

**State Rehabilitation Council
Annual Report
2011**

December 31, 2011

Dear Friends:

As we enter 2012, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services' Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped is pleased to acknowledge another outstanding year of successful collaboration between CBVH and our State Rehabilitation Council. This SRC Annual Report for 2011 highlights our productivity last year. I remain a proud member of our distinguished Council and count this service among the most important of tasks as CBVH Associate Commissioner.

During the Federal Fiscal Year, CBVH's administration of Vocational Rehabilitation yielded a 4 percent increase in successful outcomes and continuing satisfaction of our key federal Standards and Indicators. Support from our Council was critical to our success in 2011.

In confronting another year of challenges in this unpredictable economic climate in 2011, the Council remained a steady and trusted ally in supporting continuation of, and improvements in, our shared service delivery system to state residents who are legally blind.

We look forward to continuing to work with the SRC and an even more productive 2012.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian S. Daniels". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "D".

Brian S. Daniels
Associate Commissioner
New York State Office of Children & Family Services
Commission for the Blind & Visually Handicapped

December 31, 2011

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo
State of New York
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

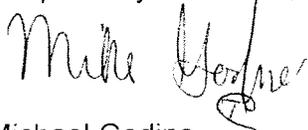
As Chairperson of the New York State Rehabilitation Council for the Office of Children and Family Services, Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped from January 2011 through September 2011, I am pleased to present for your consideration the 2011 State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Annual Report.

Each year, the SRC produces this report to inform federal and state officials and the public about its work and accomplishments. This report highlights the SRC's activities for FY 2011 and the goals for FY 2011-12.

The SRC works in partnership with all of the key stakeholders responding to the needs of New Yorkers who are blind and/or visually impaired. Each member, as does the SRC as a whole, has a well defined purpose, but our influence does not come merely from legal or regulatory mandates. Our influence comes from the completion of our key work. Each member serves as the voice of the constituencies which he/she represents, and with that voice, each represents the voice of many.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Godino". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small circle at the end of the last name.

Michael Godino

NYS CBVH SRC Chairperson

cc: Edward Anthony, Deputy Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration

Joe Pepin, State Liaison, Rehabilitation Services Administration

Tracy Cooper, SRC Coordinator/Liaison, NYS CBVH

December 31, 2011

Mr. Edward Anthony, Deputy Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services Administration
US Department of Education
Mary E. Switzer Building
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Deputy Commissioner Anthony:

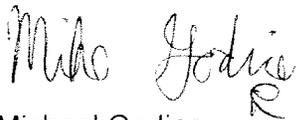
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Respectfully submitted,

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Michael Godino

NYS CBVH SRC Chairperson

cc: Joe Pepin, State Liaison, Rehabilitation Services Administration

Tracy Cooper, SRC Coordinator/Liaison, NYS CBVH

State Rehabilitation Council

Annual Report

2011

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), or, (the Council) for the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) is pleased to issue its Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 2011 to Governor Andrew Cuomo and Deputy Commissioner Edward Anthony of the Rehabilitation Services Administration. This report includes a discussion of the Council's activities during FY 2011 and plans for the upcoming year FY 2011-12.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is an advisory body mandated by Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The nature and scope of the Council's deliberations and recommendations include CBVH policies, procedures, and operations as they may affect consumers or applicants for agency services statewide. Additionally, the SRC assists in the development of federally required State plans and annual updates to those plans. Much of the Council's business has been conducted in committees focusing on the CBVH priority issues of work force development, quality assurance, policy, procedure and planning and SRC membership. The SRC meets once each calendar quarter. The Council is comprised of members representing the Title 121 program, consumers who are blind, consumers with multiple disabilities, parents, educators, business, industry and labor, consumer advocacy groups, the New York State Workforce Investment Board, the New York State Client Assistance Program, and the New York State Independent Living Council. Ex-Officio members represent Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR), the New York State Office for the Aging (SOFA), and various representatives from CBVH who provide information and assistance as requested by the Council. Meetings are open to the public and always include a public comment segment on the meeting agenda for individuals to provide input or bring issues of concern to the Council's attention.

