

Piedmont Regional Disability Services Board 2006 NEEDS ASSESSMENT



*“Serving the needs and priorities of
individuals with physical and sensory disabilities”*

P.O. Box P, 102 ½ High Street
Farmville, Virginia 23901
Phone: (434) 392-6104; Fax: (434) 392-5933
TTY: (434) 392-6105
Email: cmwrc@ntelos.net
Homepage: <http://www.commonwealthregionalcouncil.org>

**DRAFT ADOPTED BY PIEDMONT REGIONAL DISABILITY BOARD
January 23, 2006**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
PRDSB PROGRAM INFORMATION	3
ACCOMPLISHMENTS.....	4
PURPOSE.....	5
DATA COLLECTION.....	6
SURVEY RESULTS	7
ANALYSIS	9
SUMMARY OF RESULTS	10
IMPLICATIONS FOR DSB ACTION	12
IMPLICATIONS FOR STATE-LEVEL ACTION	12
APPENDICIES	
• APPENDIX A - Location Map	
• APPENDIX B – 2000 Census Disability Statistics	
• APPENDIX C – 2006 Needs Assessment Survey Instrument	

INTRODUCTION

PRDSB PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Piedmont Regional Disability Services Board (PRDSB) covers the full geographic area of the Piedmont Planning District, PD 14. The geographic area includes the Counties of Amelia, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward (See **APPENDIX A** for map). According to the 2000 Census there are 20,952 persons (24%) ages five years and over who are disabled in the Piedmont Planning District. (See **APPENDIX B** for detailed disability statistics).

Localities are represented by two full Board members and have the option of selecting an alternate member. The Code of Virginia states that a Board's membership shall not exceed fifteen. Membership must include at least one local official from each participating jurisdiction, two representatives of the business community, and consumers. In addition, the Board must have no less than thirty percent representation by individuals or family members of individuals with physical, visual and hearing disabilities. Based on the above information, PRDSB's current members are:

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Member Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Amelia	David Keener	Local Official
Amelia	Art Demario	Disability Representative
Buckingham	Robert Luke	Local Official
Buckingham	Judy Lightner	Disability Representative
Buckingham	Rebecca Carter (*)	Local Official
Charlotte	Norma Tuck	Local Official
Charlotte	Eugene Morris	Disability Representative
Charlotte	Susan Adams (*)	Local Official
Cumberland	Elbert Womack	Local Official
Cumberland	James Ferrell	Disability Representative/Bus Rep
Lunenburg	George Ingram	Local Official
Lunenburg	JoAnn Torrence	Disability Representative
Lunenburg	Tom Lanigan (*)	Disability Representative
Nottoway	Sherman Vaughn	Local Official
Nottoway	Elaine White	Disability Representative
Nottoway	Becky Covington (*)	Disability Representative
Prince Edward	Jonathan Pickett	Local Official
Prince Edward	Norman Walker	Disability Representative
STEPS, Inc.	Sharon Harrup	Business Representative
STEPS, Inc.	Ryan Follett (*)	Business Representative

(*) Alternate Member

In 1992, the Piedmont Planning District Commission (PPDC) was asked to undertake the activities leading to the establishment of a regional DSB. PRDSB first met in February of 1993

and fell into a state of inactivity after May of 1997. In 1999, Virginia's General Assembly examined DSBs across the state and found many Boards to be in a state of inactivity. The General Assembly credited this problem to the lack of dedicated personnel to support the volunteers on the Board. Thus, the General Assembly appropriated funding to give to all DSBs in order to retain staff support. In August of 1999, the Piedmont Planning District Commission was asked by the localities to handle the responsibility of appointing staff support and reorganizing the Board.

