# VRS Community Partners Committee Key Messages

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022, 9:00am to 12:00pm

## Updates regarding the upcoming 2022 VRS Community Partners Contract Cycle

* Current VRS professional/technical (P/T) contracts will expire on June 30, 2022. Preparations and approvals are in the final stages for a new Request for Proposal (RFP) for 2022 VRS P/T contracts with a targeted posting of early March.
* The RFP will be posted on the VRS Community Partners webpage and on the state register. VRS will announce the posting via a gov delivery email notice that will include the RFP and application. The RFP posting is required by state law to be open a minimum of 21 calendar days.
* VRS will hold a Webinar in March to review the new RFP and Application. Community Partnerships Program Specialists will provide 1:1 virtual contract consultation to discuss proposed services and fees with each applying community partner. These consultations are anticipated to take place starting in March and go through May.
* The VRS Community Partners Team will also be updating partners at BEN meetings as well as the new Community Partners Conversation monthly meetings that begin in March (see the next section of Key Messages for more information on the new monthly series).
* One area of change that community partners will see in the new application for a Professional Technical contract with VRS is a section of questions related to a Community Partner’s commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI.) The section will include an attestation that the partner organization is committed to staff training practices that result in providing services that are culturally informed, affirming, and appropriate to the served individual’s lived experience.
* VRS will be asking community partners to submit complete applications in April to ensure a July 1, 2022, effective date for their new 2022 P/T master contract.
* All new contracts will be issued for a 2-year period. CRPs may have the option to extend the contract each year up to an additional 3 years (5 years total) after that first term. There is no change to the term of the LUV contract: that will remain 2 years. After 2 years, LUVs need to reapply and execute a new contract.
* The new contract language is based on an updated State of Minnesota contracts template issued by the Office of State Procurement. Every new contract must be approved by DEED-VRS, DEED-Fiscal Services, and the Department of Administration’s Office of State Procurement (OSP).
* To avoid the anticipated high volume of contracts through VRS, DEED-fiscal, and Office of State Procurement at the end of the state fiscal year (June 30, 2022), VRS will be working hard to get contracts ready to go by early June for July 1 start dates.
* The VRS Community Partners Team is available for consultation and questions at any point along the way. Members of the team are Anne Paulson, Sara Sundeen, Janeen Oien, and Jess Outhwaite.
* As part of the RFP and application communication plan, the Community Partners Committee recommended that VRS highlight the major areas of change in the new application and contracts since that last contract cycle five years ago.

## Preview of new monthly VRS Community Partner Conversations Series

* The VRS Community Partnerships team will offer a new “office hours” opportunity for Community Partners to connect with the Community Partnerships Program Specialists. These meetings will be called “Community Partner Conversations.”
* Meetings will occur monthly on the first Wednesday of the month from 8:30-9:30 am.
* Each month will feature a training topic with time for questions and answers.
* The first VRS Community Partners Conversation will be hosted on March 2, 2022, from 8:30-9:30am.
* All community partner staff are welcome to attend. Topics will be shared in advance to help partners target attendance.
* Potential training topics include: How to market your organization to local VRS offices, 2022 PT Contract Conversations, Navigating the Community Partnership Website and resources available to partners, Invoicing Tips, New Contract Q & A, Report writing tips, and WF1 Access.
* These monthly meetings are intended to be more interactive and get into more specific issues that Community Partners might be seeing. Themes from these monthly meetings will be highlighted in the bi-monthly VRS Community Partner + VRS Staff Forum as appropriate.
* Meetings will be recorded and posted to the DEED VRS website.

## Next meeting

Next meeting of the CPC is on Wednesday, February 16, 2022.

## For More Information

For more information on the CPC, please go to the [CPC page on VRS’s website](https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/councils/cpc.jsp).