

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

# **DISABILITY SERVICES BOARDS**

# **2007**

# **Member Handbook**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **SECTION I: DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

HISTORY OF VIRGINIA'S DISABILITY SERVICES BOARDS	3
FUNDING/SUBMITTING INVOICES	4-5
GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING LOCAL DSB	6-9

## **SECTION II: MEMBERSHIP**

DSB MEMBERSHIP – WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A MEMBER?	10
STAFF SUPPORT	11-12
DRS LIAISON	13

## **SECTION III: NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

TRI-ANNUAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT	14
HOW TO WRITE YOUR NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT	15-17

## **SECTION IV: REHABILITATIVE SERVICES INCENTIVE FUND**

AN OVERVIEW	18
GRANT REIMBURSEMENT & REPORTING	19
GRANTS MANAGEMENT	20

## **SECTION V: GENERAL INFORMATION**

DISABILITY COMMISSION, DISABILITY SERVICES COUNCIL & CONFLICT OF INTEREST	21
INTERPRETERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS	22
DSB FACT SHEET	23
DRS CONTACT INFORMATION	24
DIRECTIONS TO DRS CENTRAL OFFICE	25
DSB MAP	26

*Note: In the process of updating this handbook several forms from previous manuals have been removed such as the members contact list, the Virginia Code, and RSIF applications and guidelines. These forms as well as a digital version of the handbook are available on the DSB Website: <http://www.vadrs.org/cbs/dsc/dsb.htm>.*

## HISTORY OF VIRGINIA'S DISABILITY SERVICES BOARDS

---

*A partnership between consumer, local government, and business working to increase access and develop consumer-oriented, community-based services for persons with physical and sensory disabilities.*

In 1992, the General Assembly legislated the development of the **Disability Services Boards (DSBs)** to assist localities in identifying and addressing the needs of persons with physical and sensory disabilities in their communities. The Disability Services Boards and their grant program, the Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund, originated in a 1992 report of the Disability Commission. Community involvement is a major theme of the report. In studying services for people with physical and sensory disabilities, the Commission found that planning for programs and services had traditionally been developed at the state level and implemented locally. In response to this finding, they created local Disability Services Boards as the infrastructure for locally-based assessment and planning. The DSBs provide a bottom-up approach to service planning which is different from the prevalent top-down planning.

The boards are a vital part in the development and expansion of services to improve access for citizens living in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Local government appoints the board members to fulfill this charge by the General Assembly. Membership is comprised of local government representatives, business representatives, and individuals with physical or sensory disabilities or family members of people with physical or sensory disabilities. A DSB may have up to 15 members. Thirty percent of the membership must represent person(s) with a physical or sensory disability and have two business representatives. The boards advise state and local government and agencies and, through incentive grants, leverage private and public dollars to improve service delivery and public awareness. Over 500 individuals serve on Virginia's 40 Disability Services Boards, representing every political jurisdiction in the Commonwealth.

Boards are responsible to the governing body or bodies of the county/city or combination thereof, which established the board. Term limits are set by the local governing body and not by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

### **Duties:**

- Develop and make available for public comment an **assessment of local needs and priorities** of people with physical and sensory disabilities, updated every three years;
- Administer the **Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund** and serve as a catalyst for the development of public and private funding sources;
- Provide information and resource referral to local governments regarding the **Americans with Disabilities Act**;
- **Exchange information** with other local boards regarding services to persons with physical and sensory disability and best practices in the delivery of services; and
- **Provide such other assistance and advice** to local governments as may be requested.

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT [HTTP://WWW.VADRS.ORG/CBS/DSC/DSB.HTM](http://www.vadrs.org/CBS/DSC/DSB.HTM)

## **FUNDING FOR THE DISABILITY SERVICES BOARDS**

---

The General Assembly allocates state funds each year to the Disability Services Boards. The Disability Services Boards Program currently receives approximately \$732,500 dollars annually. The following is a breakdown of funds allocated to the DSB program:

- \$20,000 for administrative expenses
- \$450,000 for support staff salary and expenses
- \$180,000 for the Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund

In addition to the state funding, some boards receive administrative funds or staff support from their local government. Boards also receive funds, either from their local government or the sub-grantees, to match the state Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund dollars. A sub-grantee is an organization that receives grant approval from the local board, the Disability Services Council and a contract executed by the Department of Rehabilitative Services to serve or meet needs identified by the local DSB.

