**Virginia Board for with Disabilities**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

***Sept.11, 2019***

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities held its regular quarterly meeting on Wednesday, September 11, 2019, at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, 4700 South Laburnum Avenue, Richmond, Virginia.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Diana Banks, Ann Bevan, Phil Caldwell, Theresa Casselman, Allison Coles-Johnson, Alexandra Dixon, Dennis Findley, Donna Gilles, Felicia Hamilton, Samantha Hollins, Ray Hopkins/Pam Hinterling, John Kelly, Jocelyn Kilgore, Molly Korte, Sarah Kranz-Ciment, Donna Lockwood, Eric Mann, Mary McAdam, Colleen Miller, Dawn Missory, Madeline Nunnally, Kate Olson, Deanna Parker, Dr. Ethel Parris Gainer, Lindsay Pearse, Vasantha Rayman, Chandra Robinson, Cindy Rudy, Summer Sage, Maya Simmons, Alexus Smith, Jamie Snead, Frederique Vincent.

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Richard Kriner, Chris Nace, Eric Raff, Caroline Raker, Matthew Shapiro, Travis Webb.

**LUNCHEON PRESENTATIONS:**

Donna Gilles, Executive Director presented an overview of the role and work of VCU’s Partnership for People with Disabilities.

**CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

Board Chair, Dr. Ethel Parris Gainer, called the September 11, 2019, Board meeting to order at 12:27 p.m. The Chair welcomed Board members and asked the board for a moment of silence to remember the victims and families that were affected by the 9/11 travesties. The Chair then reviewed the housekeeping notes.

**APPROVAL OF June 12, 2019 MINUTES:**

The Chair asked if there were any changes to the June 12, 2019, Board Meeting minutes. The Chair called for a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the minutes.Eric Mannmade a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the minutes, andDennis Findley seconded. Alexandra Dixon, Pam Hinterlong, Dennis Findley, Ray Hopkins, John Kelly, Christopher Nace, Felicia Hopkins, Matthew Shapiro and Maya Simmons abstained. The **MOTION** carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

**PRESENTATION: ELECTRIC VISIT VERIFICATION**

Tim Catherman, Nicole Martin, and Nichole Braxton, Department of Medical Assistance Services, gave a presentation on Electronic Visit Verification. Mr. Catherman and Ms. Braxton, responded to questions from Board members.

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Committee Chair, Allison Coles Johnson, reported the following:

The Chair called for a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the June committee meeting. Mr. Eric Mann made a **MOTION** to approve. Ms. Jocelyn Kilgore **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** carried unanimously and the March meeting minutes were approved as written. The new Committee members, Ms. Vasantha Rayman, Ms. Molly McMunn Korte, Ms. Madeline Nunnally, Ms. Dianna Banks, as well as Ms. Alexandra Dixon, **ABSTAINED**.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE:**
The Chair gave an overview of the Executive Director’s report and other issues discussed at the Executive Committee meeting, including Board member attendance, the Executive Director’s update, a fiscal update, an update on grant recipients and upcoming LOI for the grant review team, the Executive Committee’s recommendations on potential committee structure, as well as, the committee agendas.

**Partners In Policymaking Program (PIP) Updates:**
Dr. Penni Sweetenburg-Lee, Director of Training & Alumni Development Programs, introduced herself and made introductions of her staff, Ms. Ronita Wilson, Training & Alumni Development Coordinator, and Ms. Evette Wingfield-Woodley, Training Programs Coordinator. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee briefly explained the function of the Training Programs within the agency for the new Board members. She discussed the upcoming Partners in Policymaking Program (PIP) which will start its first session on Friday, September 12, 2019. The PIP Program runs for seven months through April 2020. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained the second date of importance and invited all Board members to the PIP graduation ceremony which is Saturday, April 4, 2020 at 10 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Holiday Inn City Center in Newport News, VA.

**Alumni Development Program (ADP) Updates:**
Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee discussed the Strategic Planning Retreat for the Alumni Development Program (ADP) that occurred in August 2019. She noted the materials handed out by Training, including the Chapter Operations Manuals, PPR Highlights report, and the Assessment Infographics, the ADP Chapter Operations Manual that was developed with the Communications team and its important role in redefining the goal of the program. Board staff will coordinate major training or event activities from September 2019 to May 2020 based on feedback from the alumni. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that another point that was heavily discussed at the retreat was the overall branding and image of the ADP. The title of “Alumni Development Program” doesn’t fully describe or explain the mission of the program. She added that another issue expressed by the alumni was that they had a hard time explaining the program when they were able to meet with legislators. Discussion ensued. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that staff are identifying an advisory panel of alumni to assist in recommendations and suggestions for future program improvement. Representatives to the panel could also serve as regional liaisons to assist with activity recruitment. Mr. Jarvela added that the Communications team is working to redesign the program logo. Mr. Mann asked if there was more of a role for the Board members to engage with the Training Programs participants. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee explained that it would help to have Board members attend the upcoming advocacy events. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted that currently ADP structure is still functioning based on region (NOVA, CVA, SWA, TARC) and Training staff would work to engage members, and have taken control over more of an administrative role for the ADP.

**Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) Updates:**
Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee had no update because the recruitment process for the upcoming July 2020 Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) Program would not begin until December 2019. She noted that staff were working to identify the applicant pool and planning for a social media campaign for recruitment. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee noted the program would be held at Norfolk State University and that applicants must students who are rising high school sophomores to seniors in high school (ages 16-22) and that the program is an all-expense-paid, four-day advocacy training program that includes several core subjects including: personal development, professional environment, and career development.

**EVENT SUPPORT REPORTS:**
Dr. Ethel Parris Gainer, Board Chair, and Ms. Jamie Snead gave a report on the Centra Person-Centered Thinking Workshop which took place on July 30-31, 2019. Dr. Gainer believed the investment was worthwhile and Ms. Snead concurred with that assessment and believed the event was a worthwhile investment for the Board. Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee asked whether this event was marketing to providers. Neither Ms. Snead nor Dr. Ethel Parris Gainer was sure whom the event was marketed to, but thought it should have been marketed to persons with disabilities.

Ms. Megan Weems, Communications Assistant, gave a report of the VAULT ADA Pride Day Event which took place on August 3, 2019 at the Mobility Super Center in Richmond, VA. Overall the goal of community was seemingly met, there were roughly 20-25 community attendees, who were able to ask specific questions and received answers or were directed to specific resources to help. Ms. Weems noted that perhaps in the future, there could be more focus on marketing to help increase attendance. The money appeared to have been spent according to the guidelines presented by the Board and Ms. Weems believed the event was a worthwhile investment for the Board.

**Communications UPDATE:**
Mr. Jarvela gave a brief update of the Communications Department activities including: the printing and mailing of the 2018 Assessments (Early Intervention and Community Living) to legislators in July 2019, the multiple Training Program documents discussed by Dr. Sweetenburg-Lee previously, the ADP Retreat, Executive Committee and New Board member orientations, the Arc State Conference program ad space, and current ongoing projects. These projects included: the Board Packet redesign for accessibility and the Project Living Well grant, as well as, project document which is set to be released in several stages over the next few months.

**Adjournment:**
The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:14 am.

[For the full details, see the AOT Committee meeting minutes for June 12, 2019.](https://www.vaboard.org/boardmeetings.htm)

**REPORT OF THE POLICY, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE:**

Committee Chair, Felicia Hamilton, reported the following:

**BOARD POLICY UPDATE:**

Mr. Cimino, Deputy Director, provided an update of recent public policy activities. The format and content of the PRE policy update contained in the Board packet has changed and is much more concise than it used to be. Board members were encouraged to comment on whether they like or dislike the new format.

Ms. Hamilton asked Mr. Cimino to report on highlights of the Policy update. Mr. Cimino highlighted discussion of the recent online forum hosted by the Department of Labor of the future of the federal 14(c) program, and discussion about the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) and opportunities for appealing a SIS assessment or requesting a SIS reassessment.

**PROJECT LIVING WELL:**

Linh Nguyen, Policy Analyst, provided an overview of the Board’s work on the development of a state report card for Project Living Well.

**HEALTHCARE AND MEDICAID ASSESSMENTS:**

Ms. Hamilton asked Mr. Cimino to update the Board on the committee discussion about the healthcare and Medicaid assessments. Mr. Cimino summarized the main points of discussion, which included interest in addressing the following topics in the assessments: Accessibility of healthcare services and healthcare providers to individuals with developmental disabilities; provider shortages in specific provider specialties and geographic areas of the Commonwealth; the availability of specific healthcare services, including dental; Health and healthcare literacy among people with disabilities, their families and providers, and throughout the system of supports; and managed care organization’s’ role in ensuring adequate networks of providers and specialized services, as well as in ensuring healthcare literacy within the system; and eligibility rules that that exclude people from eligibility for essential services based on income and assets, which have the effect of discouraging employment for some individuals.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:20am

[For the full details, see the PRE Committee meeting minutes for June 12, 2019.](https://www.vaboard.org/boardmeetings.htm)

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

Committee Chair, Theresa Casselman, reported the following:

**REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING:**

Ms. Casselman provided an update on the Executive Committee meeting.

**GRANT EXPENDITURE UPDATE:**

Mr. Jason Withers discussed grants and contract expenditures for five projects: 1) The Improving Health and Wellness through Empowerment project with James Madison University (JMU); 2) The Communication & Health Advocacy Training project with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU); 3) The Next Move project with William & Mary; 4) The Promoting Integrated Employment with ABLES Teams project with VCU; and 5) The Building Inclusive School Communities through Culture Shift, Collaboration, and Coaching project with Radford University. These projects and expenditures were referenced in Attachment ISP 3-2.

