Expanding Work-Based Learning and Transition Opportunities: Lessons from Vermont

Speakers | August 2021

Samantha Brennan, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Samantha Brennan is a vocational rehabilitation counselor for the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. She works in the White River Junction office where she has been implementing the Linking Learning to Careers program in addition to managing a part time general caseload with consumers ranging in age from 18 to 73. She moved to Vermont in 2010 to begin her career as a civil servant with the State of Vermont where she started working as a vocational rehabilitation counselor in the Springfield, VT office. She then moved to the White River Junction office in 2014. Brennan was born and raised by her grandparents in the Philadelphia area. She earned a B.A. in psychology from Temple University and a Masters in Social Service (Social Work) from Bryn Mawr Graduate School of Social Work.

Laurie Cook, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Laurie Cook is an assistive technology specialist for the Linking Learning to Careers project with the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation Division. She also has an extensive background working in federal jobs and training programs with the Vermont Department of Labor in a case management capacity where she worked with youth, adults, and dislocated workers alike. She is currently pursuing both an M.S. in psychology at Southern New Hampshire University and a Graduate Certificate program in Autism Spectrum Disorders for Rehabilitation Services Professionals at Emporia State University

Maegon Courville, Participant in Linking Learning to Careers

Maegon Courville began receiving support from the LLC program in high school. It has helped her grow and follow her passion of photography into her college years and formed the foundation of her career.

Kelli Crane, Center for Transition and Career Innovation, University of Maryland

Kelli Thuli Crane, Ph.D., an assistant research professor at the Center for Transition and Career Innovation at the University of Maryland, College Park, brings extensive experience in leadership roles on research and model demonstration projects funded by the U.S. Department of Educations, Social Security Administration, and NIDILRR. Crane's research interests include examining programs and practices to improve post-school employment outcomes for transition-age youth with disabilities. She served as co-principal investigator for Maryland PROMISE, and currently plays a key role on two of the Rehabilitation Services Administration-funded work-based learning model demonstration projects. She is part of the management team for the newly-funded National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: Collaborative (NTACT: C). Crane has consulted with several states to build capacity and coordinate systems to improve services for transition-age youth. In addition, she has developed several training programs and presented widely through major conferences on topics related to secondary transition and employment practices. She has worked as a transition specialist in an urban school district, a vocational rehabilitation counselor, and a job coach.

Kathleen Feeney, Mathematica

Kathleen Feeney is a survey researcher at Mathematica, and works on a variety of projects focusing on education, early childhood, and family support. On the Linking Learning to Careers evaluation, she helped with a range of tasks from monitoring data collection tasks and providing technical support to conducting site visits and writing portions of the final evaluation reports.

Brian Guy, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Brian A. Guy is the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Transition Program associate manager for the State of Vermont. In this role, he supports the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's work with youth through the Jump on Board for Success (JOBS) and Linking Learning to Careers programs. Linking Learning to Careers is a 5-year randomized controlled trial research project working with over 800 high school students with disabilities, and is focused on assessing the impact of delivering enhanced versions of: work-based learning, post-secondary education, and assistive technology. Since 2014, Guy's work with VR in project management, data analysis, and program management roles has contributed to maintaining its national reputation for innovation and effectiveness on behalf of Vermonters with disabilities. Prior to joining the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, he worked in higher education and conducted research in West Africa as a Fulbright Scholar.

Todd Honeycutt, Mathematica

Todd Honeycutt, Ph.D., is a senior researcher at Mathematica whose research focuses on vocational rehabilitation and employment programs for youth, young adults, and working-age people with disabilities. Honeycutt leads the SSI Youth Solutions project, which promotes interventions that seek to improve the employment outcomes of youth receiving Supplemental Security Income, for the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. He is also currently evaluating two long-term demonstration projects offering work-based learning experiences to high school students one of which is the Vermont Linking Learning to Careers program. He holds a Ph.D. in health systems and policy from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

Elizabeth King, Community College of Vermont

Elizabeth King is the director of student and career services for the Community College of Vermont. Her primary focus is the oversight of the TRIO Student Support Services and the Veteran's and Career Services programs, which are designed to support the persistence and success of students who are military connected, first generation, low income and/or having a disability. She is also the Community College of Vermont program manager for Linking Learning to Careers. She holds a master's in mental health counseling from Northern Vermont University.

Frank Martin, Mathematica

Frank Martin, Ph.D., is a health researcher at Mathematica. His work primarily focuses on disability policy, vocational rehabilitation, transition-age youth, and independent living outcomes. At Mathematica, he has worked on health and disability policy evaluation projects for federal clients, including Administration for Community Living, NIDILLR, Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, and the Social Security Administration. Martin has published articles in the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Journal of Disability Policy Studies, and Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin. He has also co-authored a systematic review on adult employment assistance programs for individuals with autism for the Campbell Collaboration.

Richard Tulikangas, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Richard Tulikangas serves as director of Linking Learning to Careers, a statewide initiative through the Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to increase career and college readiness for high school students with disabilities. He is passionate about helping prepare young people for life beyond high school and has been a leader of numerous programs and organizations in Vermont and nationally with that focus for over 30 years. He served as founding executive director of Linking Learning to Life/Navicate, work-based learning director for the National Academy Foundation (now NAF), consultant and program director in several capacities for the Vermont Agency of Education and was detailed to the Governor's Office to develop the state's School-To-Work plan. Tulikangas has a B.S. in natural resources from the University of Michigan and an M.Ed. from the University of Vermont in human and organizational resource development. He has presented at numerous state, regional and national conferences and he teaches a course at Castleton University focused on supporting secondary educators with successfully developing and managing high quality work-based learning programs.