### **Administrative Budget:**

The General Assembly appropriates \$20,000 annually to support the administrative and training expenses of the 40 DSB's and their members. Each board receives approximately \$500 for their administrative expenses, depending on need. Boards and members can receive reimbursement for items associated with the operational cost of each board. These include:

- Travel to and from meetings for the board members
- Interpreter costs, hearing loops, transfer of written material to Braille or audio tape, and other costs associated with accessibility needs
- Postage/Materials/Supplies
- Public Notice/Advertisement in newspapers
- Phone calls for DSB business (need original phone bill)
- Board membership (not individual) in associations
- Public awareness and ADA related activities (speakers, cost of printing materials, resource materials, etc.)

Contact your DSB staff or DRS liaison for assistance with submitting your bills for reimbursement. Items not on the list must be pre-approved by DRS Central office staff.

### **Staff Support:**

In 1999, Virginia General Assembly allocated \$450,000 to the Disability Services Boards to hire staff. The Disability Services Council allocated the funds to each board based upon the number of jurisdictions that they represent. The funding ranges from \$7,750 to \$14,800 annually to the local boards for staff expenses. The role of the support staff is to assist the local boards in fulfilling their **Code of Virginia** mandates. The support staff duties are outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding between local governments and the Department of Rehabilitative Services.

## **SUBMISSION OF INVOICES FOR PAYMENT**

---

The submission of invoices and other board-related expenses will be covered in this section. When submitting any invoice please include the original receipt showing the purchase and the method of payment. This includes payment for office supplies, registration for conferences and any other expenses related to the board. A letter of request should be attached stating who should be reimbursed, whether it is an individual or local government, with appropriate contact and mailing information included.

You can submit an invoice directly to the Department of Rehabilitative Services for payment. The invoice must be billed directly to your local DSB from the vendor that supplied the service or item. The invoice should state what item(s) were purchased, shipping date and that the items received are in good condition if ordered by mail or express service (example: Newspaper advertisement – DRS must receive a copy of the advertisement and the date it ran along with the invoice from the newspaper.)

When **planning a meeting** where food is being provided, you must have prior approval from the Department of Rehabilitative Services. A letter must be sent to DRS stating the purpose of the meeting, the number of people attending, cost of food and the length of the meeting. In order to be reimbursed your request must be in accordance with state regulations for working lunches.

When **submitting travel vouchers** for members, be sure to include points of travel, date, signature, and social security number or vendor number. These are necessary for the timely processing of the travel reimbursement requests. Payment of invoices by DRS will be within 30 days from the date it is received in accordance with the Prompt Payment Act.

For additional guidance regarding state rates and regulations for travel, lodging, and meals visit the Virginia Department of Accounts on the web at <http://www.doa.virginia.gov>.

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL DISABILITY SERVICES BOARDS**

### **Establishment:**

- A Disability Services Board (DSB) shall be established to represent a single jurisdiction or combinations of jurisdictions in accordance with the formula described below.
- Combinations of jurisdictions represented by a single DSB should occur in accordance with the formula developed by the Beyer Commission. The formula, described below, is intended to enhance the effectiveness of the local boards and streamline the administration of the boards.
- Localities may designate an existing local Board or Commission for persons with physical or sensory disabilities as the DSB, if such Board or Commission meets the membership representation requirements stipulated in the Virginia Code Section 51.5-47.
- The formula below, developed during the Beyer Commission's study, should be applied for the establishment of a DSB.
- There should be at least one DSB, representing the localities within each Planning District.
- One additional DSB should be established within a Planning District if the number of Cities and Counties within that district exceeds eight.
- Up to three additional boards may also be established within a Planning District if the total population of the Planning District exceeds 350,000. No Planning District should have more than five boards, nor should any single jurisdiction have more than one DSB.
- A Joint Powers Agreement is necessary for forming a DSB to represent a combination of jurisdictions.
- A copy of the executed Joint Powers Agreement should be forwarded to the Department of Rehabilitative Services Central Office in Richmond, Virginia within thirty days after execution.
- The DRS Central Office will review the records establishing the DSB for consistency with the guidelines and will maintain DSB administrative records. Therefore, local jurisdictions should forward documentation of public actions such as copies of executed resolutions or Joint Powers Agreements and official minutes recording board appointments to the Department of Rehabilitative Services, Central Office in Richmond, Virginia.

## **Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Assessment and reporting duties and responsibilities of the DSB should be fulfilled as specified in the Virginia Code Section 51.5-48.  
<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+51.5-47>
- Assess the local service needs and advise the appropriate state and local agencies serving persons with physical and sensory disabilities of their findings;
- Develop and make available for public comment a report with a six-year projection of local service needs and priorities for persons with physical and sensory disabilities in accordance with state guidelines.
- Obtain input from local public and private service providers and utilize such information in the development of the report.
- Review and update the report biennially.
- Serve as a catalyst for the development of public and private funding sources.
- Develop requests to the Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund when local funding for match is identified.
- Administer the incentive funds, if received, through a designated fiscal agent in accordance with an approved expenditure plan as specified within the grant.
- Exchange information with other DSBs, and local organizations within the community regarding services to persons with physical and sensory disabilities and best practices in the delivery of services.
- Provide input to state agencies on service needs and priorities of persons with physical and sensory disabilities.
- Provide information and resource referral to local governments on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Localities are not mandated to fund any recommendations made by the DSB.
- The Disability Services Boards will not provide direct services.