The Piedmont Planning District Commission dissolved on June 30, 2005 and merged with the Virginia's Heartland Partnership to become the Commonwealth Regional Council on July 1, 2006. Ms. Melody Foster, Administrative Assistant/Regional Planner with the CRC, serves as PRDSB's staff support.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In addition to the funds the PRDSB receives for staff support, the PRDSB requests \$500 annually from each participating locality. These monies are used to fund local projects. The PRDSB has funded the following local projects:

- Built Sidewalk for Prince Edward Citizen in Wheelchair
- Purchased Chair Lift for vehicle for a Buckingham County Citizen in a Wheelchair
- Built Ramp for Cumberland County Citizen in Wheelchair
- Built Ramp for Nottoway County Citizen in Wheelchair
- Reimbursements for 3 disabled citizens participating in I Fit Program
- Donation to Southside Home (Home for Persons with Disabilities)
 - Total Local Funds Provided to Disabled Persons: \$6,096.00

The PRDSB has been involved in many endeavors, including successfully recruiting agencies to apply for RSIF funds. The PRDSB submitted the following projects over the past three years:

- The James River State Park Proposal – Accessible Playground Development Project
- Crossroads Services Proposal – Funding for an ASL Sign Language Class
- Charlotte County Meals on Wheels – Funding to Assist in Purchasing Meals for Disabled Persons

However, over the past three years, not one of these projects has been funded by the State.

Disability Awareness Events:

- October 21, 2003 – Disabilities in an Ordinary Day – SVCC
Attendees were asked to perform ordinary tasks, making a peanut butter sandwich, open a medicine bottle, and repeat a comment while experiencing what it would be like to complete this task with a simulated disability.
- October 19, 2004 - St-rolling for Awareness – Town of Keysville
Town elected officials rolled through the Town of Keysville to bring attention to the issues of persons with disabilities. Officials attempted to enter local businesses, reach items on shelves and traverse the town streets and sidewalks.
- October 21, 2005 – ADA – Ensuring Compliance in Your Locality – SVCC
Local government officials including ADA Coordinators as well as the public were guided through the Americans with Disabilities Act and provided useful information on

the subject as well as helpful hints on how to remain in compliance with the ADA. Ms. Marian Vessels, Director of the ADA and IT Information Center was the guest speaker for this event.

All three of these events were well attended and informative. The public was invited and participated in all three events.

EDUCATIONAL FORUMS:

- Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC)
Representative from PEATC attended PRDSB meeting to provide information on program.
- Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services Representative – Shirley Ferguson
The PRDSB invited Ms. Ferguson to review the RSIF program with the members and provide guidance on types of projects that may be funded in the future.

ADA ISSUES:

- Contacted the Town of Keysville to report ADA issues involving the sidewalks in Town. Assisted Town in passing information onto VDOT.
- A Citizen in Cumberland County contacted PRDSB to report an impassible sidewalk. Worked with County and VDOT to resolve the correction of this matter.
- A Citizen reported ADA issues involving the doorknobs of some of the Charlotte County offices. The PRDSB wrote a letter to the County making them aware of the issues. The matter was resolved as well as the County requested additional information on any other ADA issues left unmet on County property.
- PRDSB published local service announcements in local media to make the public aware that “handicapped parking is provided for a reason.”
- Staff and PRDSB Board Members attended ADA workshop in Charlottesville, VA.

The Board has noted the importance of making the DSB a more visible and active role in the community. The needs identified by assessing the community’s resources will aid the PRDSB in becoming a more effective voice and advocate for individuals with physical and/or sensory disabilities in the region.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to identify the local needs, and service gaps for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities. The Needs Assessment is based on both quantitative and qualitative data. The assessment survey measures the services currently being provided in the region and the magnitude of the needs in order to identify gaps in those services. The DSB will use the assessment to continue a process to facilitate local and statewide awareness of high priority service needs of its residents with physical and sensory disabilities. The DSB will work to promote the awareness of the services that are available to persons with disabilities. The needs assessment report is a step towards achieving these goals.

DATA COLLECTION

The PRDSB established a Needs Assessment Committee to discuss options on updating the Needs Assessment. It was decided that a survey needed to be conducted to get input from the disabled community to determine the needs of the disabled in the Piedmont Planning District. The committee adapted the survey instrument that was provided by the State to meet the needs of the PRDSB. Ms. Foster served as the contact person for persons wishing to receive a survey or to answer questions regarding the survey. The survey was distributed to the following agencies in the counties of Amelia, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward for distribution: Social Services, Health Department, County Administrator Offices. The survey was also sent to the Prince Edward office of the Department of Rehabilitative Services and STEPS, Incorporated for distribution to their clients. An advertisement was also placed in local newspapers to alert the public that a survey was currently being conducted and requested that participants contact the PRDSB to obtain a copy of the survey. Information was also gathered by calling local service providers.