**UPDATE ON LOIs FOR COMPETITIVE GRANT RFP:**

Mr. Withers advised that 18 Letters of Interest (LOIs) were received during Phase 1 of the Board’s competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) period. The Grant Review Team (GRT) convened on August 15th, 2019 to review the received LOIs and selected 9 applicants from whom to solicit full proposals. Full proposal applications are due to the Board by October 31, 2019. The GRT will convene on November 14, 2019 to review all received proposal applications.

**APPROVAL OF WILLIAM & MARY RENEWAL APPLICATION:**

Ms. Casselman discussed the William & Mary (W&M) renewal application with committee members, which was referenced in Attachment BD 3. The Board Chair called for a vote on approval of the W&M renewal application. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY RENEWAL APPLICATION:**

Ms. Casselman discussed the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) renewal application with committee members, which was referenced in Attachment BD 4. The Board Chair called for a vote on approval of the VCU renewal application. The **MOTION** carried, with recusals from Ms. Pam Hinterlong and Ms. Mary McAdam.

**APPROVAL OF RADFORD UNIVERSITY RENEWAL APPLICATION:**

Ms. Casselman discussed the Radford University renewal application with committee members, which was referenced in Attachment BD 5. The Board Chair called for a vote on approval of the Radford University renewal application. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

[For the full details, see the ISP Committee meeting minutes for June 12, 2019.](https://www.vaboard.org/boardmeetings.htm)

**PRIMER ON BASIC PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES:**

John Cimino, Deputy Director, gave a summary on the Parliamentary Procedures to the Board Committee/Staff.

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON BOARD COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:**

Nia Harrison gave a brief summary on the proposed changes to the Board’s committee structures. As a MOTION coming out of committee, this motion did not require a second. John Kelly made a MOTION to amend the Executive Committee structure by removing items 2 and 3. Mary McAdams seconded the motion to amend. The motion passed unanimously. The chair called for a vote on the amended motion that came out of the Executive Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

**REPORT ON NACDD ANUUAL MEETING:**

Dr. Ethel Parris Gainer, Chair, gave a summary of the NACDD Annual Report to the Board Members and Board Staff. Questions were asked and answered.

**AGENCY REPORTS:**

Agency representatives who were present provided oral reports. Ms. Lawyer reminded the Board members that they were provided written reports by email from most of the agencies. Those are incorporated into the minutes below as submitted by the agencies. Ms. Lawyer briefly discussed the new executive meeting responsibilities and the changes of the committee’s names.

**Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services**, Ms. Deanna Parker, Agency Designee

**DBHDS Independent Housing Outcomes as of August 30, 2019\***

* Baseline # of People in Settlement Agreement Population Living in their own home (as of July 2015) **343**
* Number of People in Settlement Agreement Population Living in their own home (after July 2015) **633**
* TOTAL # of People in Settlement Agreement Population Living in their own home **976**
* GOAL for People in Settlement Agreement Population Living in their own home by end of FY 2019 **1205**
* Percentage of Independent Living Goal Met to Date **81%**
* # of individuals in Application, Intake or Housing Search Process **82**
* # of Rental Assistance Resources Set-Aside for the Settlement Agreement Population **798**
* Goal for Rental Assistance Resources Set-Aside for the Settlement Agreement Population by end of FY 2019 **682**
* Percentage of Resource Goal Met **117%**

**Training Center Census**

 **6/10/2019**

* CVTC= 40
* SEVTC=71
* **Total: =111**

**IFSP Updates**

The**Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP)**is designed to assist individuals on the DD Waiver Waiting List and their families access short-term, person/family centered resources, supports and services to assist and individual in establishing and maintaining an independent life in the community. DBHDS established the Individuals and Family Support Community Coordination Program to assist families and individuals with developmental disabilities with making local connections to resources and supports that maintain community living. This effort is a partnership led by families who have formed councils covering the five DBHDS service regions.

All IFSP funding applications are now submitted on-line. To apply via the online portal you will need access to a computer or mobile device with an internet browser and a valid email address. If you have applied previously and need to use a new email address, please register the new address at [here](https://ifsponline.dbhds.virginia.gov). Please ensure that an accurate Social Security Number (SSN) and date of birth is submitted for both the applicant and the responsible party.

September 9, 2019 is the first day to access and save an application in the online portal. October 1, 2019 9:00 a.m. Is the first day that applicants will be able to submit an application. The last day to submit a FY 2020 IFSP Funding Application is October 11, 2019 is the last day to submit a FY 2020 IFSP Funding. The IFSP Portal includes a new function that allows applicants to delegate someone to submit an application on their behalf. The IFSP application portal will close at 5:00 p.m.