## **Recruitment and Appointment of DSB Members:**

- The local governing bodies of the jurisdictions participating in the DSB will determine the number of members on the board and appoint the members. The membership of a Board shall not exceed fifteen. Membership shall include at least one local official from each of the participating jurisdictions, two representatives of the business community, and consumers. Each DSB shall have no less than thirty percent representation by individuals or family members of individuals with physical, visual, or hearing disabilities.
- Localities are encouraged to appoint DSB members in accordance with established written criteria.
- Written criteria for DSB membership should include:
  - A willingness to actively participate;
  - An interest in, and knowledge of community service needs of persons with disabilities;
  - The ability and willingness to network;
  - An interest in and knowledge of government, business and community concerns;
  - Expertise and/or experience in representing constituent concerns; and
  - A willingness to seek advice or more information, if appropriate when issues are presented.
- Recruitment for potential board members should include requesting referrals and nominations through:
  - Other community board members;
  - Local business and trade associations;
  - Advocacy groups, consumers, and individuals interested and involved within their communities; and
  - Public Notification.
- In making appointments, local jurisdictions should insure that boards include persons with hearing, visual and physical disabilities. At a minimum a person from each should serve on the Board.
- Localities should provide the names and addresses of DSB appointees to the Department of Rehabilitative Services within thirty days after appointments are made.

### **DSB Terms of Membership and Board Member Orientation:**

- Localities should establish staggered three-year terms of office.
- When vacancies occur they should be filled through a process that actively recruits new individuals and also provides opportunity for reappointment of current members with limits on consecutive terms of office.
- Each DSB appointee is expected to participate in DSB board orientation.

### **Board Operating Procedures:**

- Each DSB will need to establish Operating Procedures.
- Operating Procedures should address the following:
  - Name of the DSB and the jurisdiction(s) served by the DSB;
  - Purpose of the DSB as specified in the Statute;
  - Composition of the DSB and the Terms of office for DSB members;
  - Orientation of DSB members;
  - Duties and Responsibilities of the DSB;
  - DSB meeting information (regular and special meeting requirements, voting, quorum, attendance requirements, reappointment, replacement process, and business procedures);
  - DSB officers and committee structure;
  - Modification of Operating Procedures;
  - Adoption of Reports produced by the DSB; and
  - Memorandum of Understanding, if applicable.
- Each DSB established by a single jurisdiction is encouraged to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the jurisdiction.
- A copy of the executed Memorandum of Understanding should be provided to the DRS Central Office in Richmond, Virginia within thirty days of execution.
- A copy of the DSB Operating Procedures should be provided to the DRS Central Office in Richmond, Virginia within thirty days after adoption by the DSB.

## **DSB MEMBERSHIP - WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A DSB MEMBER?**

---

Disability Services Boards membership vary from year to year. Members serve from terms of one year to four or more years. There are boards that rotate members on and off the board on a regular basis ensuring that there is a continual influx of new ideas and thoughts on the needs of citizens with disabilities in their locality. The learning curve for new members may take six months to a year depending on how many meetings the board holds in a given year. Members who take a vested interest in the board and are dedicated to the mission of the DSB have asked for ways or ideas of how to get more involved in the community.

Below are some ideas that will assist members in becoming acclimated and active participants:

- Educate yourself and others about issues affecting persons with physical and sensory disabilities in your jurisdiction and bring them to the attention of the board.
- Educate yourself about the policy process of your local government.
- Provide regular updates on local issues relating to persons with physical and sensory disabilities and DSB activities to your local government representatives.
- Assist with the tri-annual needs assessment by selecting issues, developing recommendations for state and local actions, writing and reviewing the report, and overseeing the implementation of recommendations.
- Develop linkages between the DSB and other organizations of which you are a member and look for opportunities for partnerships.
- Seek opportunities to increase participation of persons with physical and sensory disabilities in the community and involve the DSB in your community.
- Be an advocate in problem-solving in your community.
- Be an active participant during board meetings and other community meetings discussing issues relating to disabilities.
- Participate in local, regional and statewide DSB activities.
- Serve on a committee within your DSB.
- Invite your local community resources to your meeting to present their services and ways of partnering to address the needs in the community.
- Assist in identifying funding sources to improve community resources for persons with physical and sensory disabilities.
- Oversee your locality's implementation of the ADA.
- Assist in selecting and overseeing RSIF projects.

