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## Chief's Corner

By: Cathy McEachron, Chief Bureau of Vendor & Contracted Services

This has been a whirlwind quarter for the Bureau of Vendor & Contracted Services (BVCS), full of travel, training, and a few staffing changes. This quarter we held our very first round of Area Wide Group Provider Training sessions. Staff from both Tallahassee and the local areas blanketed the state to provide twelve face-to-face training sessions. The response and attendance was incredible! In just five short weeks my amazing team, joined by our Business Relations Team colleagues trained well over 400 Provider representatives. You'll find more details on page 4. We're still working through survey results to leverage opportunities for improvement. Plans for next year are already underway.

We had a number of staffing changes this quarter as well. Our Area 2 Provider Liaison, Laretta Jackson, retired after many years of faithful service to the state of Florida, 18 of which were spent with VR. She left

some big shoes to fill. Fortunately, Peter Shepis is up to the task! Peter joined us in July, but he has been with VR since 2015. Prior to coming to VR, Peter worked for a VR Provider in Arizona, which happens to be my home state, so I knew he'd be awesome from the second I met him! Unfortunately, another member of our team has left us to pursue an offer too good to pass up. Tim Goodman, our Area 5 Provider Liaison, has accepted a position in the private sector. They will soon find out how fortunate they are to have him. Tim's humor, kindness, and genuine passion for his work are unparalleled. We are in the process of hiring for his vacant position now. Whomever we choose will have a tough act to follow!

I hope you enjoy this quarter's edition of The Benchmark. Thank you for being such wonderful partners and for all you do for our customers.

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## It's a twin thing

by: Evelyn Langmaid and Judith Toussaint, FLPR

Did you know that your Area 1 Provider Liaison, Evelyn Langmaid and your Area 6 Provider Liaison, Judith Toussaint both have an identical twin sister?

Being a twin is a unique experience. You are born with your best friend and develop such a strong connection that you might be able to finish each other sentences after just two words or communicate with one another using a single look. As a twin, you are used to being a whole although you are two completely different people. No matter what, you'll always have a best friend, through thick and thin, good and bad times, you will always have your twin to help you through. We both love having a twin and wouldn't want it any other way.

### Our twin thing:

Evelyn: My twin and I have shown up to a parties wearing the exact outfit without planning it

Judith: My twin and I are reigning champs at the party game Taboo



Judith Toussaint (left) and Geraldine Toussaint (right)



Evelyn Langmaid (left) and Elaine McCabe (right)

# Business Relations Team Update

by: Kathy Davis, Business Relations Team Unit Supervisor

Hello from Business Relations! It was exciting to meet with so many of you during the training sessions developed by VR's Field and Provider Relations Unit. We know we did not get to meet all of you, so we want to follow-up with some frequently asked questions from the trainings:

**Q: What services does Business Relations provide?**

**A:** The most commonly provided Business Relations services are awareness/sensitivity training, OJT assistance, orientation to VR and Business Relations services, pre-ETS coordination of services, recruitment assistance, referral of qualified applicants, referrals to the Abilities Work Help Desk and other resources, sector partnerships, and service alignment and coordination with workforce partners.

**Q: Could we initiate a monthly meeting with the area providers, provider liaison and the Business Rep – in an person meeting to talk, network, and brainstorm?**

**A:** Yes! Let your provider liaison and Business Rep know you are interested in meeting regularly. If you don't know who your Business Rep is, email [VRBusinessRep@vr.fldoe.org](mailto:VRBusinessRep@vr.fldoe.org), and we will connect you.

**Q: Can you assist employers with job retention for their current employees who experience an onset of disability?**

**A:** Yes, you may share the employer information with your Business Rep directly or email [VRBusinessRep@vr.fldoe.org](mailto:VRBusinessRep@vr.fldoe.org) for assistance.

**Q: If I am working with an employer on a placement and the employer needs a workplace accommodation for my client, can I reach out to the Business Rep to facilitate that or does the employer have to reach out to the BRR?**

**A:** While worksite accommodations for participants are addressed by the counselor and may involve a rehabilitation engineer, Business Relations is happy to provide technical assistance support to the employer in the process. You can reach out to the Business Rep, so that they can work as a team with you and the counselor.

**Q: If an employer has questions I cannot answer or needs services that I do not provide, can I refer the employer to Business Relations for assistance?**

**A:** Absolutely! We are all working towards the same goals of careers for our participants and satisfied business customers.



**Q: At my agency, we do network and outreach with employers in addition to doing job development with jobseekers. If I meet with an employer, can I then hand off that employer to the Business Rep so they can do outreach with the employer about Business Relations services?**

**A:** Yes, we can work as a team with you and the employer to build a relationship to facilitate placements. However, keep in mind that our team utilizes labor market information to target business relationships in high skill, high wage, and growing industries that will produce multiple placements.

If you have any other questions about Business Relations or you would like to connect with your Business Rep, please email [VRBusinessRep@vr.fldoe.org](mailto:VRBusinessRep@vr.fldoe.org). In addition, you may provide that email address to employers if you want to refer them to Business Relations for any reason.

