**Virginia Board for with Disabilities**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

***March 15, 2017***

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities held its regular quarterly meeting on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, 4700 South Laburnum Avenue, Richmond, Virginia.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT :** Charles Meacham, Randy Burak, Cindy Rudy, Angela Sadsad, Matthew Shapiro, Vicki Beatty, Deanna Parker, Ethel Parris Gainer, Stephen Joseph, Richard Kriner , Ronald Lanier (VDDHH), Donna J. Lockwood, Rachel Loughlin, Mary McAdam, Alexis Nichols, Melissa Gibson (Designee for Colleen Miller, disability Law Center of Virginia), Summer Sage, Ann Bevan, Kathleen Vaughan, Felicia Hamilton, Philip Caldwell, John Eisenberg (VDOE), Donna Gilles, John Kelly, Travis Webb, Traci LaGanke, Allison Coles-Johnson, Caroline Raker, Jamie Snead

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Carina Elgin, Marisa Laios, Michael Carrasco, Atima Omara, Rick Mitchell

**CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:**Board Chair, Charles Meacham called the meeting to order at 11:35 am.He then introduced Donna Bonessi, DARS, and Robin Metcalf, The Choice Group, as the luncheon presenters. Mr. Meacham welcomed Board members, staff, and agency designees: Ann Bevan, who will be replacing Terri Smith as DMAS agency representative. He informed the Board that DMAS is undergoing reorganization, and Terri is now focused on the aging population. He also welcomed and introduced: new Board staff member, Nia Harrison, Director of Planning, Research & Evaluation as well as AOT subcommittee speakers: Ms. Dawn McCoy, Chair of Central Virginia Regional Alumni Chapter(CVA), Ms. Charlotte Woodard, Chair of Northern Virginia Alumni Chapter (NoVA), Ms. Kristine Osborne, Chair of Tidewater Alumni Regional Chapter (TARC), Ms. Alexus Smith, Lead of Southwest Virginia Alumni Chapter (SWA) The Chair lastly congratulated and welcomed two new members to the Board: Traci LaGanke & Allison Coles-Johnson who previously served on the Board, she was first appointed in 2002 by Governor Warner.

The Chair noted some general announcements related to the upcoming deadline for PIP applications, requesting that Board members help solicit applicants. He also noted upcoming Board vacancies of which there are 6. He noted that Ms. Heidi Lawyer, Executive Director, would notify individuals eligible for reappointment to see if they were interested. Mr. Meacham stated that he would not be seeking reappointment. Mr. Meacham noted that this year’s Nominating Committee is comprised of Mr. Ron Lanier, Ms. Angela West, and Ms. Donna Lockwood. Anyone with interests in a new position or reappointment to their current position is encouraged to contact one of the three committee members.

**LUNCHEON PRESENTATION:** Ms**.** Donna Bonessi, Manager, Employment Support Services, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services & Robin Metcalf, Board member, Virginia Association of Providers of Supported Employment (APSE) and President, The Choice Group presented “*Employment First and the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act”,* which focused on employment advancement and self-sufficiency for all people with disabilities.

**APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 14TH, 2016 BOARD MINUTES**: The Chair asked if there were any changes to the December Board Meeting minutes. Hearing none, the Chair called for **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the minutes. Mr. Randy Burak made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the December 2016 Board Meeting minutes, and Ms. Cindy Rudy seconded the **MOTION.** The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was none.

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**REPORT OF THE INVESTMENT & STATE PLAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Committee Chair Ms. Cindy Rudy reported that:

**GRANT EXPENDITURE UPDATE:**

Mr. Jason Withers, Grants, Contracts & Program Information Manager, discussed grants and contract expenditures for three projects: 1) The Advocates Building Livable Environments (ABLE) through the Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living (VACIL).  2) The Virginia NICU Early Intervention Collaborative through the Virginia Hospital Research & Education Foundation (VHREF). 3) The Development of Adult Curriculum on Critical Decision-Making Points for Students with Disabilities project through the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). These projects and expenditures were referenced in Attachment ISP 3-2.