The disability statistics used in the 2003 Needs Assessment are current and therefore will be used in the 2006 Needs Assessment see **APPENDIX B**. The 2000 Census population of the district is 97,103. There are 86,072 persons 5 years of age and over in the district. There are 20,952 or 24% of the district population 5 years of age and over that have a disability with the Virginia population for the same category being only 18%. Forty-six percent (46%) of the persons 65 years of age and over in the district are disabled compared to 42% in Virginia. Of the population 21 to 64 years of age in the district, who are disabled, 52% are employed compared to 58% in Virginia. Of the 20,952 persons, 5 years of age and over who are disabled in the district 18% have a sensory disability, 45% have a physical disability, 25% have a mental disability and 15% have a self-care disability.

SURVEY RESULTS

The PRDSB received 34 surveys from disabled persons. A copy of the Survey Instrument is included in **APPENDIX C**. Surveys were sent to all County Administrators to be distributed to Health Departments and Social Services for citizens to fill out. All seven local newspapers covering the area were sent a notice concerning the surveys to be published in the newspaper alerting the public of the need for disabled citizens to fill out a survey. Also several board members took copies of the surveys and distributed them to local agencies, including STEPS, Inc. which distributed the survey to it's employees.

The following is a summary of the results received:
(The numbers indicate the number of respondents for each question)

What city or county do you live in?

Amelia	1
Buckingham	7
Charlotte	9
Cumberland	5
Lunenburg	
Nottoway	
Prince Edward	10
Appomattox	2

I am an Adult (over 21) - 31 respondents

I am a Child (0-20) – 3 respondents

Type of Disability:

Blind/Vision Impaired	3
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	5
Speech Impaired	2
Physically Disabled	5
Brain Injury	4
Other:	
Mental Retardation	11
Down Syndrome	3
Aeacger	1
Cerebal Palsy	3
Bipolor	1
Mental Health Illness	1
Schizophrenia	2
Progressive MS	1
Degenerative Disc Disease	1

****Respondents could check more than one category if it applied.**

Do you feel current ADA laws are implemented/enforced?

Yes – 27

No – 4

I. If yes, what are some of the issues that you face that impair your mobility?

- **Hearing at a public meeting.**
- **PA System not good acoustics in courtrooms insufficient & PA system also.**
- **They have never found me a job or provided rehabilitative assistance since 1989.**
- **Service with speech and physical therapy should be ongoing.**
- **Transportation for those who no longer drive.**

Do you feel you have been discriminated against because of your disability?

Yes – 3

No – 29

If you answered Yes, please describe the discrimination:

- **Can't participate efficiently & without embarrassment in public (board of supervisors, etc.) buildings.**
- **Bathrooms don't have handrails all the way round.**

Are there any individuals, groups, programs or organizations that have had a positive impact on helping you with your disability (please name them)?

- **STEPS, Inc. – 16**
- **Crossroads – 2**
- **Voc. Rehab. – 1**
- **Longwood University – 1**
- **Town House & Briery Creek Adult Home – 1**
- **YMCA (I Fit Program) – 2**
- **Special Olympics – 3**
- **Church – 3**
- **Department of Rehab. Services – 1**
- **Southside Training Center – 1**
- **Employment Placement Services – 1**
- **Family – 2**
- **Case Worker – 1**
- **Woodrow Wilson Rehab. Center – 1**
- **Blue Ridge Chapter of MS Society**
- **Friends – 1**

Do you have a story to share regarding a positive experience you had relating to your disability?