The role of **DSB Chair** may vary differently among the boards, but one of the primary responsibilities is to conduct meetings. The Chair is the catalyst in ensuring that meetings run in an effective and efficient manner. One way of doing this is having committees. Committees develop action plans and do the "grunt work" before the meetings. Committees present recommendation(s) to the board on item(s) presented during the regular meeting so that board members can discuss and vote on a course of action.

## STAFF SUPPORT

---

The role of the DSB staff is essential to the daily operation of the Board. The staff person assists the board in maintaining its relationships with their local government(s). Staff is responsible for obtaining appointments from their local government(s) when a vacancy occurs on the board. They also work with local governments, community partners and others in presenting the role of the Disability Services Boards. They assist the Chair in obtaining speakers/presenters for regular or special board meetings. Staff works in concert with the Chair to ensure that all board directives are met prior to the next meeting and that the will of the DSB is carried out.

Support staff are expected to:

- Attend all DSB meetings (minimum of one meeting per quarter), committee meetings and related activities;
- Prepare, disseminate and maintain agendas, minutes and other correspondence;
- Maintain and monitor the administrative budget;
- Maintain official records for the DSBs;
- Administer and monitor the RSIF grants and ensure that the impact reports are completed and sent within the timeframe specified;
- Arrange sign language interpreters, CAN and/or CART services, and all other necessary accommodations, for DSB meetings and hearings;
- Ensure DSB compliance with the Code of Virginia and DSB Establishment Guidelines;
- Provide ADA and disability information to DSB members, local elected officials and the public within the localities served by the local DSB;
- Support DSB efforts to exchange information with other local boards regarding services and best practices in the delivery of services to persons with physical and sensory disabilities;
- Perform other duties as directed by the local board. Examples of additional duties assigned to DSB staff by DSBs (at the DSB's direction and with the board's assistance) include:
  - Provide notice of and advertise (as appropriate) DSB meetings;
  - Prepare the triennial assessment, including research or background work, of local needs and priorities of persons with physical and sensory disabilities;
  - Administer the Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund (RSIF) grant application process;

- Provide input into statewide processes initiated by DRS;
- Participate in a statewide network of DSB staff members to share ideas about DSB activities and efforts; and
- Facilitate such other assistance and advice to local governments as requested.

The **Staff Support Performance Measure** is part of the Memorandum of Understanding that local boards and their local government entities have signed to access the support staff monies. These performance measures are the minimum expectations set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding and are not to be considered all-inclusive. The local DSB or the employer of record can set additional performance measurements.

## **DRS LIAISON**

---

A DRS Liaison is assigned to each DSB to provide technical assistance and guidance to boards with meeting statutory mandates and to keep the DRS Central office apprised on developments and products related to DSB staff work. The DRS Liaison position may be filled by a Disability Services Agency (DSA) staff from the Department of Rehabilitative Services, The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, or the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Every board is required to have one active DRS Liaison, and may have multiple Liaisons.

### **DRS Liaisons may:**

- Provide guidance and resources on issues related to persons with disabilities, Disability Service Agencies (DSA), resources and services for persons with physical and sensory disabilities, Virginia Code mandates of DSB, the Disability Commission, the Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund, the Disability Services Council and the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Assist the DSB in acquiring information for the Needs Assessment;
- Provide information to boards on local service organizations in order to support consultation regarding local needs, service gaps, potential RSIF applicants, and best practices;
- Clearly differentiate to the DSB when citing personal opinion, DRS position, policy or perspective or other governmental rules or regulations;
- Provide technical assistance to assure the accessibility of DSB meetings and public access to relevant information; and
- At minimum, attend quarterly meetings of the board, but keep abreast of activities of the board.

### **DRS Liaisons may NOT:**

- Carry out political activity such as lobbying government officials while acting in role of agency liaison.
- Be expected to participate in meetings beyond the quarterly requirements;
- Chair meetings, act as DSB secretary; or
- Participate as a voting board member.

## **TRI-ANNUAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

---

One of the main products of the boards is their needs assessment, which identifies local needs, services gaps, priority populations, and services for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities. State law requires that these needs assessments be updated every three years (Code of Virginia § 51.5-48). The needs assessment is the planning document for the DSB's in which the Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund Grants are awarded. DRS staff develops a summary report of DSB needs assessments findings. Needs assessment findings are reviewed by the Disability Services Council and is distributed to the appropriate state agencies to be incorporated into the agencies' programmatic and fiscal planning for services.