**Functions of the State Rehabilitation Council
(as stated in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act)**

The Council shall, after consulting with the State Workforce Investment Board —

1. Review, analyze, and advise the designated State unit regarding the performance of the responsibilities of the unit under this title, particularly responsibilities related to:
 - a. eligibility (including order of selection)
 - b. the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and
 - c. functions performed by State agencies that affect or that potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under this title;
2. In partnership with the designated State unit —
 - a. develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities in accordance with section 101 (a)(15) (C); and
 - b. evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit reports of progress to the Commissioner in accordance with section 101(a)(15)(E);
3. Advise the designated State agency and the designated State unit regarding activities authorized to be carried out under this title, and assist in the preparation of the State plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by this title;
 - a. To the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with —the functions performed by the designated State agency
 - b. vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this Act; and
 - c. employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this title, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes;
4. Prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State, and make the report available to the public;
5. To avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, coordinate activities with the activities of other councils within the State, including the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705, the advisory panel established under section 612(a)(21) of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (as amended by section 101 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997; Public Law 105-17, the State Developmental Disabilities Council described in section 124 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 6024), the State mental health planning council established under section 1914 (a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300x-4(a)), and the State workforce investment board;
6. Provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between the designated State agency and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the state; and

7. Perform such other functions, consistent with the purpose of this title, as the State Rehabilitation Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.

Meeting Highlights and Activities for FY2011

Below please find meeting highlights and activities for 2011 including, participation in the development of the 2012 State Plan, recommendations, public forums, communication with CBVH Executive Board, and presentations

The fiscal year began January 1, 2011 with a welcome to the new Chair, Mike Godino and Vice Chair, Aaron Baier.

As discussed in FY2010, the first order of business confronting the council was the changing of the fiscal year. The council voted to change the Fiscal year to begin January 1, 2011 and end September 30, 2011 for FY2011 and to continue into the future as October 1, to September 30 of the following year. This change will make allowances for the council to complete, review and accept a final report of the council's business at the first meeting of the new fiscal year prior to its due date to the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) on January 1.

As the new chair of the council, Mike Godino requested and was granted attendance to ACCES-VR's SRC winter meeting to observe and report back to the council as an exercise in leadership and collaboration.

Meeting Highlights, SRC Business:

The NYS SRC under CBVH conducts its council business at four (4) quarterly meetings each year. At each of these meetings the council follows an agenda created and proposed by the Executive Committee. A standard agenda consists of introductions, report from the Chair, report from the Associate Commissioner, presentations, public comment, committee reports, council business and action items. Following is a brief synopsis of the SRC business for each of the three (3) quarterly meetings for FY2011.

March:

The first meeting of three for FY2011 was in March. At this March meeting, the council discussed the State Budget, the CBVH State Plan for 2012 and operations of the council. Prior to the meeting, the Chair distributed the draft CBVH State Plan to each of the committee chairs and requested they bring back recommendations at the meeting. The council at the meeting read through and made several recommendations to the draft that were accepted by CBVH and RSA in the final draft.

As part of the council's business, we completed the act of changing the fiscal year. The council voted unanimously to change the fiscal year as stated above. From the budget discussion, the council voted to have the Chair write a letter supporting level funding to State 4201 schools in the 2011 state budget.

June:

The June meeting concentrated on the work of the committees. As a council, the committees meet via phone conference supported by CBVH thus providing the forum to conduct business outside of and in preparation for quarterly meetings. Some of the work can be shown in the brief highlights of the committee reports below.

The Policy & Planning Committee would like to be a part of the CBVH committee making revisions to the Assistive Technology (AT) policy and requested that one person from the Workgroup Review be a part of the CBVH committee. The group would also like to have the entire work group & SRC look at the AT policy and provide input. The committee made a recommendation that College students know the contents of their IPE and have it periodically reviewed and updated as additional changes/services are needed. The committee suggested that incarcerated consumers who are blind be referred to the State Protection & Advocacy office as part of the services being provided by CBVH.

The Workforce Development Committee recommended that Elaine Kost from the Department of Labor come and speak at an SRC meeting to discuss Disability Employment Initiative in March or June 2012. Also recommended, was that Ray Cebula or Edwin Lopez attend a SRC meeting to discuss Ticket to Work and Benefits advisement. The committee reported that seventeen (17) consumers were recently hired for "Dialogue in the Dark," Dialogue in the Dark is a program wherein people pay for the experience of going to a simulated café, an MTA stop, and some other places in total darkness simulating some of what a blind person might experience.

The Membership committee will work to update the 2006 membership binder that needs more pertinent information about the SRC in more up to date formats. The newest section will include "the blindness movement" in the nineteenth century, the Hadley School and a survey for new members to take.

The Quality Assurance Committee reported that the successful outcome comprehensive service contracts will be audited. They recommended that the unsuccessful outcomes and shortcomings be noted in the needs assessment report. Also noted QA audits will be expanded to include DVE's (Diagnostic Vocational Evaluations). Needs assessment reports are done by CBVH every three years; therefore one will be due next year 2012 all Needs Assessments are submitted to RSA.

September:

As the final meeting of the year, the council continued the committee work with recommendations, election of the Chair and Vice Chair and action items for the next year.

Policy, Procedures, & Planning Committee:

- Recommendation 1. Work with CBVH Home Office and District Offices to update the Assistive Technology policies.
- Recommendation 2. Work with CBVH to learn more about statuses 28 and 30 and create policies to identify, evaluate and monitor trends.

