

# **State Rehabilitation Council**

## **Annual Report**

**2001-2002**



***Bureau of Rehabilitation Services  
Connecticut Department of Social Services***

**Cover Photograph:**

**State Rehabilitation Council Member  
Heather Harrison (r.), with SRC  
Student Representative Shannon Mazurick (c.)  
and Melanie Eichman (l.),  
at the 2002 Youth Leadership Forum.**

December 2002

It is my pleasure to represent the Connecticut State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in submitting the Annual Report for federal fiscal year 2001-2002.

This document contains information highlighting the accomplishments of the Connecticut State Rehabilitation Council. In 2002, the Council worked hard to improve its working relationship and partnership with the Department of Social Services, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. Council members visited their local Bureau of Rehabilitation Services offices on a regular basis, and State Rehabilitation Council meetings were held at various locations so that Bureau of Rehabilitation Services staff could participate.

The Connecticut State Rehabilitation Council continues its commitment to working on behalf of all Connecticut residents with disabilities. The goal of the SRC is to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the necessary services to maximize their employment opportunities. Through the activities of the Council, SRC members make sure that vocational rehabilitation programs are carried out with respect for individual dignity and personal responsibility. SRC has a commitment to assure informed consumer choice and an expansion of opportunities throughout the vocational rehabilitation process.

In this report, you will find many accomplishments for this year and many goals for the next year. The SRC members' dedication and commitment to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities is so important and much appreciated.

I look forward to another year where the State Rehabilitation Council will continue to build relationships that will provide meaningful employment outcomes to individuals with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Helen K. Bosch, M.S.  
Chairperson, Connecticut State Rehabilitation Council

### **Mission of the State Rehabilitation Council**

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides assessment, advice and recommendations to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and others regarding coordination and effectiveness of programs and strategies which promote community-based competitive employment for persons with disabilities.

### **Goals of the State Rehabilitation Council**

To assess the effectiveness and delivery of vocational services provided by BRS to individuals with disabilities.

To improve the coordination of vocational services among BRS, state agencies and public and private entities for the benefit of consumers of BRS.

To make recommendations to the Governor, BRS and others for developing and improving strategies for the employment of, and vocational services for, individuals with disabilities.

### **Functions of the State Rehabilitation Council**

To review, analyze and advise the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services regarding its performance in carrying out its responsibilities as the state agency designated to administer the public Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

To provide input to the Bureau in preparing the state plan for vocational rehabilitation services, as well as other plans, reports, needs assessments and evaluations.

To provide input to the Bureau regarding the Bureau's coordination activities with Connecticut's workforce investment system.

To review the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with, the performance of the Bureau and other public and private agencies in providing vocational rehabilitation services to Connecticut residents with disabilities.

To prepare and submit an annual report to the governor of the state of Connecticut and the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

To coordinate with other advisory councils in the state which oversee services to individuals with disabilities.

To perform other functions as appropriate to the mission of the Council.

# Council Committee Reports

## **Consumer Satisfaction Committee**

*Frank McCarthy, Chairperson*

**Purpose** To assess consumers' views of vocational rehabilitation, including evaluating the effectiveness of VR in assisting consumers to obtain and maintain employment.

### **2002 Accomplishments:**

- Analyzed the implications of the April 2001 consumer satisfaction survey to improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.
- Completed planning for the second phase of the survey.

### **2003 Goals:**

- Assist with the implementation of the next consumer satisfaction survey.
- Review the results of this survey and provide feedback to the Council and the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services.
- Based on the results of both surveys conducted by the Center for Research and Public Policy, plan for future assessments as needed.

## **Intercouncil Coordination/Nominations Committee**

*Linda Wallace, Chairperson*

**Purpose:** To foster linkages with other councils that oversee or have input into the provision of rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities, to plan training for Council members to foster effective council teamwork.

### **2002 Accomplishments:**

- Implemented a "partnership plan" to improve communication between the Council and BRS field staff.
- Developed a mission statement for SRC web site; created a plan and recruited vendors to build and maintain the site.

- Conducted outreach and recruited nominees for appointment to the Council with emphasis on increasing membership diversity.
- Planned the development of a resource manual of state councils which advocate for persons with disabilities in conjunction with the Connect to Work Center.

### **2003 Goals:**

- Conduct outreach to nominees for appointment to the Council, with particular emphasis on broadening Business and Industry representation.
- Continue to develop a resource manual of councils in the state that advocate for persons with disabilities, in collaboration with the Connect to Work Center.
- Work to develop a Council web site to help individuals with disabilities become gainfully employed.

## **Policy, Legislation and Planning Committee**

*Ann Seigel, Chairperson*

**Purpose:** To address issues pertaining to implementation of state and federal laws and regulations related to the vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, and to assist in developing the state and strategic plans for vocational rehabilitation services.

### **2002 Accomplishments:**

- Worked with BRS staff to implement the state plan, including reviewing updates and submitting recommendations.
- Planned and conducted a public forum to discuss the state plan.
- Worked with Executive Committee to develop a Legislative Action Plan.
- Planned and conducted legislative advocacy training for council members.

### **2003 Goals:**

- Work with BRS to implement the state plan, including reviewing the updates and providing recommendations
- Host a public forum in the spring of 2003.
- Implement and monitor the legislative action plan

## **Public/Private Partnership Committee**

*Tom Savard, Chairperson*

**Purpose:** To enhance employment outcomes for people with disabilities, while providing timely focused service to their employers, by: fostering collaboration among all the related service providers and employers (public and private, for profit and non-profit); assessing employer satisfaction with VR programs; encouraging coordinated training and orientation of employers, employees and co-workers; and determining and addressing the employment needs of business and industry.