### **The Purposes of the Needs Assessment:**

- To identify areas for DSB's to address locally through education, developing partnerships, identifying resources, etc.;
- To inform state agencies of the needs of persons with physical and sensory disabilities for their programmatic and fiscal planning;
- To enhance awareness of the service needs of persons with physical and sensory disabilities at the state and local level;
- To function as a framework for identifying program coordination and innovative programs which can potentially be supported by rehabilitative services incentive funds;
- To facilitate communication among the boards regarding services and best practices in service delivery; and
- To facilitate communication among consumers and public and private entities regarding development of the consumer-centered service system and continuum of options envisioned in the Disability Commission Report.

### **Information Which Can Be Included in the Assessment:**

- Needs of persons with physical and sensory disabilities and their families;
- Existing services within the community;
- Utilization of existing services;
- Capacity of the service provider;
- Profiles of persons served (age, type of disability, gender, etc.);
- Accessibility to services in local areas;
- Identification of trends;
- Gaps in services within the community;
- Demographics and service needs of persons not served or under-served;
- Service options emphasizing consumer choice, self-sufficiency, and independence for individuals; and
- Incentives for achieving service coordination and desired outcomes.

### **How to obtain the information for the Assessment:**

- Questionnaires;
- Focus groups in the community; and
- Service Providers.

## HOW TO WRITE YOUR NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

---

Preparing your needs assessment report according to these guidelines will help you organize your thoughts about what is needed in your local area and what you might do as a DSB to respond to the needs you've identified. It will also present the information you've obtained in a format that can be easily used at the state level. Your report does not need to be long, but it does need to be complete, and should not require the reader to refer to other documents. Your report should consist of the following sections:

### A. Introduction

Include a description of DSB (i.e. the name, jurisdictions included, members, brief history), as well as other information on DSB as desired, such as history of region; economic, historical, geographic, factors affecting region; and documents from local planning departments. Also include an overview of DSB activities to address needs and list any significant outcomes achieved as a result of DSB activities.

### B. Purpose

State the purpose of the needs assessment. Keep in mind that the reason each DSB conducts its own needs assessment is because locally-obtained information on the needs of people with disabilities in its own area is of great help to a DSB when setting priorities, planning DSB activities, obtaining support from local government, etc. The DSB needs assessments are also important to state-level agencies or organizations, as they provide much needed information about needs, service gaps, and systems issues across the state.

### C. Data Collection

Describe the methods you used to obtain information. Include copies of any forms you used (these often are put into an Appendix).

Most of the DSBs have collected data using some combination of the following methods:

1. Interviewing service providers (most often, via a written survey form) about services, number of clients, who their clients are, respondent's opinions about needs, etc.
2. Interviewing local government officials (again, via a written survey form).
3. Soliciting comments from members of the public, through public meets, focus groups, notices in local newspapers, advisory board meeting, public access cable TV, etc.
4. Reviewing demographic data from the U.S. Census and other sources.

To update your needs assessments, re-contact local services providers to ask if anything has changed – services added, program funding lost, etc. It is not necessary to ask again for a full description of services if you have it from before. Note if any providers or services have become “extinct.” Contact any new service providers in your area. Solicit comments from members of the public, as above.

Don't worry about updating demographic data UNLESS a change with implications for DSB

action has occurred, e.g., the average age in your area has changed dramatically because a new retirement community or new community college campus has opened.

#### **D. Analysis**

Describe how you organized and summarized the information you collected. Include copies of any tables or charts you developed. Many DSB's have done charts which describe each local service provider; some have done a "resource matrix" which shows what services are and are not available. If you obtain public comments, it is more useful to write a summary of the different topics that are brought up than it is to present just the number of responses. For your purposes, the analysis does not have to be quantitative or statistical.

#### **E. Summary of Results**

Summary of what you found out about local needs. A list of the important points is easier to follow than a narrative summary.

For example:

1. Public buildings in Raintree County in general are not accessible. This is a particular concern at the Courthouse, which has no ramps, and at the Public Library, which has a ramp that is too narrow for most wheelchairs.
2. There is no public transportation in Raintree County, so people with disabilities in the county must rely on private transportation. The Red Cross Transportation Program will take them to and from medical appointments, but it does not cover the western part of the county due to lack of resources. In June 1997, a large new medical clinic will open in the Town of County Seat, located in the western part of Raintree County.

#### **F. Implications for DSB Action**

Summary of what your results suggest about priorities, needs for services, needs for action, etc., that your DSB can address at the local level.