**UPDATE ON STAGE II PROPOSALS FOR COMPETITIVE RFP:**

Mr. Withers updated the members, informing them that seven full proposals were selected for review by the Grant Review Team (GRT); however, only five applications were received by the posted deadline of 4:00PM on January 17, 2017. Of the received applications, the GRT chose two proposals to recommend to the Board for funding, which totaled $184,782.

The Board discussed the Investment and State Plan Oversight (ISP) Committee’s recommendation to fund a proposal from the Arc of Northern Virginia entitled, **“Increasing Access to Disability Resources in non-English Languages”** for $124,782. This project was referenced in the Supplemental Packet that was sent to Board members via email on March 9, 2017. Mr. John Eisenberg had an inquiry related to the Arc of Northern Virginia’s proposal, regarding the six published guides listed in the grantee’s proposal. Mr. Eisenberg wanted to ensure that the guides had been appropriately vetted prior to publication and release. Board staff advised that they would follow up with the grantee to determine whether the materials had ben vetted and require such as a condition of the grant award. After discussion, Ms. Mary McAdam called for a vote of Approval on the recommendation made by the Grant Review Team. The following member(s) recused themselves from voting: Ms. Angela Yong-West. The ISP Committee recommended **APPROVAL** by the full Board of the recommendation made by the Grant Review Team. The **MOTION** emanating from the Committee did not require a second. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

The Board also discussed the ISP Committee recommendation to fund a proposal from the disAbility Law Center of Virginia entitled, **“Improving Transportation Planning in Cities and Counties to Increase Access to Community-Based Healthcare”** for $60,000.This project was also referenced in the Supplemental Packet that was sent to Board members via email on March 9, 2017. Mr. John Kelly had an inquiry related to the dLCV’s proposal, regarding the use of federal Developmental Disability (DD) grant funds for potential litigation. Board staff advised that they would pose this inquiry to the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) for response and would add the appropriate conditions to the grant award, if applicable After discussion, Ms. Mary McAdam called for a vote of Approval on this recommendation made by the Grant Review Team. The following member(s) recused themselves from voting: Ms. Melissa Gibson. The ISP Committee recommended **APPROVAL** by the full Board of this recommendation made by the Grant Review Team. The **MOTION** emanating from the Committee did not require a second. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

**DISCUSSION OF FFY 2017 COMPETITIVE RFPs:**

Mr. Withers reported that the Investment and State Plan Oversight (ISP) Committee made a **MOTION** to recommend **APPROVAL** by the full Board to release two Request for Proposals (RFPs). The **1st Recommendation:** The Supplemental Draft 2017 *Creating Inclusive Communities* Phase II RFP was created because several Areas of Emphasis (AOEs) were not captured during the initial solicitation period of the initial Creating Inclusive Communities RFP. The newly proposed RFP focuses on the areas of Employment, Healthcare and Housing and provides funding up to $400,000 for one or more projects. This RFP was referenced in a Supplemental Packet that was sent to Board members via email on March 9, 2017. After discussion, Ms. Mary McAdam called for a vote of Approval on this recommendation made by the ISP Committee. The **MOTION** emanating from the Committee did not require a second. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

The **2nd Recommendation:** The Supplemental Draft Competitive Mini Grant *Strengthening Self-Advocacy in Virginia* RFP seeks to support a local, regional or statewide self-advocacy organization or program, led by individuals with DD. Projects funded through this special grant program must be designed to strengthen an existing self-advocacy organization or program led by individuals with DD, by increasing an organization’s skill-set, organizational structure and work to effect policy change. This RFP was also referenced in the Supplemental Packet that was sent to Board members via email on March 9, 2017. After discussion, Ms. Mary McAdam called for a vote of Approval on this recommendation made by the ISP Committee. The **MOTION** emanating from the Committee did not require a second. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

**2017-2021 STATE PLAN UPDATES AND DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Withers discussed highlights of the 1st Quarter updates to the 2017-2021 State Plan. He explained that much of the contextual information that was included in the State Plan Activities spreadsheet for various workgroups and advisory councils that Board staff attend, would be removed for future updates and only the quarterly activities will be included. Mr. Withers also discussed that the next State Plan Update was due to the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) by January 1, 2018. Attachments ISP 4-1 through 4-15 were referenced.