Resources for families, including FAQ’s, the application training schedule, and a video demonstrating how to submit an application is available on the [DBHDS Senior Navigator website](http://www.mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/). The page is entitled “*Resources for Families.*”

**DBHDS Updates**

* **DMAS and DBHDS are pleased to report that on August 22, 2019, the Commonwealth was granted final approval of its Statewide Transition Plan submitted to CMS on May 8, 2019.**
* Any settings that have been or will be submitted by the state under heightened scrutiny will be reviewed and a determination will be made separate and distinct from the final approval.
* The proposed permanent DD Waivers regulations are under review at DMAS.
* DMAS and DBHDS have begun work on updating the existing waiver provider manual work to reflect the most current info in the regulations.
* The Individual Planning Calendar training has concluded at all CSBs; however, DBHDS Service Authorization staff is still conducting training as needed for those Support Coordinators who missed the training.
* DBHDS is developing training modules for two of its newer waiver services, the Community Housing Guide and the Peer Supports Mentor. A few providers who met the criteria as a Community Guide provider under the emergency regulations are seeking authorization to provide services.  If successful, these providers will need to complete the new training once the regulations are final and the new curriculum is in place.
* DBHDS Service Authorization and Employment Service Provider data reviewed from 3/2018-3/2019 show that the Individual Supported Employment service has increased 88.8%.
* DBHDS is still soliciting volunteers to serve as back-up Waiver Slot Assignment Committee members. For more information, please contact Joan Bender at DBHDS (804) 774-4469.
* DBHDS Service Authorization began authorizing Personal Assistance services for those under 21 under the DD waiver criteria. This is a reversal from the past few years’ policy of reviewing these requests under EPSDT criteria. Requests for those under the age of 18 will need to be accompanied by a new form detailing the need for supervision.
* FY 2020 DD waiver slots have been assigned at 31 CSBs. The goal is to ensure that all FY 2020 Waiver slot assignments are completed by the end of September.
* The DBHDS Office of Integrated Housing will host the second Statewide Regional Community Nursing meeting October 22, 2019 in Radford.

**HCBS Final Rule**

Virginia received final approval on its STP from CMS on August 22, 2019. Virginia is responsible for completing the assessment, remediation and on-going monitoring of settings consistent with the approved Statewide Transition Plan. All settings must demonstrate full compliance by March 17, 2022.

The state plans to work with a consultant to support the planning, tool development, training and logistics for completing 400 on-site reviews of settings. Providers/settings needing to undergo heightened scrutiny will be included in the 400-onsite reviews. Each setting type will be included in the onsite reviews. Settings will be determined based on a number of factors including 1) the size of the setting to ensure larger settings are included in the review; 2) targeting multiple provider organizations; 3) targeting specific settings/providers identified through the self-assessment and remediation process as needing significant remediation; and, 4) settings brought to the state’s attention by individuals and family members.

Additional validation activities of settings’ remediation and compliance include desk reviews of settings specific evidence submitted via REDCap, Quality Service Reviews and NCI interviews of individual experiences in a particular setting and DMAS Quality Management Review outcomes. Additional strategies/methods are being considered.

**Department of Medical Assistance Services**

Ms. Ann Bevan, Agency Designee

The following timeline provides a high-level view of upcoming activities required for the 2021 deliverable:



**Waiver Operations**

* The new FE/A Contractor - Consumer Direct Care Network of Virginia (CDCN) assumed responsibility for CD services January 1, 2019.
* The Community Living Waiver renewal was granted the end of June with a start date beginning July 1, 2019.
* Policy/Regulations - In February, 2019 new proposed regulations were posted to Town Hall for public comments. All told there were 354 commenters; over 1,600 individual comments and insights reviewed. Based on public comment, revised regulations were informally sent as draft copy to the OAG for pre-review. The official version is under review with DMAS. Once officially approved by DMAS, they will be submitted to the OAG for review. Once OAG reviews/approves, they will be submitted to DPB for review/approval, then to HHR and finally, to Governor. Once Governor signs off, they are submitted to the “Register” for publication.  The regulations will be entered into the VAC 30 days after publication in the Register.
* Quality/Audits - During the VALIDD meeting held Monday, August 19, 2019, DMAS presented the recent audit findings from the internal QMR teams, which were supported by the Myers & Stauffer findings outlined in their annual ‘general auditing services annual report; 1/01/2018 – 12/31/2018; discussed at the July 29, 2019 meeting. Over the last five (5) years, overpayment totals $3,853,714 - the largest group being DD waiver (congregate settings). The three (3) areas for improvement identified were; 1) undocumented services; 2) qualified/trained/proper staff level; and 3) criminal background checks.

**High-Level Trends over Five-Years**

| **Provide Type** | **Overpayment Costs** |
| --- | --- |
| DD Waiver | $1,667,721 |
| Personal Care | $1,020,654 |
| Dentist | $269,262 |
| PDN | $228,170 |
| Respite | $205,688 |
| DRG | $165,223 |
| SVCS Facilitation | $98,334 |
| Physicians | $88,564 |
| Hospice | $59,495 |
| ADHC | $34,063 |
| Home Health | $13, 257 |
| Outpt Rehab | $422 |
| Intensive Rehab | $0 |

Under the DD Waiver, the largest paybacks came from congregate living and group homes.

