the continuing resolution is \$2,086,922. We are looking at creative ways to spend this money down, although client spending is increasing and we are almost at full staffing levels. Lisa is thinking about sending another letter to RSA in an effort to add time to spend down the money for next year as well as seeking help with referrals to increase the number of people coming into the system.
- **QA Contract:** A grant of almost \$600,000 was let to The Stephen Group in early summer. So far, the agency is very happy with the work they have done. They are assisting the agency in working on our audit findings focusing on 6 areas: governance, fiscal, eligibility, plan development, authorizations and payments. Teams of admin staff, fiscal staff, VR supervisors, counselors and rehab technicians are working together during each phase of the project. We are currently within the mapping process. There will be two deliverables at the end of the project – an annual business plan for the agency as well as a strategic plan.
- **Marketing Contract:** The agency contracted with Concepts, Inc. to update the agency VR logo and Tag Line.



Our new campaign slogan will be “We Are VR”. We will be known henceforth as VRNH instead of NHVR, putting the focus on VR. Our website is being remodeled where we will highlight some success stories.

Future plans include asking Concepts to do some videos for all areas of the program as well as having an active campaign for radio and TV spots to get the word out of what we do.

When it is all in place, representatives from Concepts will be invited to present the changes to the SRC.

- **Strategic Partnership Update:** We are currently developing 2 year contracts, using carry over money, with our community mental health area agencies to hire work incentive counselors so participants understand how work will affect their benefits. To date, 3 have been hired.

The agency has held parent and school information sessions with the STS counselors. To help more youth with work based learning opportunities, we are looking at perhaps doing an RFP.

- **State Plan Goals and Measures:** Lisa worked with her leadership team and walked through each area of the state plan to develop measures for the goals contained within. She has forwarded them all to Brent Cote for his review. Looking ahead, this information will be helpful as we put together another update for the FY-22 plan.

**Institute on Community Inclusion Updates:** Kelly Haines, Senior Research Associate/Program Manager with the Institute on Community Inclusion was present today to give updates on the Customer Satisfaction Survey and CSNA.

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The customer satisfaction survey will attempt to measure customer satisfaction of participant experience with VR including responsiveness, scope and quality of services and professionalism/competency of staff providing services. The projects primary objectives are to develop and implement a comprehensive and accessible approach to collecting survey data from VRNH customers and identify the most important factors that affect their satisfaction with services. Customers will be contacted in two waves --- those served in 2019 and 2020 will be contacted during November beginning next week and during December. Those served in 2020-2021 will be contacted in January and February. An interim report will be delivered in January of 2022 and the final report in June.

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment, or CSNA, began in October. Phase 1, primary and secondary data accumulation for the baseline assessment, will run through February. Phase 2, community based data collection will begin in January and run through June. An interim report will be delivered in May of 2022 with the final expected in June.

ICI will conduct Individual interviews with up to 30 members of the community, not served by VR as well as served. The goal is to identify barriers to accessing services. ICI is seeking assistance from the SRC to get the word out to recruit participants as well as suggestions on how to increase the percentage of people responding. Suggestions included:

- Work with the Parent Information Center. They have a list of stakeholders they can share.
- Contact area agencies and high schools
- Assist participants to complete the survey if needed
- Work with guardians of persons with developmental disabilities. Kimm Phillips would be willing to host information ZOOM sessions with families if helpful.
- Encourage persons with hearing loss to be part of the survey by captioning the survey.
- Include questions about CAP
- Include persons with blindness and vision loss
- Publish an ad in the paper to reach populations within the area
- Use social media to invite unserved or underserved newly arriving populations within the state. Tap into those communities.

ICI will be invited back to future SRC meetings to give updates on the projects as it moves along.

## **REPORT OUT FROM COMMITTEES:**

**Membership:** Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre reported out for the committee indicating they had one meeting during the past several months. A brief overview of a typical meeting is discussing ways to increase membership, periodically reviewing the by-laws, reviewing the chart of members against the mandated slots to make sure all are filled, as well as identifying members who are terming off that need to be replaced. The committee continues to seek additional members from the business community. The Membership Committee is always looking for new members. Contact Isadora if interested.

**State Plan:** Brent Cote reported that the goal for the short term is to review the information on state plan goal measurement developed by Lisa and her leadership team. The active time for this committee is currently underway. The comment period for the state plan ends on November 12<sup>th</sup>. Tomorrow the last public hearing of 4 held throughout the state. The VR draft will should be ready mid-January for submittal in February.

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The State Plan committee is welcoming new members. Please contact either Brent or Ella if interested.

**Policy:** Courtney Lockwood, Chair of the Policy Committee reported that a lot of work is being done currently reviewing updated policy chapters, making suggestions and presenting them back to VR. Right now she has a small stack to review. As the agency makes updates, the Policy committee will continue to review the suggested changes.

**SRC RAC CARD:** A draft of the proposed SRC Rac Card was sent to members earlier to get their input. Most thought the language was too formal and should be revised to make it more friendly in layman's terms. Lisa agreed to send the recommendation back to Concepts for them to take another shot at it.

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS:** Lisa announced that there will be an "All Staff" and staff recognition meeting via ZOOM on December 16<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9:30 am and is inviting SRC members to participate if they can. The ZOOM invite will be sent well in advance.

A request was made that for future SRC meetings, the ZOOM invite be resent about an hour prior to the start. Sue Roma agreed to make sure this occurs.

As there was no further business to be heard, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 2:58 pm.

The next scheduled meeting of the SRC will be:

**January 27, 2022**

**1:00 pm to 3:00 pm**

**Room 100 Walker Building & ZOOM option**

**21 South Fruit Street, Concord, NH, 03301**