**REPORT OF THE POLICY, RESEARCH & EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

Committee Chair Ms. Summer Sage reported that:

The PRE Committee reviewed the Board’s policy activities briefly and then reviewed the draft Employment and Education Assessment Briefs. The Committee made several recommendations for consideration by the full Board, including:

1. The PRE Committee **RECOMMENDED** language amendments to ensure that each recommendation begins with an action word. This was **PASSED** by the full Board without discussion by unanimous vote.
2. The PRE Committee **RECOMMENDED** a language amendment to clarify recommendation 1B in the Education Assessment. This language was introduced to the full board, and the Board **APPROVED** the language amendment without discussion by unanimous vote.
3. The PRE Committee **RECOMMENDED** the addition of an additional recommendation, which would become recommendation 2B, promoting the adoption of legislation that limits the use of exclusionary discipline in Virginia’s schools. This recommendation was **APPROVED** by the Board without discussion by unanimous vote.
4. The PRE Committee **RECOMMENDED** to the full board the adoption of the Education Assessment with recommended amendments for final editing and publication by board staff. This was **APPROVED** by the full Board by unanimous vote without discussion.

1. The PRE Committee **RECOMMENDED** to the full Board language amendments to recommendation 4A. This recommendation would change the language of the recommendation from supporting the elimination of new admissions to sheltered workshops immediately, to reducing admissions to sheltered workshops; and it would eliminate the call to phase out “funding” for sheltered workshops within ten (10) years and replace with language focused on the elimination of the “use” of sheltered workshops with no mention of funding. This recommendation was supported by nine (9) PRE Committee members and opposed by four (4) members. There was much discussion about this proposed change, and multiple variations on alternative recommendations were discussed. After discussion the Board voted on three alternative language amendments and **APPROVED** by majority vote an amendment that supports ending all new admissions to sheltered employment and developing a plan to eliminate sheltered employment within ten (10) years and transition people from sheltered employment to integrated employment.
2. The PRE Committee **RECOMMENDED** adoption of the Employment Assessment, with agreed upon edits, for final editing and publication by Board staff. This recommendation was **APPROVED** by the Board by unanimous vote.

**REPORT OF THE ADVOCACY OUTREACH AND TRAINING COMMITTEE**

Committee Chair Randy Burak reported that:

Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee, Training Programs Manager, updated the Committee on the Board’s Training Alumni Association. Four regional representatives, Charlotte Woodward, Kristin Osborne, Dawn McCoy and Alexis Smith, spoke on behalf of the Northern Virginia, Tidewater, Central and Southwest, Virginia alumni chapters. Each representative provided input on the progress of their regions’ chapter.

The Committee reviewed/discussed the FFY 2016 State Plan Goals and Objectives. Mr. Benjamin Jarvela, Communications Director, informed the Committee on the Board’s communication activities, including the Board’s rebranding initiatives and website relaunch. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee concluded the discussion by updating the Committee on the Partners in Policymaking and Youth Leadership Forum training programs.

For the full details, see the AOT Committee meeting minutes for March 15, 2017, at [the Board's website.](https://www.vaboard.org/boardmeetings.htm)

**BOARD SHAREPOINT INTRODUCTION**

Benjamin Jarvela, Communications Director, briefed the Board members on the launch of the Board SharePoint site, including registration details, use and upkeep, and allowable content types for the new system. He also noted that Board staff would be happy to take suggestions on further additions or revisions to the system’s capabilities.