- **I am a Brown vs Board of Education scholarship recipient. Longwood University readmitted me. Voc. Rehab. has indicated they are interested in helping me complete my bachelors degree.**
- **Cookouts at Town House & Briery Creek Adult Home.**
- **My church has a great PA system.**
- **God saved me and brought me out of the mental institution and I know that what counts most is what you do for Christ and living free from sin. It's been truly a joy bringing others to Christ to obtain eternal life.**
- **I would not have had any of the great opportunities and experiences that I am experiencing now, if it wasn't for God allowing my disability to happen to me, I probably would not be working at STEPS Inc. I am very grateful for my place in the STEPS organization. I feel right at home.**

I came home from MCV and needed chux pads for my bed and MS Society got me box and it was waiting for me when I returned home.

ANALYSIS

According to the 2000 Census it is apparent that the largest percentage of persons who are disabled in the district are physically disabled (45%). It is also evident that the largest segment of the district population that are disabled, are persons who are 65 years of age and over (46%). Survey results suggest that persons with disabilities have limited knowledge of the services available to them and also have difficulty in locating the services that are available.

It is very apparent that since the adoption of the American Disability Act, rural localities have a long ways to go in order to come into compliance with this law. With this said, it has been brought to the PRDSB's attention on many occasions the need for public awareness of the law as well as enforcement. It is also apparent that the counties within our region need guidance in how to best bring their facilities into compliance without undue financial stress. The PRDSB has been requested on more than one occasion to notify a locality of ADA violations on County property. On many of these occasions the locality in question was more than willing to make accommodations once notified. It is also apparent that many private businesses as well do not meet ADA requirements but are willing to accommodate request when notified. It has been the PRDSB's observation over the past three years that educating the public is a key component in furthering the needs of persons with disabilities.

The PRDSB surveys identified several specific examples of ADA requirements not being met, including public meeting accommodations not being met, and inadequate transportation.

It was also interesting to note that respondents listed 16 different types of groups/agencies that had provided a positive impact on assisting them with their disability. The PRDSB staff have repeatedly been contacted by persons with disabilities requesting assistance and not knowing what agency to call for their particular need. The information gathered from the survey along

with these phone calls suggests that a central agency needs to be established to assist persons with disabilities.

The PRDSB also over the past three years has begun to receive local funds to complete local projects. The majority of the requests received have been for ramps to make homes accessible to persons with disabilities. This allows the disabled person to remain in their own home instead of being moved to a more costly facility like a nursing home. There is an obvious need for accessible housing to meet the needs of persons with disabilities in this district

In 1992, the Virginia Baptist Children's Home established a new ministry...the Developmental Disabilities Ministry. A step in a new direction for VBCH&FS, the Developmental Disabilities Ministry (DDM) was created to provide homes for adults with developmental disabilities. DDM has group homes in several locations throughout Virginia including Salem, Martinsville, Fredericksburg, Richmond, and Abingdon. In addition to the residential care provided through community-based homes in each of these locations. The Developmental Disabilities Ministry began in 1992 and serves individuals with developmental disabilities such as mental retardation or other neurological impairments. Residents may also have physical disabilities. These disabilities occur before the age of 18 and will continue indefinitely. As a result, these conditions suggest a need for lifelong dependency on others for care and services. DDM residents have limitations in three or more of the following major life activities: self-care, independent living, economic self-sufficiency, receptive and expressive language, mobility, learning, and self-direction. As a ministry of Virginia Baptist Children's Home & Family Services, the DDM offers care that will help strengthen the family's care-giving role, and when needed, assist in planning for suitable long term care for their disabled family members. When appropriate, the DDM offers long term care for adults with developmental disabilities that encourages continued growth toward individual maximum potential within a Christian, community-integrated, homelike environment. Services are offered to families throughout Virginia and will be implemented based on the family's need and financial resources. DDM also provides short-term respite care, residential support services, respite camps, and long-term planning assistance. The PRDSB donated funds to a local group home - the Southside Home (all male home) located on Milnwood Road in Farmville, Virginia. There are currently 175 of people on the waiting list for these facilities statewide. The local chapter is planning to build an additional facility (all female) in the near future.