The examples above might suggest the following implications:

1. The Raintree County DSB should meet with Courthouse and Library officials to identify resources and implement activities to make sure these buildings are accessible.
2. The Raintree County DSB should explore methods of meeting the increasing need for transportation in the western part of the county. Initial efforts will include working with the Red Cross to determine if there are ways the DSB can support expansion of their existing service. Also, working with administrators at the new medical clinic as well as town officials and taxi services providers in the Town of County Seat, to determine if transportation services to and from the clinic can be provided through a joint effort.

## **G. Implications for State-level Action**

Summary of what your results suggest about needs, service gaps, or systems issues that should be addressed by agencies or organizations at the state level.

The examples above might suggest the following implications:

1. There is a need for additional resources, such as training and informational materials, to help the DSB's provide technical assistance with regard to building accessibility.
2. There is an urgent need for system development and services coordination of transportation for people with disabilities.

To view a copy of the 2006 DSB Needs Assessment Survey please go to:  
<http://www.vadrs.org/cbs/dsc/rsif.htm>

## **REHABILITATIVE SERVICES INCENTIVE FUND – AN OVERVIEW**

---

### **History:**

In 1994, Virginia's General Assembly approved the creation of Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund (RSIF). This fund was designed to promote investment in meeting the needs of individuals with physical and/or sensory disabilities. Local DSB's identify unmet or under-served needs through the tri-annual needs assessments reports, which uncover areas for change and improvement to increase the quality of life for individuals with physical and/ or sensory disabilities. The local DSB is charged with the duty of administering the RSIF. As of the year 2007, the Fund receives an annual appropriation of \$212,500, of which \$180,000 is available to DSB's through a competitive application process for grant development. In non-competitive cycles, both single and multi-year grants (up to three years) are available. Currently, only single year grants are available.

### **Purpose:**

RSIF dollars may be used to increase service capacity through expanding existing services or creating new services. But more importantly, these funds are designed to stimulate model programs, coordinated service systems and program innovations. RSIF is ideally used as 'seed' money; it establishes a service, and then further funding for that service must be uncovered through other avenues to continue the program or service. RSIF may not be used to meet requirements established under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). RSIF is a reimbursement grant. RSIF dollars are only awarded when a matching local percentage is met. The local match cannot be in kind services or other state money.

### **Allocation:**

Since FY 2002, the dollars available in the Rehabilitation Services Incentive Fund decreased from approximately \$900,000 to \$180,000, and DRS initiated a competitive award process. The RSIF Guidelines are reviewed and approved by the Disability Services Council (DSC) each year to include the number or submissions accepted from each board and maximum award amounts.

### **The Application Process:**

An annual grant application package, along with specific guidelines, is sent to each DSB. It is the responsibility of the local DSB to conduct a tri-annual needs assessment, which is the basis for the RSIF. The DSB is responsible for the solicitation of bids by local organizations. Both profit and non-profit organizations are encouraged to apply for RSIF dollars to fill the gaps identified in the needs assessment. The DSB makes determinations as to the most urgently needed services and recommends the applications that fulfill that service. All grant applications must list a local government entity or 501(c)-(3) organization to act as Fiscal Agent, who can assure accountability at the local level for funds expended by the DSB and maintain records thereof. The supported applications are then sent to Department of Rehabilitative Services, where they are reviewed by a panel. An interagency and consumer panel reviews proposals and makes recommendations for funding to the Disability Services Council. The Council considers these recommendations and formally decides which grants to award. Once the determination is made, award letters and contracts are generated, as are rejection letters.

## **GRANT REIMBURSEMENT AND REPORTING**

---

Upon signing of the contract, the sub-grantee accepts all responsibility for the contract and the provisions included. One such provision directs the sub-grantee to invoice monthly for reimbursement. The reimbursement must adhere to the correct format. The Fiscal Agent must first approve the reimbursement request. Upon approval, the Fiscal Agent forwards the reimbursement request to DRS, for further processing. In order for a reimbursement to be paid, it must contain the proper supporting documentation, as stipulated in the grant contract.

Two **impact reports** are required from the sub-grantee per fiscal year. The first report is due midway through the fiscal year while the second (final report for 1 year contract) report is due at contract completion, or the end of the fiscal year. The impact reports provide the DSB, the Fiscal Agent, and DRS a way of gauging the progress and success of each grant. "The DSB, as the Grantee, is responsible for assuring that the Sub-grantee meets the performance deliveries as outlined in the contract. This accountability is defined in the Grant contract and required that the DSB, through either their local government staff or the Fiscal Agent, tracks and documents such performance." (RSIF Guidelines § 3.5)

One-year projects are defined as one time, non-recurring costs that cover only one year and may include:

- ✓ Purchase of units of a given service.
- ✓ Consultant services on an hourly or daily rate.
- ✓ Equipment related to the described project.
- ✓ Other costs related to the project, such as, printing, postage, and office supplies.