**AGENCY REPORTS:**

**Kathleen Vaughan, agency representative, Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS):**

**2017 VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY – BUDGET**

* In December, Governor McAuliffe introduced his proposed budget and DARS was impacted by these major measures:
* Move funding from DSS to DARS for APS curriculum developer +60k

Expand ombudsman services to meet federal MLTSS requirements + 395k

* Fund adult services and adult protective services case management system operations +440k
* Reflect October 2016 Savings in agency budgets -2.5m (programmatic cuts in programs: CILs, Triple As, ESOs, etc….)
* Capture administrative savings -.5 admin savings by streamlining operations and reducing discretionary expenses.

The General Assembly has reviewed the introduced budget, heard from advocates, reviewed current economic information, and offers their amendments as follows:

* CIL funds restored at $200k
* Brain Injury funds restored at $375k
* LTESS restored at $200k
* Restore Care Coordination initiative thru Triple As $490k
* Restore Pharmacy Connect at Mountain Empire Triple A $145k
* Eliminate funding for Adult Services Case Management System -$440k
* Programmatic cuts to community programs are restored to meet ever increasing demands.

**2017 VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY – LEGISLATION**

**SB 869** Frank M. Ruff, Jr.

**Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission; sunset.** Extends the sunset date of the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission from July 1, 2017, to July 1, 2020, and makes a technical correction to the reporting requirement of the Commission. This bill is identical to HB 1716 (Anderson).

**HB 1946** Christopher K. Peace

**Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman.** Amends provisions related to the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (the Office) and its access to and handling of certain information and records to conform to federal requirements and remove ambiguities. The bill also prohibits interference with or retaliation or reprisals against (i) the Office or its representatives or designees for fulfillment of its functions, responsibilities, or duties or (ii) a person who in good faith complains or provides information to, or otherwise cooperates with, the Office or any of its representatives or designees. The bill requires the Commissioner for Aging and Rehabilitative Services to promulgate regulations regarding the investigation of allegations of interference, retaliation, or reprisals and the implementation of sanctions with respect to such interference, retaliation, or reprisals. The bill also requires the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services to put in place mechanisms to ensure that the Office may (a) analyze, comment on, and monitor the development and implementation of laws, regulations, and policies related to long-term care services and providers or to the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals receiving long-term care services; (b) recommend changes to such laws, regulations, and policies; and (c) provide information, recommendations, and the position of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman to public and private agencies, legislators, media, and other persons regarding concerns of individuals receiving long-term care services.

**Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services**

Individuals with the most significant disabilities (MSD) who remain on the waiting list for VR services will be moved off of the waiting list. Effective March 15, 2017, nearly 1,200 individuals in the MSD service category that have Application dates between December 1, 2016 and March 14, 2017, will be moved from delayed status.  Therefore, on March 15, 2017, the MSD service category will be completely opened so that all waiting individuals can be served. We anticipate being able to take more people off of the waiting list next month.

**Project SEARCH**

There will be three new Project SEARCH programs starting in Fall, 2017, in Stafford, Frederick/Winchester and at Joint Base Langley/ Fort Eustis, bringing the number of Project SEARCH sites in Virginia up to 20! It is possible that an additional program may begin in far Southwest Virginia. A nine-month program that is implemented nationally, Project SEARCH is a collaborative effort to provide youth with disabilities with internship experiences in their last year of high school.

**Individuals with Autism Served by DARS**

Currently, 2,803 individuals with a diagnosis of primary, secondary or tertiary cause autism have applied and are eligible to be served by DARS. Of these individuals, the majority (53%) are actively receiving services. 7% are ready for employment, and 6% are employed.  During SFY2017 to date, DARS has successfully supported and completed services with 293 individuals with autism. Their average earnings were comparable and even slightly higher than earnings last year.