**DOJ Settlement Agreement**

The next ‘Status Conference’ is scheduled for September. The Internal Reviewer and his consultants will be developing comments, etc., for the next six (6) month report - due in December. Of note, his focus will narrow in on Medical transportation and the Case Management function.

**Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)**

Federal compliance with EVV begins on January 1, 2020. EVV for Home Health services begin on January 1, 2023.

The Virginia Appropriations Act expanded the use of EVV to include consumer directed personal care and respite and companion services. Since the federal date has changed, DMAS has changed the required implementation date of EVV for Agency and Consumer Directed personal care, respite care, and companion services that originate or conclude in the member’s home to October 1, 2019.

The EVV FAQs were updated on October 3, 2018. They can be found on [the DMAS website](http://www.dmas.virginia.gov/#/longtermprograms). Click on ‘Electronic Visit Verification’ in the top banner.

For additional questions please e-mail: EVV@dmas.virginia.gov.

**Disability Law Center**

Ms. Colleen Miller, Director

Colleen Miller briefly discussed the Final Rule Plan and how it is a fully integrated system of communications for people with developmental disabilities. She noted that they have received thousands of reports of incidences that has occurred in the community with people with disabilities. Colleen Miller stated that they are looking into transportation providers and how they are treating people with disabilities.

**Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired**

Pam Hinterling, Agency Designee

On June 19, the House of Representatives approved [H.R. 2740](http://cqrcengage.com/thearc/app/thru?ep=AAAAC2Flc0NpcGhlcjAxoRfG4i9RahuoNUkLRkUwQs4nsTXHkzx0-ezgqmfDuCNSAJPzsd05l10Fh429dZWIPQtUwtD-378W0rQvHCceF2dD9cDoSqVjsE3NiAK46UaNXJFU6jOBOfEFlu3PbawtTwKu9d1DZDrCWfAnzEza64mZldG99oIUE1f4lRvpIkn4FA6vLPira_R5iIHQHCyU&lp=0) with a vote of 226-203. It contains four appropriations bills, including the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies (L-HHS-Ed) bill. At the time it was passed, the package was not expected to pass the Senate due to cost and controversial policy language. This could be altered by the spending agreement reached between the White House and Congressional democrats on July 23.

On Thursday, July 18, 2019, the House of Representatives passed the Raise the Wage Act, [H.R. 582](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/582). In addition to raising the minimum wage for over thirty three million Americans, the Raise the Wage Act would phase out subminimum wage payments to people with disabilities and would raise the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour by 2025. The bill passed 231-199 on a mostly party-line vote.

On July 19, 2019, Governor Northam announced the reappointment of Debra Helms of Roanoke to the Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired. Ms. Helms was previously appointed to fill the unexpired term of a Board member who resigned and is eligible to serve two consecutive four-year terms. Congratulations Debbie on your reappointment.

Utilizing the Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) grant the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) held a two-day Coding Academy at Service Source in Oakton.  The sixteen students served by DBVI and DARS moved quickly through the two-day curriculum so additional modules were taught.  There were also sessions on career pathways for IT careers, the NOVA workforce career ladder, and the cyber mapping from Intellectual Point.   Students registered to access a career exploration tool, Career Index Plus, and did a career exploration in the IT field and reported their findings back to the group.  The students also watched a video from Kevin Fleming called, Success in the New Economy, which speaks to the importance of credentials.  On Day 2, students were broken into two large teams to solve a coding challenge with coding sound.   Prem Jadwhani and Glenn Garcia from Intellectual Point, gave a credential overview before lunch sharing about in-demand IT careers.

The Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) conducted its pre-employment transition program for students entitled, “LIFE”.  The five weeks of the program flew by.  With twenty-one participants eager to learn new skills and increase their independence, it has been a very exciting time at VRCBVI.  Students have participated in skills of blindness classes such as Braille, personal and home management, orientation and mobility, access technology and job readiness.  Additionally, they have participated in confidence-building activities which include:  ropes course and zip lining, improvisation training, swimming, bike riding, grilling, and going to the movies.  One student commented:  “In the past whenever I have gone to the movies, I went with my family.  I never went to the concession stand or found my seat by myself.  But I now know I can do these things.  I don’t have to wait for someone to take me.  I am in charge of where I go.” Students attended employment workshops where they learned techniques and strategies for successful interviewing.  They then had the opportunity to do mock interviews with staff stationed on the Azalea campus of DBVI and received valuable feedback on ways they can strengthen their presentations.  Students participated in a three-week work experiences. There were a total of nineteen employers providing work sites for the students, nine of which are new partners to working with the VRCBVI LIFE program.