A one-year project may not include:

- ✗ Personnel costs for one-year projects.
- ✗ Services or accommodations required under a state or federal law, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- ✗ Studies for the purpose of identifying needed services for people with physical and /or sensory disabilities or gathering data with no tangible product or service.
- ✗ Services, personnel or accommodations that are currently funded with another revenue source.

## GRANTS MANAGEMENT

---

When grants are awarded, a letter announcing the award is sent to the grant recipient. This letter will outline the amount of the award and the scope of the project. A contract will be generated including the amount, scope of the project, timetable and reporting requirements. The Department of Rehabilitative Services sends an award letter to each grant recipient and copies of the letter to the DSB chair, staff, DRS liaison and Fiscal Agent for their records.

Below are suggested guidelines/model for monitoring each sub-grantee and their contract performance. These guidelines will help to ensure progression of the contract, that performance measures are being met, and address issues/problems as they arise. Each sub-grantee should be contacted monthly. Information obtained may include:

- Progress made on the project since last contact;
- Review of sub-grantee's projected completion schedule;
- Funding update since last contact – what has been expended by sub-grantee and status of grant disbursement requests;
- Review of sub-grantee's projected expenditures required to complete the project;
- Request of information on any difficulties encountered or anticipated – what can the board or the state do to assist with the successful completion of the project.

Support staff or a member should maintain a **monthly action item list** for all grants. The list would identify tasks or actions of the local board and its staff that will assist sub-grantees in maintaining their completion schedules and budgets.

Each year, prior to the completion of the mandatory impact reports, each grant recipient should be expected to give a presentation to the DSB on their project. The report should include a review of the project's goals, the progress made to date, and the schedule for project completion. The timing of the presentation should be aimed prior to the completion of the impact report in order to help the sub-grantee prepare and arrange all information to assist in providing DRS with a complete and informative impact report.

Fiscal Agents should be informed of their duties in the RSIF projects prior to taking on this responsibility. Fiscal Agents must keep a copy of all payment requests made by the sub-grantee, as they are responsible for money management at the local level. Requests for reimbursement should be thoroughly examined for errors and deviations from contract specifications. Requests for reimbursement should only be forwarded to DRS once deemed complete and signature worthy.

## **THE DISABILITY COMMISSION**

---

**Website:** <http://dls.state.va.us/disability.htm>

The purpose of the Disability Commission is to identify and recommend legislative priorities and policies for adoption or examination by the General Assembly, in order to provide ongoing support in developing and reviewing services and funding related to Virginians with disabilities.

## **THE DISABILITY SERVICES COUNCIL**

---

**Website:** <http://www.vadrs.org/cbs/dsc/>

The Disability Services Council (DSC) was established in the same legislation as the Disability Services Boards during the 1992 Virginia General Assembly. The Council consists of the Commissioner of the Department of Rehabilitative Services, the Commissioner of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, the Director of the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, three consumer members representing physical and sensory disabilities and one representative of local government. The Council develops guidelines for DSB establishment, needs assessment reports, and the Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund (RSIF). The Council reviews RSIF request proposals for consistency with the guidelines and determine awards for both the regular and competitive RSIF proposals. The Council also reviews and establishes the formula for allocation of both the support staff and RSIF funds.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

---

The Disability Services Boards are governed by Virginia's Comprehensive Conflict of Interest Act, which prohibits board members who have a personal interest in a transaction before the Board from participating in the transaction. For the purposes of the Act, a "personal interest" means a financial benefit accruing to the member or someone in his/her immediate family. Knowingly violating the Act is a criminal offense.

A board member who has a personal interest in an organization applying for RSIF funds should not be involved in the discussion or vote on the organization's application. A board may elect to include language in their operating procedures on excluding such a member from the discussion or vote on all applications.

In addition, administrative funds are to be used for expenses of the Disability Services Board. These funds are not to be used to benefit an organization in which a board member has a personal interest or to meet the personal needs or interests of the board member.

## INTERPRETERS & OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

---

Since meetings and related activities are open to the public, we always strive to provide accommodations so people with disabilities can equally participate in a DSB meeting or sponsored activity. This section will provide guidance in meeting the request of both board members and the public who may need an accommodation.

### Physical Accessibility:

You will want to **ensure that the facilities are accessible** to wheelchairs, scooters or other type of mobility devices. This would include bathrooms, water fountains, and access to the meeting room by ensuring the elevator is working.