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

For additional updates, including information about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), please reference the lunchtime presentation facilitated by Donna Bonessi and Robin Metcalf and the corresponding handout that will be provided during the presentation]

**Ann Bevan, agency representative, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS):**

**2017 General Assembly & State Budget**

The General Assembly concluded its 2017 legislative session in the last week of February. The session began with a revenue shortfall of over $1 billion and much of the session was focused around how to balance priorities while closing this gap. Much of the gap was closed by taking $567.2 million from the Revenue Stabilization Fund (aka the “Rainy Day Fund”), and $169.7 million from tax policy changes.Other budget items relevant to Medicaid in the GA Budget Conference include:

* $209 Million in updates for Medicaid funding for enrollment and other technical changes
* Adds 144 FIS waiver slots for FY 2017-2018
* No overtime for CD home health attendants (this was in the Governor’s proposed changes to the 16-18 budget but did not make it into the 2017 Conference budget)
* Adds Sponsored Residential to the list of services eligible for customized rates (this cannot be implemented without CMS approval)
* Requires DMAS & DBHDS to collect information and feedback related to payments to family homes and the impact of changes to the rates on family homes statewide from sponsored residential providers, VNPP, VACSB, Va Sponsored Residential Provider Group, and family home providers
* Requires DBHDS & DMAS to convene an annual stakeholder’s workgroup on issues related to the SIS, support levels, reimbursement tiers and communication about these issues

**DOJ Settlement**

DMAS continues to collaborate with DBHDS in implementing terms of the DOJ Settlement Agreement. Case Management and Quality Management, in particular, has been a recent focus for the Independent Reviewer over the last several months. DMAS staff are working with DBHDS staff to review case management data and quality evaluation and determine how this can be used to evaluate changes and improvements in case management.

**Waiver Operations**

DMAS has received feedback from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on the four “Evidence Reports” that were submitted several weeks ago. These documents report to CMS on the Commonwealth’s progress in meeting CMS waiver assurances and are necessary for waiver renewals. The four reports are for the Alzheimer’s Assisted Living, Technology Assisted, Day Support and Individual and Family Developmental Disability Supports waivers. (As they are retrospective in nature I have included the former titles of the waivers.) DMAS, in collaboration with DBHDS will now respond to CMS’s questions, comments and requests.

**Waiver Redesign**

DMAS is working with DBHDS on continued implementation of the three waiver redesign. Current work is focusing on drafting final regulations and a new unified provider manual for all three DD waivers. CMS has approved the redesign and associated rate changes have been implemented. The single point of entry for admissions to the DD Waivers along with changes in case management provisions was also implemented and transition is complete from previous systems.

**Consumer Directed Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)**

CMS has mandated the use of EVV beginning in 2019. DMAS has begun discussions with EVV vendors and is developing talking points, gather from other states on best practices in use of these systems, mandatory vs voluntary us, agency and/or consumer directed use. Information will be made available as the project proceeds. One clear message from other states is that the roll out of these systems takes significant time and that consumer directed is a more challenging roll out in that autonomy is critical and times are often directed by the consumer.

**Overtime for Attendants – Department of Labor**
Effective July 1, 2016, by directive of the General Assembly overtime is no longer paid for any single attendant who works more than 40 hours per week for a single consumer (employer). Questions and Answers have been posted on the DMAS website, letters to individuals impacted have been sent by the Fiscal/Employer Agent, PPL, and data to understand the number impacted has been gathered. Live in attendants may work any number of hours and do not receive overtime pay per the federal Department of Labor Ruling. All other attendants may work only 40 hours per a single individual. Please watch the website for additional details. DMAS is aware of advocates and stakeholders ‘requests for an “exceptions” process authority for which was not provided by the General Assembly.

