DEED / Vocational Rehabilitation Services

VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee

Friday, February 22, 2019 – 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

VRS St Paul Fairview Office

# VRS CRP Advisory Committee – Meeting on February 22, 2019

Key Messages for the Greater Vocational Rehabilitation Community:

*Note: Key Messages are first distributed via .govdelivery approximately one week after the meeting and posted on the DEED website. They are also included at the end of the official full session notes.*

**VRS Leadership Transition**

* DEED/VRS welcomed Larry Vrooman as the new state director effective January 9, 2019 succeeding long time VRS Director Kim Peck who retired in November 2018.
* Larry joins VRS after serving 11 years at the federal VR level with RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration) where Minnesota was one of 6 states and 9 state agencies whose programs he advised and supported, and one of 12 states and 17 state VR agencies he monitored. He has also managed the disability services, alcohol and drug prevention and new student orientation programs at a state college in South Dakota, where he also taught Counseling, Program Development and Evaluation. He has a master’s in VR counseling and received CRC certification.
* Larry is thrilled to be in Minnesota and closer to direct services. He plans to leverage his local, state and federal VR knowledge and experiences to engage with the greater VR system and to help Minnesota navigate WIOA policy and regulation implementation, build program support, and effectively deliver person centered services.

**VRS Service Provider Contracts and Processing**

* VRS Director of Community Partnerships Kim Babine provided an update on recent changes to invoicing and amendments to VRS Professional and Technical (P/T) Contracts. More information on invoice requirements, report requirements and sample reports can be found on the ‘Forms and Reports’ tab at: <https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/partners/resources/>
* Questions on VRS P/T Contracts should be directed to Anne Paulson, VRS Rehabilitation Program Specialist at Anne.Paulson@state.mn.us

**Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS Services)**

* The VR program in Minnesota must do more in order to meet the requirement under WIOA that 15% of the VR budget be spent on Pre-Employment Transition Services.
* The advisory committee had an initial conversation regarding various Pre-ETS challenges and questions including work-based experiences, transportation, language/definitions, and grants.
* Director Larry Vrooman asked the advisory committee to be prepared for additional strategic dialogue on the topic at the March meeting.
* VRS staff are in the process of reviewing RSA compliance information regarding Pre-ETS. VRS is awaiting responses to questions sent to RSA regarding implementation specifics and will continue to share additional information as clarifications are determined.
* Pre-ETS compliance issues can result in significant penalties impacting the entire VR program.

**Memo of Understanding (MOU) Work Continues**

* VRS Director of Strategic Initiatives Chris McVey provided an update on continued efforts by DHS/DSD and DEED/VRS staff to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
* DEED-VRS & DHS-DSD hosted regional roundtables comprised of VRS, Community Partners providing 245D & VRS services and Lead Agencies in Houston, Chisago and Hennepin counties. The goal was to gather “front line” service insights to help inform the MOU development. DEED-VRS has been researching and reviewing agreements from other parts of the nation that will help inform Minnesota’s MOU.
* The team met with DEED/VRS Director Larry Vrooman and DHS/DSD Director Alex Bartolic and received approval to continue development of the MOU. The MOU Team will meet monthly with agency Directors to ensure leadership alignment with the goal of a signed MOU in place by June 2019 with Training and Rollout to follow.

**Other Updates**

* After five years of work, the **new Extended Employment (EE) Rule** has been published in the state register and will be effective March 4, 2019. The rule has been revised so the program will reflect principles such as Minnesota’s commitment to person-centered practices, informed choice, and Minnesota’s Employment First policy—especially its focus on competitive, integrated employment.
* **Governor Walz’s proposed budget** includes $4M a year/$8M for the biennium in additional permanent VR funding to continue, and increase slightly, the current biennium’s one-time $3.5M/$7M funding appropriation that will end June 30th. Without this funding, VR would have to close Category 1.
* VRS’s federal funder **RSA is scheduled to conduct a formal program review of Minnesota’s VR program on August 19-23, 2019**. VRS’s last federal monitoring visit occurred in 2010. Early indications are that RSA has increased its focus on performance management, compliance, and outcomes.

*\* End of Key Messages*