On August 18, the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) welcomed a group of 27 individuals to its facilities for a week long “Senior Retreat”. The cohort is comprised of older individuals who are blind and their care givers. Participants are exposed to technologies and techniques that are available to assist persons with vision impairments to function independently within their homes and communities. It is hope that participants will take away some basic skills which will be helpful and will be inspired through the exposure to “new” concepts to seek additional services from DBVI. The retreat is sponsored by VRCBVI and the DBVI Independent Living for Older Individuals Who Are Blind grant.

**Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

**Executive Management**

Statewide Interagency Team (SIT) is comprised of four agencies, the VDDHH, the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) and the Valley Community Services Board. The SIT hosted one town hall meeting in Richmond on Saturday June 29, held at the DARS central office with approximately 30 people in attendance. ADA presentation given by the disability Law Center of Virginia’s Zachary Devore. The town hall meetings are a part of SIT ongoing effort to develop a needs assessment and identify new priorities. There will be three (3) more town hall meetings scheduled for the rest of 2019:

August 10 - Abingdon

Oct 19 – Martinsville (tentative)

Nov 2 - Staunton (tentative)

Support Service Provider (SSP) Workgroup – SSP is a service to DeafBlind people providing visual information either through tactile sign language or spoken language (blind people who are hard of hearing) empowering them to live independently since they often face communication barriers and cannot communicate effectively with other people. VDDHH had convened a SSP workgroup to discuss the problem and identify solutions. The workgroup is comprised of representatives from Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Deaf Blind Youth Project, Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Virginia Association of the Deafblind (VADB), Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind (VSDB) Intervenor Program, Reynolds Community College (RCC) Interpreter Training Program, and the Department of Education. The workgroup met on May 30 discussing various models of delivery systems, funding and legislation.

**VDDHH Advisory Board**

On Wednesday May 1, VDDHH hosted its’ quarterly meeting of the 9-member advisory board. The agenda included board and agency reports. The board also focused on reviewing and discussing the strategic plan.

**Virginia Relay**

Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC) The VRAC hosted its semi-annual meeting on Thursday April 11 at Longwood University located in Farmville. Hamilton presented on its’ activities including marketing. There were several presentations including a demonstration of real-time text technology, viewing of ‘Text to 9-1-1 videos’ and a special guest speaker, Claude Stout, Executive Director of the Telecommunication for the Deaf, Incorporated. He is a nationally known expert and advocate for accessible technology benefiting deaf and hard of hearing people. The next VRAC meeting with be at DARS central office on October 22.

Virginia Relay Program Manager - VDDHH has 11 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions and for years, only 10 FTEs has been budgeted/filled. The Director has been performing relay manager duties in addition to his Director duties. A new position was created to take on the responsibility of Virginia Relay and oversight of the Technology Assistance Program. VDDHH posted a job bulletin and initiated a recruitment campaign for a new Virginia Relay Manager. After conducting interviews, David Bahar was appointed and started working on June 27. He brings extensive experience with the telecommunication relay industry.

Relay Calls Trends During Fiscal Year 2019, Virginia Relay provided 330,697 minutes of relay services including traditional relay services and captioned telephone service, along with other relay features such as HCO, VCO and STS. FY19 saw a moderate 11% decrease in overall relay traffic compared to a 15% decrease during FY18. Virginia Relay call volume traffic using analog is projected to decline through the end of Fiscal Year 2022 as growth in Internet based relay services continues.

**Telecommunication Assistance Program (TAP)**

Request for Proposal (RFP) - Developed draft RFP to award new contracts for TAP and Community (formerly known aka “Outreach”) Services. The RFP was released and currently active. Officially closed the TAP Distribution site in Danville, VA due to retirement. All remaining TAP equipment stock and TAP documents returned to VDDHH.

Department of Veteran Services - A special presentation was given to the Department of Veteran Services (DVS) Executive Leadership Team in Richmond. This was a follow-up TAP/VA Relay presentation from the April 25th presentation to staff members at the DVS. Eighteen Leadership Team members including the Deputy Commissioner were in attendance.

**Interpreter Services Program (ISP)**

Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) - The Advisory Board had previously petitioned DPOR to study on whether to regulate sign language interpreters. On March 4, there was no quorum to take official action. However, on June 24 DPOR had a quorum and voted to implement the study. The ISP Manager and the Community Services Manager participated in a telephone conference call with staff at DPOR to prepare for the study on licensure of sign language interpreters and provide technical assistance with the public hearing logistics and interpret any ASL video comments received during the public comment period.

Supreme Court Memorandum of Understanding - The Interpreter Programs Manager met with staff from the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia and representatives from the Office of the Attorney General on June 11 to discuss ongoing efforts to improve communication in Virginia Courts.  Several topics were discussed including: updating the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as related to the use of private interpreter referral agencies, billing for late cancellations, and pre-authorizations for lodging and other exemptions. The Interpreter Programs Manager will also present at the Judicial Conference in August and the Clerks’ conference in September.

**Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS)**

The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessments (EIPA) and candidate paperwork are being uploaded directly to Boy’s Town for evaluation within 24 to 48 hours of completion of assessment. This process has gone seamlessly and has resulted in candidates receiving results in a timelier manner from Boy’s Town.