Workforce Development Committee:

- Recommendation 3. Work with CBVH to create a centralized transition program directory for students planning to attend vocational school or job training.

Recommendation 4. Have a college intern working within CBVH identify the reasons for the drop in Supported Employment Closures.

Membership Committee:

Recommendation 5. Work with CBVH to compile a list of SRC members complete with contact information, the demographic population they represent and the geographic areas they cover.

Recommendation 6. Ensure the availability of the following year's schedule, committee descriptions and scopes in draft form, at the December meeting.

Quality Assurance Committee:

Recommendation 7. Work with CBVH to identify unsuccessful case closures and analyze the findings for trends to establish policies that will positively impact these consumers.

Presentation by the Associate Commissioner:

Beginning with the Associate Commissioner Brian Daniels, the SRC is kept well informed of CBVH and its reporting processes to the state and RSA. In his report, the Associate Commissioner informed the council of the major accomplishment of meeting all six of the standards and indicators while increasing the successful case closures by 12%. The Associate Commissioner shared with the council the fact that Governor Paterson signed a bill that will increase CBVH authorities for the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) opportunities. The next step for CBVH is to draft regulations to be promulgated by 2012. He mentioned that under the State Administrative Procedure Act (SAPA), the regulations will be issued by CBVH. The Associate Commissioner shared in March the fact that the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has informed CBVH that they will be monitoring CBVH in 2012. Additionally, he stated, According to data pre-released by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, CBVH ranks second in compliance with federal Standards and Indicators among the 24 similarly situated public vision rehabilitation agencies across the country. At the final meeting for FY 2011, the Associate Commissioner reported CBVH has been doing very well in meeting the RSA standards. The successful case closures (26s) are coming along well as this fiscal year comes to a close and we seem to be on target for a 12% success rate. Lastly, the Associate Commissioner shared the fact that CBVH is down by about 15% in staff (from 150 to 130.)

Other Presentations:

Mike Rose reviewed CBVH's Quality Assurance process. CBVH reviews two separate contracts for services to the blind: Assistive Technology contract and Comprehensive Service Contract. The services are contracted out to seventeen separate comprehensive service contract (CSC) providers and seven assistive technology centers across the state. The CSC includes VR and adaptive living services. The Quality Assurance program handles all reviews or audits of the programs for both contracts across the state.

Laurie Munro reported that CBVH hopes to have a new pre-college program in place in 2012. The program will be required for all youth seeking college sponsorship. The program will run five weeks starting after July 4. The plan is to have two sessions, one

upstate and one downstate, from which students may choose. She expects that 50-60 students will participate. Students will be expected to stay on campus and not return home each weekend.

The Leadership Program, held during a week in August from Sunday through Friday was a huge success! It was even better than last year's! Twenty-seven youth attended, six of whom were Braille users, and they were housed in two separate dorms this year (a boys' dorm and a girls' dorm) rather than last year's one coed dorm. This change allowed staff to better monitor the participants.

Sharon Flom explained changes CBVH plans to make to its college policy. She stated they plan to revise the policy regarding remediation during college training. In addition to seeking comments from the SRC, CBVH sought input regarding this proposed policy change at the State Plan open forums. The policy change is needed because many community colleges are now accepting students that don't have the required skills and are requiring that these students take remedial courses without credit, sometimes for multiple semesters. CBVH currently allows for 6 years to complete a four-year college program. With the added remediation, many students cannot complete their degrees in that time frame, and there is further concern that students will use up their TAP and/or PELL awards before they get their degrees.

Steve Moore provided the SRC an overview on the Business Enterprise Program (BEP). He reported that the recent amendment to State legislation affecting BEP (often referred to as "mini Randolph Sheppard"), removed many of the limitations in the original legislation. Now the program will have access to broader opportunities including: SUNY, Corrections, all state authorities including the Thruway, MTA, etc. and airports. It also removed the limitation of a minimum of 400 people in a facility. The program can now serve State parks, motor vehicle offices and other sites with lower staff but lots of walk-through traffic.

Peter Herrig, the newest counselor representative to the SRC explained his role as a Transition Counselor. He works with youth age 14-21, which provides time for him to build a relationship with the students and develop a solid plan. In his role, he collaborates with families, schools, and providers. He generally receives his referrals from the Children's Consultant. The ultimate goal of transition is to make the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) support the future Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). As a transition counselor, Peter offers pre-vocational services, and then offers work experiences typical to other youth. Older teens focus on internships related to what they want to do in the future. Services are very student driven. He tries to match desires with work opportunities. Peter prefers the students stay in school until they are 21 so that they can achieve a local or Regents diploma instead of an IEP diploma. He encourages students to get involved in social activities and summer camps where they can meet other students who are blind. Students exiting school typically seek more education, a job, or supported employment. Peter is working with about 66 youth.