**Slots**

The most recent conference budget has made some changes to the number of waiver slots. Community Living: 180 slots effective July 1, 2017Family & Individual Supports: 344 slots effective July 1, 2017 (this was previously 200 slots and the conference report added 144 slots) Building Independence: 60 slots in FY 18. There continue to be emergency reserve slots which may be created across the waivers for individuals with disabilities for emergencies, individuals transferring between waivers and individuals transitioning from an ICF or state nursing facility to the community.

**Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)**

Each state that operates a 1915(c) waiver that was in effect on or before March 17, 2014 was required by CMS to file a Statewide Transition Plan (STP) to describe how the state will bring all pre-existing settings into full compliance with the home and community-based settings requirements. Virginia has received initial approval from CMS for its Statewide Transition Plan. The state is required to report to CMS the compliance status of each HCBS setting impacted by the HCBS settings requirements following waiver redesign. A mandatory provider self-assessment will be the method through which Virginia meets this CMS requirement. The self-assessment will be required for providers of group home residential, sponsored residential, supported living, group day and group supported employment services for EACH unique setting where HCBS services are provided. Additional information about the self-assessment and self-assessment process will be coming out in the near future.

**PACE Innovation Act**

The PACE Innovation Act has passed which permits the PACE program, currently for individuals age 55 and older to be expanded for younger populations with disabilities. CMS is currently working on the opportunity for pilot projects. However, it is unlikely at this point in time that funding will be included for any pilots.

**Ron Lanier, Director, Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH):**

**Collaboration with Libraries of Virginia Update**

As previously reported, VDDHH, through the Statewide Interagency Team (SIT), is working on an initiative to place videophones in public libraries across the Commonwealth. This project is in keeping with VDDHH’s mission of reducing communication barriers, as it will greatly enhance communication access for users of sign language in areas where the required high speed internet access is often unavailable or unaffordable. In January, SIT met with the two top providers of Video Relay Service (VRS) and both have agreed to take on this pilot project beginning in far Southwest VA, where the expressed need for this service originated. The next step is to obtain specific information from each of the library representatives, and then coordinate with the VRS providers who will move forward with the installation of the equipment.

**Statewide Training Scheduled**

The Statewide Interagency Team (SIT) is planning/hosting a training seminar for the Regional Interagency Teams (RIT) comprised of representatives from the four agencies, like SIT, which serve persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind. Invited to this seminar are the Mental Health Counselors (DBHDS), Regional Counselors for the Deaf (DARS), Outreach Specialists (VDDHH) and DeafBlind Specialists (DBVI). The seminar will be held at the Waynesboro Best Western Conference Center on March 30-31, 2017. RIT meets to coordinate services and share information, ideas and issues, in order to better serve our clients.

**Deanna Parker, agency representative, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS):**

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**DBHDS Independent Housing Outcomes Table**

**February 2017**

| Baseline # of People in \*\*Target Population Living in their own home  | 343 |
| --- | --- |
| Number of People in \*Target Population Living in their \*own home  | 255 |
| **TOTAL # of People in \*Target Population** **Living in their \*own home** | 598 |
| # of Rental Assistance Resources Set-Aside for the \*Target Population | 382 |
| # of individuals in \*Application/Voucher Intake/Housing Search Process | 67 |

**Housing Information Sessions**

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services’ (DBHDS) Housing Specialist staff is conducting statewide housing information sessions to help individuals in the settlement agreement population access independent housing in the community with supports. Session dates and locations are available on the DBHDS website under the Community Supports tab.

**DD Waivers Update**

The amendments related to the customized rate and EPSDT services were submitted to CMS on 3/2/17. A DMAS and DBHDS Workgroup is continuing to work on permanent proposed regulations and provider policy manual updates. All WSAC’s have met to distribute slots, except for one which will meet on 3/21.

**IFSP**

The IFSP funding period for FY2017 has ended. In April, there will be smaller regional meetings to discuss drafts of the state plan and other documents. Throughout March, the IFSP Council will convene statewide forums for families who have never accessed or received IFSP funding. The purpose of the session is to introduce people to the council, demo the upcoming web application, and determine stakeholder needs statewide.

