

# Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living (DAIL)

Department Overview - January 2023

**Mission:** *To make Vermont the best state in which to grow old or live with a disability: with dignity, respect, and independence.*



# Department Overview

DAIL's primary role in Vermont is to fulfill the commitment that we have made as a state, to people with disabilities and to older Vermonters, enabling them to receive supports and services in their home of choice, living independently and fully included as members of their communities. Vermont remains a leader in supporting self-determination, choice, expansion of community-based options, the development of robust supported employment, and mature worker options.

This commitment is underlined by state and federal mandates such as:

- ▶ the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),
- ▶ the Developmental Disabilities Act (DD Act)
- ▶ the Older Americans Act (OAA) & Older Vermonters Act (OVA),
- ▶ the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA),
- ▶ the Vermont Health Care Administrative Rules (HCAR),
- ▶ the Medicaid Global Commitment 1115 Waiver,
- ▶ and the Olmstead Decision, which require states to provide services to people in the least restrictive environments possible.

# Department Overview (cont.)

- ▶ 300+ Employees
- ▶ \$585M+ State Budget
- ▶ Over \$490M in 5 Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) programs serving over 11,000 Vermonters
- ▶ Over \$12M in Older Americans Act services
- ▶ Over \$9M in protective services (Office of Public Guardian, Adult Protective Services, Survey & Certification)
- ▶ Over \$7.6M in workforce development and retention programs
- ▶ Approximately 806 active contracts and 160 active grant agreements.
- ▶ Commissioner's Office and 5 Divisions
  1. Adult Services Division
  2. Developmental Disabilities Services Division
  3. Division of Licensing & Protection
  4. HireAbility Vermont
  5. Division for the Blind & Visually Impaired

# Commissioner's Office

The Commissioner's Office includes:

- ▶ Commissioner Monica White
- ▶ Deputy Commissioner Megan Tierney-Ward
- ▶ Executive Assistant Ashley Bonneau
- ▶ Principal Assistant Rebecca Silbernagel
- ▶ Business Office – led by Bill Kelly, Financial Director
- ▶ Legal Unit – led by Stuart Schurr, General Counsel
- ▶ Operations Unit – led by Brian Guy, Director of Operations
- ▶ Director of Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind Services Laura Siegel

# Adult Services Division

Director: Angela Smith-Dieng

Primary Focus: Managing long-term services & support for adults with physical disabilities and older Vermonters.

- ▶ 43 Employees
- ▶ Long-Term Services & Supports Unit
- ▶ Quality Management Unit
- ▶ State Unit on Aging
- ▶ Money Follows the Person Project

# Adult Services Division - Priorities

## Current Priorities:

- ▶ Conflict of Interest in Case Management
- ▶ HCBS Quality Measures Development
- ▶ Workforce Challenges Across Providers / Provider Stability
- ▶ State Plan on Aging / Strengthening AAAs & Aging Network
- ▶ Vermont Action Plan for Aging Well
- ▶ Action Plan for Alzheimer's Disease, Dementias and Healthy Aging
- ▶ Money Follows the Person / Complex Care – Improving Transitions
- ▶ Maximizing Use of ARPA Funds – Enhanced FMAP & OAA

# Developmental Disabilities Services Division

Director: Jennifer Garabedian

Primary Focus: Managing HCBS Services for Vermonters with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and providing court-appointed public guardianship services.

- ▶ 51 Employees
- ▶ DS Program Specialist Team
- ▶ DS Quality Management Unit
- ▶ Office of Public Guardian

# Developmental Disabilities Services Division - Priorities

## Current Priorities:

- ▶ Conflict of Interest in Case Management
- ▶ HCBS Quality Measures Development
- ▶ Crisis Continuum of Care/Expansion of Clinical Supports
- ▶ Workforce Challenges Across Providers / Provider Stability
- ▶ Housing Options/Residential Alternatives Initiative
- ▶ Standardized, Independently Administered Assessment Tool (SIS-A)
- ▶ Payment Reform
- ▶ Supported Decision Making
- ▶ Ombuds Support for Individuals with I/DD



# Division of Licensing & Protection

Director: Joe Nusbaum

Primary Focus: Protection services

- ▶ 54 Employees
- ▶ Survey & Certification Unit
- ▶ Adult Protective Services
- ▶ Restorative Justice Services
- ▶ Service Navigators
- ▶ COVID-19 Strike Team

# Division of Licensing & Protection - Priorities

## Current Priorities:

- ▶ Update the APS State Statute to reflect victim-centered priorities and other values that have evolved in recent decades.
- ▶ Align new S&C positions to provide annual surveys to State facilities.
- ▶ Pilot grant-funded efforts to establish APS restorative justice services and assisting vulnerable adults to connect with community providers.
- ▶ Finalize State survey regulations to include new requirements established during COVID-19.
- ▶ Increase the substantiation rate of APS investigations after a declining trend in recent years.
- ▶ Align to the recommended best practices of the Self-Neglect Working Group's July 2022 report.
- ▶ Launch new "Strike Team" positions to address immediate crisis situations from staffing gaps, facility capacity issues, and ongoing Covid challenges.

# HireAbility Vermont

Director: Diane Dalmasse

Primary Focus: To help Vermonters with disabilities prepare for, obtain, and maintain meaningful careers and to help employers recruit, train, retain and promote employees with disabilities.

- ▶ 145 Employees
- ▶ Career Counseling - Vocational services for about 5000 people per year
- ▶ District Workforce Partnerships – Employer Outreach
- ▶ Assistive Technology
- ▶ Employee Assistance Program – Invest EAP

# HireAbility -Priorities

## Current Priorities:

- ▶ VT Career Advancement Project – Career Pathways Initiative
- ▶ Summer Career Exploration Program
- ▶ Opioid Employment Pilots
- ▶ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access Effort
- ▶ Performance Management

# Division for the Blind & Visually Impaired

Director: Fred Jones

Primary Focus: Employment and independent living supports for Vermonters who are blind or visually impaired.

- ▶ 11 Employees
- ▶ Vision Rehabilitation Employment Services
- ▶ High School Transition Services
- ▶ Independent Living Services & Assistive Technology
- ▶ Business Enterprise Program--Self Employment
- ▶ Older Blind Program

# Division for the Blind & Visually Impaired - Priorities

## Current Priorities:

- ▶ Expand the LEAP program to include apprenticeship opportunities.
- ▶ Plan and host a consumer-driven conference for consumers to learn more about blindness related assistive devices for work and independent living.
- ▶ Implement a Support Service Program for people who are deaf-blind.