Rosemary Lamb reported on the Interagency Council on Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing. She stated there are seven state agencies involved with the Interagency Council: NYS Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, NYS Office of Children and Family Services, NYS Office for the Aging, NYS Public Service Commission, NYS Department of Health, NYS Department of Labor and NYS

Education Department. The statute calls for public representation by public members, and by Senate and Assembly members as well. The Council was formed to examine issues related to the deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing.

Michael Seereiter from the Department of Mental Health, Director of Medicaid Infrastructure Grant presented to the SRC on the topics of the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG). Michael reported the funding for the MIG stops at the end of this calendar year. OMH administers it, although various other State agencies participate in it. The program's goals are to identify and then break down barriers to employment. The website is: www.nymakesworkpay.org and Mike is the contact person.

Roger Gray reported to the SRC on the topic of ARRA funding and projects. As of 9/30/11, the full ARRA award was spent. Some of the ARRA projects include: 513 CCTV's have gone out to 350 Senior Centers and nursing homes, Helen Keller National Center to conduct an in-depth needs assessment of people who are deafblind in New York, staff training about disproportionate areas, minority areas outreach & outreach techniques, paid stipends for SUNY Buffalo students in vocational rehabilitation counseling, Hunter College remote mentoring for O & M and RT students, two leadership programs at Union College in Schenectady, added new equipment to tech centers, a pilot project testing new assessment tools for technology centers, and \$2.5 million for innovative employment training programs.

Monica Redeye presented the Section 121 Program to the SRC. The 121 program similar to the Access VR and CBVH vocational rehabilitation programs, as prescribed in statute, and it's called CANAR. The counseling portion has additional culture-related aspects, with the counseling being sensitive to the consumer's tribal culture and this often includes things like going to a healing lodge, or first providing some basic unmet needs, such as food and clothing.

Mike Rose reported updates on ACB and NFB forums in Albany and Utica. They were both held on the same day, and were very lively and interactive. About 30 people were present at each one.

Mindy Jacobson reported to the SRC on the work of the Executive Board. The 2010 Executive Board Report to the legislature is available on the CBVH website and Mindy can share copies. The report documents several board resolutions: adoption of certification requirements for VRT/O&M; adoption of audio warning device in silent running vehicles; review of NYS policies: acquisition and use of electronic equipment and technology to assure accessibility; and supporting the work of the Pedestrian Access Coalition to assure crossings have appropriate audible devices and incorporate pedestrian safety, including blind and deaf blind, in standards of design. In addition, the Board recommended that BEP should dedicate at least 2 staff members to research expansion. They also recommended that State Education needs specific competencies goals for blind students to be assessed through periodic assessments with outcome based milestones. The Executive Board is looking into getting additional funding for IL and ALP for services.

Planned Goals and Activities for FY2012:

The Council re-elected Mike Godino and Aaron Baier to serve as its Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, for FY2012.

The SRC is scheduled to meet quarterly in FY2012. In addition, the Executive Committee and each of the four standing Committees will meet via conference call throughout the year.

The four standing committees will be: Membership; Policy, Procedure and Planning; Quality Assurance; and Workforce Development. Chair Godino will appoint the Chairs and members of each committee and will give each its charge.

The Council will participate with CBVH in development of the State Plan for Federal Fiscal Year 2013 including information gathering from its members' respective constituencies.

The 2013 State Plan will incorporate information obtained at the public forums held at the recent ACB and NFB state conventions.

The SRC will re-examine its current by-laws to determine whether any amendments or restructuring may be appropriate.

The SRC is planning to incorporate an Orientation and new member training into its first meeting of the Fiscal Year starting in FY2013.

The SRC plans to add a half day of training from Thomas P. Golden, Associate Director at the Employment and Disability Institute (EDI) which is in the Industrial and Labor Relations School (ILR) at Cornell University at the March meeting. The plan is to add three or four hours in the morning of the second day.

Arrangements will be made with the hotel for an additional night's stay to insure all the members can attend.

In addition, the SRC will work to strengthen its connections with other SRC's outside New York State, as well as with the National Council of SRC's and the National Council of Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies.

Further, the SRC will work with CBVH to develop one or more mentoring programs, as well as other mechanisms to bring New Yorkers who are blind together so that they may learn from and support one another.

Finally, the SRC will work with CBVH to bring about implementation of the various recommendations made by the Committees and by the Council as a whole in 2011. Many of the recommendations of the committees overlap with one another as well as with those of the CBVH Executive Board. Communication and brainstorming among the members of all of these bodies will further refine their recommendations, and thereby result in an across the board improvement in services and opportunities for New Yorkers who are blind and visually impaired.