**\*Settlement Agreement Population**:

(1) individuals currently residing at any of the Commonwealth’s training centers, (2) individuals who meet the criteria for the Developmental Disability Waivers (includes individuals who currently have BI, FIS or CL waivers), or (3) individuals who currently reside in a nursing home or ICF-IDD. **Own Home**- Non-provider owned or operated housing that is leased or owned by an individual in the target population. **Rental Assistance Set-aside**- Rental assistance made available for individuals in the target population. **Application/Voucher Intake/Housing Search Process**- Individuals in the target population have been referred to a PHA and are completing a program application and submitting required documentation; 2) the individual has submitted an application and associated documents that are under review by the PHA determine program eligibility; 3) the individual has received rental assistance and is actively looking for housing.

**John Eisenberg, agency representative, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)**

**VDOE Agency Updates:**

* Restraint and Seclusion Regulations will be presented for final review at the March 23, 2017 Board of Education meeting. There are significant revisions in the latest draft. If voted in the positive, the regulations will be sent to the Attorney General, Department of Planning and Budget, Secretary of Education and the Governor for Executive Level Review.
* The Dyslexia module as required by the General Assembly for all educators seeking initial and renewal of their license has almost been completed.  It is anticipated that it will be available for use by the middle of next month.
* Collection of the 2016 special education child count data has just been completed by local school divisions. Initial but unverified counts indicate a dramatic spike in the child count from previous years. Divisions have potentially reported significantly more students in categories of Autism, Other Health Impairments and Specific Learning Disabilities.
* Statewide IEP system is still under review by the Virginia Information Technology Agency (VITA) and is projected to pass review by 3/31/17.
* VDOE has completed a strategic plan for the increased inclusion of students with more significant disabilities in general education environments. Staff will begin implementing phases of the plan immediately.
* VDOE is hearing that significant federal special education funding cuts are projected as well as school based Medicaid funding in the distant future.

**Rick Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner,**

**Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI):**

* The US Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration is presently without a Commissioner. Dr. Edward Anthony is presently serving as the acting Commissioner. This means that the RSA is likely to take steps to maintain the status quo until a new Commissioner is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. It is estimated by many policy watchers that it might be 18 months to two years before there’s an appointee in place.
* Many organizations continue to question the RSA interpretation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The most frequently raised issues impacting related to services for persons with vision impairments include guidance on ages of students to receive Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), use of the Pre-ETS 15% set aside, elimination of homemaker closures as acceptable outcomes for the Vocational Rehabilitation program, and application of the definition of competitive integrated employment to jobs created as part of the AbilityOne program. The transition to new leadership in the U.S. Department of Education is perceived as an opportunity to seek additional review of the recently implemented regulations and the related sub-regulatory guidance.
* On February 7, 2017, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a Public Notice announcing that, for 60 days, starting February 6, 2017, and ending April 7, 2017, it will accept applications for certification to participate in the permanent National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP), also known as “iCanConnect.”  In addition, any entity that is currently certified under the NDBEDP pilot program that does not wish to participate in the permanent NDBEDP must notify the Commission by April 7, 2017. DBVI has served as the entity administering the iCanConnect program in Virginia since January of 2016, assuming these responsibilities from the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH). DBVI, after consulting VDDHH, has decided not to apply to be the certified entity for this program in the Commonwealth going forward. The Department is supporting the application of the Perkins School for the Blind to serve in this capacity. If the Perkins School is the successful applicant, DBVI will be a partner providing outreach, taking applications, and engaging in training consumers.