**Community Services**

I-CAN! Accessibility Project (VCU)

“Ensuring Accessibility to All Survivors” Abuse prevention project: VCU was awarded a grant by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) to create signed videos of the “Understanding Protective Orders” brochure, and to train VDDHH staff and contractors on recognizing indications of abuse when working with the community. The I-CAN Accessibility project will also produce “Agency Spotlight” videos for relevant agencies. VDDHH is collaborating with I-CAN! Accessibility Project to complete the project.

Community Integration Implementation Team (CIIT)

Quarterly meeting held at DBVI; member agencies reviewed Olmstead Strategic Plan for updating which is overdue due to multiple changes in personnel at contributing agencies

SB 1741 Stakeholder Workgroup (JCHC)

Regarding the proposed legislation addressing “Language Development for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing,” sessions conducted by the Joint Commission on Healthcare. VDDHH attended workgroup meetings and participated in interagency subgroups to discuss systematic approaches to satisfying some aspects of the bill.

Emergency Management

Participated in the School and Campus Safety Advisory Committee (Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety at the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services) and the purpose is to review and edit the current draft of the “School Crisis Response Plan” to make it accessible to people with disabilities. The State Shelter Stakeholders (VDEM, DSS) Group is revising the State Coordinated Regional Shelter Plan and related operational documents and related to that topic, VDDHH reviewed and submitted revisions for the draft Statewide Emergency Operations Plan issued by the Governor. The Access and Functional Needs Advisory Committee (AFNAC; VDEM) established a Language Access workgroup to develop a future Language Policy for all State Coordinated Regional Shelters to follow and reviewed the AFN Annex plan to ensure needs for sign language interpreters is addressed appropriately.

**Department of Education**

Samantha Hollins, Agency Designee

Instructional and Support Resources

* VDOE is in the process of developing guidance to schools on the new requirements for School Counselors as a result of legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2019.
* VDOE will attend its first state cohort meeting as a member of the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) this week. This is demonstrative of the agency’s increased focus on increasing and improving access to instruction and resources related to social emotional learning across the Commonwealth.
* The VDOE will be addressing the data from state performance results (Standards of Learning) data regarding reading with a renewed focus on resources, support and technical assistance to local school divisions.

Family Engagement

* Connect for Success Conference: In collaboration with the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Center for Family Involvement (CFI) staff from the Department of Special Education and Student Services (SESS) will be attending and/or presenting at the Connect for Success Conference. This conference is intended to bring together representatives from various family engagement stakeholder groups to share successes and learn new strategies on how to assist parents of children with disabilities to navigate the special education processes. The conference dates are September 11 -13 and will be held in Virginia Beach.
* Parents as Collaborative Leaders (PACL) Training Opportunity in Spanish: In collaboration with the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC), VDOE staff participated in a training for parents of children with disabilities who are non-English speaking. This training was conducted entirely in Spanish and will provide parents with information on the special education process, how to build and maintain collaborative relationships with school division personnel, and challenge these parents to share the information they learned within their respective communities and serve a point of contact for PEATC and VDOE as other training opportunities arise.
* Court Involved Youth Training Opportunity: In collaboration with the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC), VDOE staff participated in a training for parents of children with disabilities conducted by the Coordinator of VDOE supervised State Operated Programs (SOPs), the VDOE representative responsible for instruction in local jails, a public defender and an attorney from Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc. The training was designed to engage community members around topics related to Juvenile Justice, promote disability awareness, emphasize the rights of students with disabilities, and encourage policies and protocols that support capacity building in educational settings. Attendees occupy various roles; school administrators, court involved youth staff members, parole officers, school resource officers, faith-based ministry leaders, family and any community member’s with a vested interested in improving the life of court involved Virginia Youth were all invited to attend.

Other Areas

* Virginia once again earned the highest possible ranking on the evaluation of its special education programs from the Office of Special Education Programs at the U. S. Department of Education. Additional details can be found on the VDOE [website](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/news/news_releases/2019/07-jul12.docx).
* Staff from the Department of Special Education and Student Services will participate in a workgroup meeting to respond to HB 2086 from the 2019 General Assembly session. This work seeks to create additional pathways for licensing teachers in critical shortage areas such as special education.
* The Virginia Board of Education voted unanimously to approve the proposed *Regulations Governing the Use Seclusion and Restraint in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Virginia* on final review during their July 25th. Pending final approval and enactment, the Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE) Department of Special Education and Student Services will be issuing guidance to the field on next steps and timelines for implementation of the requirements in the regulations. To prepare for the implementation of the regulations, VDOE strongly recommends that local school divisions review the language in the proposed regulations including the updated language which contains a ban on prone restraints to ensure timely compliance when the regulations become effective. Areas of focus include developing plans for the following:
	+ Adoption of division level policies and procedures at by the local school board
	+ Parent notification and internal review procedures
	+ Prevention strategies
	+ Annual reporting
	+ Training

While a final timeline for implementation has not been released, VDOE is recommending that local school divisions review their existing policies, practices and procedures in order to ensure a successful transition to the regulations when enacted.

**Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services,**

**The VR Program Updates**

**DEI GRANT ACTIVITIES:**

Dissemination

Sinclair Hubard organized two proposals for the HIRE Education Conference. *Serving Job Seekers with Multiple Barriers: Tools to enhance Partnerships and Coordination of Services using the Integrated Resource Teams/Joint Program Planning Strategy from local Workforce Development Areas* is a panel discussion on Integrated Resource Teams (called Joint Program Planning in Virginia). Included are presentations by Gary Butler, Deputy Director of the Greater Peninsula Workforce Board; Marty Holliday, Executive Director of New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board, and Claudia Barrios, DEI Disability Resource Coordinator, SkillSource. Sinclair will moderate the discussion. Each presenter has worked with both DEI and CPID grants, and will describe how partnerships with VR and other community partners has provided better services for clients. The second presentation is titled *Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in the Community College Classroom.* This presentation will be provided by Dr. Francis Smith, Adjunct Professor, GWU. The topic is one of the deliverables for the Disability Employment Initiative Grant that was awarded VCCS and is implemented by DARS, the sub-recipient.

**CPID GRANT ACTIVITIES:**

Dissemination

The CPID Team submitted two presentations and is supporting the WWRC Showcase at the HIRE Education Conference. The first, *Regional interagency Workforce Partnerships: Aligning Recruitment, Training and Credentials with In-Demand Careers*, will be moderated by Tish Harris and includes Dale Batten, Director DRS; Sharon Johnson, CEO, Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board, Gary Butler, Deputy Director, Greater Peninsula Workforce Board, and Lauren Parker, Senior Director, Ticket to Work Program, Virginia Career Works-Northern. DeeDee will describe how the DARS/DBVI five-year Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) grant, funded by the federal Department of Education’s Rehabilitative Services Agency, provided the catalyst for initiating and enhancing collaborative efforts in targeted areas of the state that resulted in mutual benefits for workforce partners and their clients. Lauren Parker will describe how CPID activities such as cross agency staff training, introductory IT training and a certification fair resulted in positive outcomes for staff and clients. Gray Butler will describe how the one-stop and VR worked together to change internal processes resulting in better referrals, enhanced ability to serve individuals with disabilities, and leveraged resources. Sharon Johnson will describe the pipeline approach to modern manufacturing developed through the RSA’s CPID grant and the SVWDB’s Registered Apprenticeship grants. Another presentation includes Diversity in the Workplace: The drive for diversity and inclusion has never been stronger.  Hear first-hand from Apple, Dynamic Aviation and Marvin Windows how they have built diversity and inclusion programs, and get resources to help you move your company forward. CPID staff is working with WWRC on a showcase presentation focusing on the multiple industry recognized credentials offered by WWRC, and featuring the IT curriculum. Instructors and students will staff the table; CPID staff will help design and set up.

Integration with VR

We wish Emily West the best of luck in her new position with New York State’s vocational rehabilitation services. Kate Kaegi will assume Emily’s role as CPID liaison to the DRS Field and for CPID/VR joint projects.

Counting industry recognized credentials is important for both VR/WIOA and CPID reporting. A workgroup of involved staff will take up the issue for WWRC and DARS this fall. Tish Harris and Deborah Collard are working on the DBVI side to make sure all of their countable credentials are documented.

Update on the DBVI hosted IT Academy 2020: Tish Harris, Dr. Chuck Gardner, and Tommy Gober of NICERC held a conference call to discuss the evolution of the Cyber Robotics Academy to be held in June, 2020 at the Vocational Rehabilitation Center at the Blind and Vision Impaired. Dates have changed, and students in summer 2020 will arrive on Saturday, June 27th to check into the dorms, with classroom starting on Sunday, June 28th and running through Wednesday, July 1. The Rally Showcase will be held on Thursday, July 2 and will end by noon. DBVI staff were polled and have graciously agreed to help staff the check-in, classroom and volunteer for the evening activities on the weekend. The curriculum will also change, and will focus on students exploring Linux, which runs 90% of the internet. The Northern Virginia Tech Council noted in their 2018 Greater Washington Technology Workforce Needs Assessment that Linux competency was the most frequently cited framework among tech employers. This makes the training appropriate, in demand, and a great launching pad for the IT field. Rally day is still in the planning stages, but we have discussed having each student show a web page they have created. One concern was ordering computers with a great deal more power, so an email has been sent with inquiry on costs.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Dr. Ethel Parris Gainer, Chair, noted that it is important to have mentors and thanked all of the mentors for the time and support. She also thanked the mentors for their help in assisting the new board members and noted that the mentors and members cannot discuss board information. The Chair also stated that Ms. Heidi Lawyer will be retiring and that the Board and Staff will do something special to acknowledge her at the December meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:15.