### Sign Language Interpreters & CART:

From time to time, you may receive requests for Sign Language Interpreters and or Computer Accessed Real-time Translation (CART). Interpreters are in high demand and are often scheduled months in advance. Due to the demand for interpreting services, it is a best practice to schedule interpreters as far in advance as possible. **You can contact the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) at 1-800-552-7917 V/TTY or 804-662-9793 V/TTY to assist you in obtaining an interpreter and or CART services.** You can access interpreter and CART request forms from the VDDHH forms cabinet on the web at <http://vadors.org/formscabinet/formscabinet.asp?pass=et1&t1=VDDHH&pg>.

### Materials:

When planning a meeting or DSB-related activity, you should **always prepare materials in alternative formats.** Braille, disk, materials on tape are examples of alternative formats. You may want to contact the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired for advice on accommodating individuals who are blind or visually impaired. When publicizing an event be sure to include that accommodations are available upon request. You may want to state a timeframe for the request such as it must be received two weeks before the event. The individual should tell you what type of accommodation he/she needs.

# Disability Services Boards

## What are the Disability Services Boards?

In 1992, the General Assembly legislated the development of Disability Services Boards (DSBs) to assist localities in identifying and addressing the needs of persons with physical and sensory disabilities in their communities. The Boards advise state and local government and agencies and, through incentive grants, leverage private and public dollars to improve service delivery and public awareness. Over 500 individuals serve on Virginia's 40 Disability Services Boards, which represent every political jurisdiction in the Commonwealth.

## Who are its members?

Members are appointed by their local government. Membership must include at least one local official from each of the participating jurisdictions, two representatives of the business community, and persons with physical and sensory disabilities or their family members. Each board must have no less than thirty- percent representation by persons with physical, visual or hearing disabilities or their family members. The membership of a board shall not exceed fifteen.

## What are the duties?

- Develop and make available for public comment an **assessment of local needs and priorities** of people with physical and sensory disabilities, updated every three years;
- Provide information and resource referral to local governments regarding the **Americans with Disabilities Act**;
- Administer the **Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund** and serve as a catalyst for the development of public and private funding sources;
- **Exchange information** with other local boards regarding services to persons with physical and sensory disability and best practices in the delivery of services; and
- Provide such **other assistance and advice** to local governments as may be requested.

*A partnership of consumer, local government, and business working to increase access and develop consumer-oriented, community-based services for persons with physical and sensory disabilities.*

*Reproduction of this document is encouraged.*

## **DRS OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES BOARDS**

---

### **How We Can Help:**

- Provide guidance and technical assistance on DSB's & RSIF to ensure compliance and fulfillment of mandates in the Code of Virginia.
- Implement strategies to inform DSB's and other parties of DSB activities and projects.
- Arrange for a variety of training activities for DSB staff, liaisons and members.
- Provide ADA resources to DSB's.
- Develop and distribute DSB related materials for trainings and presentations

### **Contact Information:**

**Richard Kriner**  
DSB Program Manager  
(804) 662-7059 Voice  
(800) 552-5019 Toll Free Voice  
(800) 464-9950 TTY  
[Richard.Kriner@DRS.Virginia.gov](mailto:Richard.Kriner@DRS.Virginia.gov)

**Sheila Williams**  
Administrative Assistant  
(804) 662-7055 V/TTY  
(800) 552-5019 Toll Free Voice  
(800) 464-9950 TTY  
[Sheila.Williams@DRS.Virginia.gov](mailto:Sheila.Williams@DRS.Virginia.gov)

### **Mailing address:**

Richard Kriner  
Disability Services Boards Program Manager  
Department of Rehabilitative Services  
8004 Franklin Farms Drive  
Richmond, VA 23229

## **DIRECTIONS TO DRS CENTRAL OFFICE**

---

### **VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATIVE SERVICES**

**8004 Franklin Farms Drive**

**Richmond, VA 23229**

**804/662-7000 Voice**

**800/552-5019 Toll-Free Voice**

**800/464-9950 Toll-Free TTY**

### **FROM I-95 NORTH OR SOUTH OR I-64 EAST:**

Take I-95 to Interstate 64 West

Take Exit 183-A, Glenside Drive South

Follow Glenside Drive to Forest Avenue

Turn Right onto Forest Avenue

Follow Forest Avenue to Franklin Farms Drive

Turn Right onto Franklin Farms Drive

DRS Central Office is in the third office building on the right (Lee Building)

### **FROM I-64 WEST:**

Take I-64 East from Charlottesville

Take Exit 183, Glenside Drive/University of Richmond

Take a right onto Glenside Drive

Follow Glenside Drive to Forest Avenue

Take a Right onto Forest Avenue

Follow Forest Avenue to Franklin Farms Drive

Take a Right onto Franklin Farms Drive

DRS Central Office is the Third Building on the Right (LEE BUILDING)

# Virginia Disability Services Boards