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* The Roanoke Regional Office conducted a ribbon cutting event on February 8 for their new location at 1202 Franklin Rd., Roanoke, VA.  The event had over 65 people in attendance with the Roanoke Vice-Mayor and Commissioner Hopkins making comments.  A number of local partners attended the event from the business and education communities.  The new office space is very professional in appearance and the staff are very pleased to be back together again.
* DBVI’s Director of Business and Corporate Initiatives attended a Workforce Innovation and Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) conference in December 2016 surrounding WIOA and our work with Community Rehabilitation Professionals. She was able to meet with other Vocation Rehabilitation Professionals from across the Country. Many states have rebranded their Business Unit’s to be more reflective of the goals surrounding WIOA.   Given our efforts to ensure the highest level of business engagement the DBVI Workforce Unit has a new name.  The unit is now branded “The Business Relations Unit”. The Workforce Specialists are now, Business Relations Specialists and Cindy Roberts is now the Director of Business and Corporate Initiatives.  These changes have already proven to be advantageous for DBVI.
* The Business Relations Unit recently met with Corporate Executive’s representing CVS Health and Omnicare (recently purchased by CVS Health).  A Memorandum of Understanding is being drawn up between CVS/Omnicare and DBVI. This will allow our individuals the ability to perform paid and unpaid work experiences within the retail stores.  CVS will allow an Employment Service Organization (ESO) to attend with our individuals to provide assessments, job shadowing etc.  CVS is also interested in working with students from our Life Program to gain work experience in the various retail stores in Richmond. They have also graciously offered to provide training for our ESO’s within the different positions within the stores. DBVI has developed a relationship with Strategic Contact Solutions, based in Spokane, Washington.  They are a work from home business that sets appointments for travel and tourism, motor coach companies, convention centers etc. They are also a federal contractor. Due to expansion on the east coast, they are hiring individuals within our time zone.  One DBVI job seeker has already been hired, and they are presently setting up interviews for two more of our individuals. They are JAWS friendly and their trainer is blind. We are excited about bringing this opportunity to DBVI!
* DBVI will be hosting the Virginia Business Leadership Network (VABLN) event in May at the Library and Resource Center on the DBVI campus. The event will showcase a keynote and will be followed by an Assistive Technology Fair.
* Under the Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities grant, work continues on the Dream it. Do it Academy, focused on robotics and cyber security that is being held June 26-30, 2017 at the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI).  The Robotics and Cyber Academy will be open to students with disabilities who are rising sophomores through graduating seniors in the 2016-2017 school year.  Students from throughout the state can apply, since dormitory space is available at VRCBVI.  The Robotics and Cyber Academy will be the first fully accessible academy offered that aligns with public school robotics programs offered by the Virginia Department of Education through summer camps in public school systems.
* The CPID website is up and live, with links to both DBVI and DARS.  The CPID site features information for businesses, career seekers, training opportunities, and highlights success stories.

**Melissa Gibson, agency representative, Disability Law Center of Virginia (DLCV):**

[**2017 Legislative Highlights**](http://dlcv.org/legislative-highlights/2017-legislative-highlights/)

dLCV spent considerable time at the General Assembly this quarter, closely following legislation relevant to Virginians with Disabilities.

* dLCV had success with two companion bills that would require the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to inform dLCV of critical incidents occurring in DBHDS licensed programs.  The return deadline from the Governor’s office is March 27th, and dLCV is confident that the bill will succeed.  Agency staff are planning on the “how” of utilizing this information, with the objective of better monitoring and advocating for improvement in the service system.
* dLCV is making the [Pathways Through Special Education in Virginia Workshop](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pathways-through-special-education-in-virginia-workshop-tickets-31758002039?aff=eac2) available to students with disabilities and their families on Thursday, March 30, 2017.

Tickets are now available for dLCV’s annual [Liberty and Justice for ALL Gala](http://dlcvfoundation.org/gala/) on Friday, April 28, 2017.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

There was none.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Board Chair Charles Meacham called for other business. There being none, the Chair proceeded with closing comments and reminded board members to complete the Evaluation Forms, Committee Survey Forms, and to ensure their directory information is accurate. The meeting was then adjourned at 3:55 pm.