### **2002 Accomplishments:**

- Reworked procedures regarding the Small Business Start-up Grant Program; worked with BRS district offices to ensure adequate small business training, and to create a team approach between the counselor and consumer to increase successful outcomes.
- Offered financial and in-kind support for the Youth Leadership Forum, which works in association with the Governor's Committee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities.
- Identified a Youth Leadership Forum representative to serve as a non-voting member of the Council.

### **2003 Goals:**

- Continue to support the Youth Leadership Forum with financial and in-kind resources.
- Establish a link with the Connecticut Business Leadership Network (CTBLN), a business-led initiative that promotes the hiring of qualified workers with disabilities in partnership with the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.
- Continue working with BRS on the Small Business Start-up Program.

## **Work Incentives Committee**

*Michael Spiteri, Chairperson*

**Purpose:** To provide input on, and disseminate information about, work incentives programs that may benefit recipients of disability benefits.

### **2002 Accomplishments:**

- Discussed and monitored changes in legislation and policies as they pertain to individuals with disabilities and their benefits.
- Looked at implications of the “Ticket to Work” legislation and its implementation, including the establishment of “employment networks” for persons with disabilities receiving Social Security disability benefits.

### **2003 Goals:**

- Link with the Bureau’s Connect to Work Center, to provide input and gather information on disability benefits in relation to employment for persons with disabilities.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the “employment networks,” and “Ticket to Work” Program.
- Utilize new Council web site to disseminate employment information.

## Second Phase of Consumer Satisfaction Study Completed

In October 2002, The Center for Research and Public Policy conducted the second phase of a consumer satisfaction survey of current and former recipients of vocational rehabilitation services. In November 2002, Bureau staff and members of the State Rehabilitation Council's Consumer Satisfaction Committee were briefed on the preliminary results of this study.

The majority of questions on the second survey were the same as those on the first survey (conducted in April 2001); however, the second survey assessed not only satisfaction with services, but the consumer's rating of the importance of the services received. It is anticipated that, by comparing the two dimensions of satisfaction and importance, the Bureau, with input from the Council, will be better able to identify programmatic areas that most merit attention.

A random sample of consumers in Status 12 (in service), Status 26 (closed successfully employed), and Status 28 (closed after initiation of services) were polled, resulting in a total of 801 consumers who completed the telephone survey.

Generally, the results of this follow-up survey corroborated the largely positive findings of the first phase of the study; differences in satisfaction ratings from one study to the other were small.

Key findings include the following:

- Of those responding, 72.2% said all, most, or some of their expectations were met, up slightly from 71.4% in 2001.
- 82.1 % of respondents said the benefits information provided was accurate, up from 77.8% in 2001.
- 78.7 % said this benefits information enabled them to make better decisions about work, up from 75.4% in 2001.
- The overall "Consumer Satisfaction Index" (an average of the ratings on a variety of organizational and personnel characteristics) was 87.2%, down slightly from the 2001 level of 90.5%.

In conclusion, the survey contractor stated the following:

“Overall, BRS consumers continue to report significant and impressive satisfaction with services, the program, and personnel. Recommendations for continuous improvement include improving career counseling services, communication skills and job placement assistance.”

Copies of the 2002 Consumer Satisfaction Study are available by calling Richard Carlson at 1-800-537-2549 or (860) 424-4845, or by e-mail at [richard.carlson@po.state.ct.us](mailto:richard.carlson@po.state.ct.us)

## **Membership on the State Rehabilitation Council**

Members of the State Rehabilitation Council are appointed by the governor of the state of Connecticut. The membership includes representatives from the BRS consumer community, business and industry, community-based providers of vocational rehabilitation services, advocacy organizations, and state agencies that serve individuals with disabilities. A majority of the members of the Council have physical and/or mental disabilities.

The director of the designated state agency, which is the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services of the Connecticut Department of Social Services, serves *ex officio* on the Council, as does a student representative.

## Members of the State Rehabilitation Council

*Helen Bosch, Chairperson*  
*Linda Wallace, Vice Chairperson*  
*Francis McCarthy, Secretary*  
*Mark Myers, Treasurer*

*Madison*  
*Middletown*  
*Woodbridge*  
*Canton*

Nancy Blackwell-Todd	Bridgeport
Maggie Boyce	Shelton
Pearl Brooks	Bridgeport
Joyce Budd	Shelton
Margaret Cordeiro	Milford
Brita Darany	Greenwich
George Dowaliby	Middletown
John Esteves	Stratford
Lynn Goodrich	New Britain
Heather Harrison	New Britain
Jerry Koret	Hamden
Michael Krieger	Pleasant Valley
Morag MacDonald	Bloomfield
Heidi Mark	Meriden
Shannon Mazurick*	Avon
Kathleen McManus	Hartford
Kenneth Messman	Westport
Libera Nosal	Milford
Cephas Kwame Ocansey	Portland
Thomas Savard	Easton
Ann Seigel	West Hartford
Fred Shinkle	Middletown
Michael Spiteri	Wallingford
Mike Valuckas	Waterbury
Raymond Venter	Lisbon
Marybeth Waltman	Rocky Hill
Susan Werboff	Hartford

\*Student representative (*ex officio*)

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***Please visit our website: [www.brs.state.ct.us](http://www.brs.state.ct.us)***

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Action Employer, and offers its programs regardless of race, color,  
national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation,  
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*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this report is  
available upon request in large print, braille, or on audiocassette  
or computer diskette  
by contacting Ms. Moeckel as indicated above.*

**State of Connecticut**  
**John G. Rowland, Governor**

**Department of Social Services**  
**Patricia A. Wilson-Coker, Commissioner**

**Rita M. Pacheco, Deputy Commissioner of Programs**

**Michael P. Starkowski, Deputy Commissioner of Administration**

**John F. Halliday, Director**  
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