

DEED / Vocational Rehabilitation Services

VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee

Friday, January 26, 2018 – 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

VRS St Paul Fairview Office

VRS CRP Advisory Committee – Meeting on January 26, 2018

KEY MESSAGES FOR THE GREATER VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COMMUNITY:

Note: Key Messages are first distributed via .govdelivery and then posted on the DEED website

- The CRP Advisory Committee welcomed the following new members (listed in alphabetical order):
 - Kassia Janezich, Tasks Unlimited
 - Robert Reedy, RISE
 - Krista Stafsholt, Occupational Development Center
 - Sarah Timmerman, Ability Building Center
 - Kim Babine, VRS Extended Employment Director
 - Click here for a link to the full committee membership list:
<https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/councils/crp-advisory.jsp>
- RSA recently informed VRS that third-party assessment services will not be eligible for inclusion in the 15% set aside requirement for Pre-ETS expenditures. VRS is currently analyzing the implications of this new information for assessment services being authorized and will provide updates to the VR community via webinar or similar tool.
- The EE Rule Revision is in the process of a complete rewrite focused on alignment with Minnesota's Olmstead Plan, the requirements of WIOA, Section 511 and the changes that will exist within the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). Another major objective of the rewrite is to increase the clarity and ease in understanding the rule and its processes. VRS anticipates the formal rule revision process and public comment will occur in March and April, with formal adoption of the rule in May or June 2018.
- The advisory discussed job coaching services in Minnesota:
 - With a new infusion of individuals with multiple, significant disabilities that are seeking VR services because of WIOA, Section 511 and Pre-ETS, VR field staff are predicting, and already seeing in some places, an insufficient level of ongoing supports to meet the needs of the more challenging populations we are serving.

- The committee discussed the availability of job coaching services—both the quality of services being provided, and the challenges associated with retaining staff to do this work.
- Some of the biggest challenges related to job coaching services include:
 - **Wide range of job coaching mindsets and skillsets:** Job coaches vary widely in terms of the perceptions and skill levels they bring to the work ranging from the more passive ‘I’m here to observe and make sure nothing bad happens to the individual or the employer’ to ‘I’m actively engaged in supporting job success for the individual and employer, and I have many skills and approaches I can use depending on the individual situation’. Training deficits also plays a big role in this challenge.
 - **Service reimbursement and staffing:** Low reimbursement rates make it difficult to hire and retain qualified staff for job coaching.
 - **Unpredictability and inability to budget and staff:** The unpredictability of job coaching services demand and non-traditional work hours makes dedicated staffing and budget/business planning difficult.
- Some of the ideas discussed to increase the quality and availability of job coaching services in Minnesota include:
 - **Advanced training options:** We see the opportunity to increase our effectiveness in understanding and working with more complex individuals through specialized training options such as Customized Employment’s component on Systematic Instruction. Can we develop the equivalent of a ‘Placement 101’ for advanced job coaching skills?
 - **Flexible, cross-trained staff:** Cross training staff in other programs so an individual can be utilized across multiple services within a CRP/LUV.
 - **VRS staff as a stopgap solution when there is no CRP job coaching capacity available:** Explore the possibility of developing some VRS job coaching capacity to fill person-centered needs after first reaching out to providers for ongoing supports and finding no provider capacity available to serve them.
 - **Higher wages:** Compensation must be more competitive to attract and retain the staffing quality and quantity we need to provide job coaching services. There is an interagency effort working on recommendations to address the reimbursement levels.
 - **Increasing employers’ understanding and use of natural supports:** There are employers who do this extremely well and we want to find ways to encourage more employers to use natural supports to help attract and retain talent to their organizations.

** End of Key Messages*