

December 2, 2008

The fourth and final meeting of the Disability Commission for the 2008 interim was held December 2, 2008 at the General Assembly Building in Richmond.

### **Disability Navigator Program**

Ms. Vicki Tanner and Dr. Joe Ashley, with the Department of Rehabilitative Services, presented information on the Disability Navigator Program. Ms. Tanner and Dr. Ashley stated that the program exists to ensure that the workforce investment system is physically and programmatically accessible to job seekers with disabilities. The Navigator operates as a facilitator, resource person, relationships builder, and problem solving partner for persons seeking employment. Key initiatives undertaken by the Navigator staff include an accessibility survey process and follow-up report, trainings and technical assistance for job seekers, and installation of universal computer workstations and videoconferencing units. Currently, there are 16 Navigator locations in the Commonwealth. These locations are funded through U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Investment Grants and SSA Disability Program Navigator Cooperative Agreements. The Department anticipates at least one more year of federal funding, to equal approximately \$575,000. Additionally, the Department reports that it may receive a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant for \$70,000. Financial support from the Department is uncertain at this time, due to budget concerns.

### **Recommendations**

Following the presentation on the Disability Navigator Program, the commission members discussed potential recommendations for the 2009 session of the General Assembly. The members decided to recommend:

- 1) Legislation increasing the per unit cap for the Livable Home Tax Credit from \$500 to \$1,000.
- 2) Legislation requiring local planning commissions and localities to post comprehensive plans on a website maintained by the local planning commission or locality, to promote collaboration and increase community awareness and citizen participation in regional planning efforts.
- 3) A letter to the Senate members of the Virginia Congressional delegation asking for support of the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Investment Act of 2008.
- 4) A letter to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources requesting the Office to work with the Virginia Association of Counties to encourage the use of the Transportation and Housing Appliance Toolkit in the development of local comprehensive plans.
- 5) A letter supporting modifications to the Auxiliary Grant program, to increase portability of the grant, as a step towards expanding the portability of Auxiliary Grants for all persons receiving grants.
- 6) A letter to the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, asking the Department to collaborate with the Department of Housing and Community Development, to utilize federal HUD grant funds for development and

dissemination of a booklet or field manual that is designed to educate builders and building officials about the requirements of ANSI A117.7 (2003), to address concerns about the statute of limitations on design and construction complaints under the Federal Fair Housing law and Virginia Fair Housing law.

- 7) A letter asking the Department of Health to consider linking the development of accessible housing to Certificate of Public Need requirements.