Several agencies commented that currently there are no facilities within the State of Virginia to primarily house brain injury patients. Recently citizens concerned over this issue conveyed their concerns at public hearings held by the General Assembly. There is not only a need for housing but also day support. This is currently an unmet need that needs to be addressed not only locally but State-wide. It was suggested that Medicaid needs to expand services to assist brain injury patients.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

After gathering data from survey results and agency input the following are specific examples of need in the district:

- Accessible Housing - Many disabled persons are now forced into nursing homes because they do not have the funds to make their homes accessible.

- Family Support Services - Many family caregivers become burnt-out from 24hr -7 days a week support of a family member with a disability.
- Currently support services as well as housing assistance for brain-injury patients are very limited. There are currently no facilities in the State of Virginia that primarily provide housing for brain-injury patients. Also Medicaid does not provide extended services to these patients.
- Independent Living Services - Currently, the waiting list are very long for these facilities which are not even located in the PRDSB district area. Currently there are no assisted living facilities located in Planning District 14. This problem becomes exacerbated for low-income disabled persons.
- Public Accessibility – Many public buildings in the district still are not accessible and need to be brought into compliance with the ADA. There is also further need for accessible sidewalks and curb cuts in many of the townships across the district. Most of the sidewalks and roads are maintained by VDOT.
- Transportation – Many persons with disabilities are not able to drive and need transportation to and from their doctor. Public transportation would also enable persons with disabilities to be more independent and interact with other persons in the community.
- Employment Services – Many disabled persons are ready and willing to work but need assistance in finding suitable employment.
- Counseling & Training – Local service providers have provided information that locally available counseling is ineffective. Local service providers also state information on new available programs are often not clear and the eligibility requirements are not clear. There are also many areas that there are not funds available to assist persons with disabilities where there is a clear need. Also available programs in many cases have the funds in theory but often the client is told there are not funds available at this time. While there are some training programs available to assist persons with disabilities much more is needed.
- Recreational Opportunities – Disabled persons are in need of social recreational opportunities. Basically the only available outlet at this time is the Special Olympics. While there are many opportunities for the general public to participate in recreational programs, none are designed to accommodate the disabled community. Also, many of the parks and trails are not “wheelchair friendly.” Also, although most of the parks have playground, the majority of those playgrounds provide only a transfer platform rather than a ramped deck that would enable children in wheelchairs to access play modules. None of the parks have platform swings.

The Piedmont Regional DSB identified the following high priority needs for persons with physical and sensory disabilities based on the current data available. These service areas include:

2006 Priorities

- Accessible Housing
- Independent Living Services
- Transportation
- Family Support Services

- Employment Services
- Counseling & Training
- Public Accessibility
- Recreational Opportunities

IMPLICATIONS FOR DSB ACTION

It is the conclusion of the PRDSB after surveying the disabled community and reviewing their comments, that there is a lack of coordination of distributing information on services that are available to the disabled community. Many services that are perceived to be, “not available” by the disabled community do in fact exist, however, gaining this information is not always easy for the disabled community. The PRDSB will contact the State DRS office to request assistance in establishing a central agency point of contact for disabled persons.

The PRDSB will continue to use local funds to try and provide needed funding for persons with disabilities who have needs that are not currently being met by State or local programs.

The PRDSB will also continue to advocate for the disabled community by holding workshops and fairs to bring together the service providers, local units of government and the disabled community.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STATE-LEVEL ACTION

The State DRS needs to be involved in pursuing legislation that provides more funding for the disabled community.

The State DRS needs to totally re-vamp the RSIF program to better distribute the funds to all DSB’s across the State. New guidance needs to be developed to identify what the goals of the program are and what the funding will cover and what it will not cover. Workshops with trained staff from the DRS need to be held across the State or at least in Richmond for potential applicants to attend and ask questions about the program.

The State needs to provide better ADA guidance to each DSB & staff support in the form of literature or State training workshops. The State DRS should request from each locality the name of the ADA coordinator and provide these names on the State DRS website for the public. ADA coordinators across the State should be required to attend one workshop a year to bring them up-to-date on ADA requirements. Also, localities should be given resources to provide guidance on ADA issues.

Provide funding through the RSIF program for funding assistance in all of the areas listed as priorities by the PRDSB.