Until next time,

Kathy Davis, Business Relations Administrator,  
[Kathy.Davis@vr.fldoe.org](mailto:Kathy.Davis@vr.fldoe.org)

# Who's Who – The Role of a Provider Liaison vs. The Role of a Provider Manager

by: FLPR and MECU Unit Staff

Many of you may have stopped to ask yourself when you should go to your Provider Liaison with a question or concern, and when you should go to your Provider Manager. The answer is you can always go to either your Provider Liaison or your Provider Manager when you have an issue or need advice. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has a “no wrong door” policy in place, which means any VR employee will take ownership of your issue and work to get you a response or solution.

The chart below provides you with an overview of the Provider Liaison and Provider Manager's role:

Provider Liaisons Role	Provider Managers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housed in local areas to work in conjunction with field staff and providers</li><li>• Conducts on-site visits and provide face-to-face trainings and assistance for field staff and providers</li><li>• Collaborates with Provider Managers to identify areas of concern and help with technical assistance</li><li>• Assist with monitoring outstanding NOAs and MPRs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housed in Tallahassee. There is one manager per provider</li><li>• Monitor and ensure manual/policy compliance is met.</li><li>• Provide information and identify needs for additional training and other areas of concerns for providers</li><li>• Provide technical support and guidance on requirements of the provider manual to field staff and providers</li></ul>

Each of the 7 Areas of the state has an assigned Provider Liaison. You may work with multiple Provider Liaisons if you're serving more than one area. You only have one assigned Provider Manager, regardless of which area(s) of the state you are serving. The 7 Provider Liaisons are as follows: Area 1 – Evelyn Langmaid, Area 2 – Peter Shepis, Area 3 – Jose Rivera, Area 4 – Marilyn Figueroa, Area 5 – Tim Goodman, Area 6 – Judith Toussaint, and Area 7 – Linda Lacy. The 4 Provider Managers are; Jason Gallub, Nicolette Moody, Steven Nedeau, and Cacetha Sims.

If you have any questions or concerns never hesitate to reach out to us. Communication is an integral component of the partnership that exists between VR and our providers. We're here to help you in your efforts of assisting individuals with disabilities find and maintain employment.

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## We Want to Hear from YOU!

by: Christienne Adrick, Public Affairs and Government Relations

Do you have a customer Success Story you would like to share? We are all so proud of our customers who meet their employment goal and find the perfect job in the community. VR wants to hear from you so we can get these stories out to the public; and particularly to encourage other employers to hire members of this qualified workforce. Please use the Success Story guide for writing the article and finding pertinent waiver release forms. Be sure to include a photograph of your customer at their job site. These stories may appear in the VR/Florida Rehabilitation Council Annual Report, the VR monthly newsletter, media outlets, and the VR Success Stories brochure that is distributed widely at job fairs, legislative events and employer outreach activities.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated. For questions or further assistance, please contact Christienne Adrick at [Christienne.Adrick@vr.fl.gov](mailto:Christienne.Adrick@vr.fl.gov) or call (850) 245-3477.

# Group Provider Training

by: Field and Provider Relations Unit staff

From May 17th, 2018 to June 21st, 2018, the Bureau of Vendor and Contracted Services (BVCS) held its first Area Wide Group Provider Training sessions. Our Bureau offered 12 Provider Training sessions throughout all 7 Areas for all of our Employment Services Providers and Pre-Employment Transition Services Providers. In total we trained 242 out of 282 (86%) of our Providers and had a total of 442 Provider attendees.

## Here is the Breakdown by Area

### Area 1

27 out of 34 Providers (79% attended)

Total number of attendees 67

### Area 2

32 of 42 Providers (76% attended)

Total number of attendees 47

### Area 3

41 out of 47 Providers (87% attended)

Total number of attendees 68

### Area 4

50 out of 50 Providers (100% attended)

Total number of attendees 89

### Area 5

19 out of 20 Providers (95% attended)

Total number of attendees 46

### Area 6

35 out of 45 Providers (78% attended)

Total number of attendees 47

### Area 7

38 out of 44 Providers (86% attended)

Total number of attendees 76

At each training session, Providers received consistent information regarding VR Works, our Business Relations Team, and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Our Field & Provider Relations Unit conducted presentations on VR Works and Pre-ETS. The VR Works presentation covered Informed Choice, new tools including the Career Goal Decision Matrix and updated Preliminary Assessment, as well as explaining how the principles of VR Works translates to the Provider. The Pre-ETS presentation defined and described our Pre-Employment Transition Services, explained who may receive Pre-ETS, when Pre-ETS can be requested, the referral process for Pre-ETS and its requirements as well as the payment process and its required deliverables.

At each of the Group Provider Training sessions, our Providers had the opportunity to meet our Business Relations Team. Our Business Relations Team described the purpose of Vocational Rehabilitation's Business Relations Program and why it was created. They also covered the importance of Labor Market Data and discussed opportunities on how Providers and Business Relations Representatives can work together to better serve our customers.

The Bureau of Vendor and Contracted Services would like to thank to everyone who attended and provided us with their feedback. A special thank you to the VR Learning and Development Office, Employment Services HQ Team, and the Monitoring and Employment Contracts Unit for assisting the Field and Provider Relations Unit with training development and support.

# BVCS Headquarters

## Staff Directory

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# Provider Liaisons

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