

**PROTECTION and ADVOCACY for BENEFICIARIES of SOCIAL SECURITY (PABSS)**

**ANNUAL PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT  
(Revised November 2005)**

**REPORTING PERIOD:** From 12/01/2007 To 11/30/2008

**GRANT AWARD NUMBER:** 17-B-20051-3-04

**STATE:** Virginia

**AGENCY NAME:** Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy

**AGENCY ADDRESS:** 1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 5  
Richmond, Virginia 23230

**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Sherry Confer

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 804-662-7375

**FAX NUMBER:** 804-662-7057

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:** Sherry.Confer@vopa.virginia.gov

**DATE SUBMITTED:** 12/31/2008

**PABSS PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**PART I – QUANTATATIVE STATISTICS**

**Section A: Information and Referral**

	<b>Semi-Annual 1<sup>st</sup> half</b>	<b>Semi-Annual 2<sup>nd</sup> half</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>How many individuals received Information and Referral under the PABSS program during the report period? (Do not count individuals more than once for this response.)</b>	434	437	871
<b>How many Information and Referral requests were made under the PABSS program during the report period? (Include all I&amp;R requests, even if more than one for some individuals. This number should equal or exceed Sec A. 1.)</b>	436	442	878

**Section B: Individuals and Issue Area Service Requests/ Workload Statistics**

<b>1. Individuals (Do not count individuals more than once for this response.)</b>	<b>Semi-Annual 1<sup>st</sup> half</b>	<b>Semi-Annual 2<sup>nd</sup> half</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>How many individuals had open PABSS issue area service requests at the start of the report period?</b>	15	6	21
<b>How many new PABSS individuals were added during the report period?</b>	11	12	23
<b>Total individuals served during the report period under the PABSS program. (Sum Section B1-a and B1-b.)</b>	26	18	44
<b>Total number of individuals with all issue area service requests that were closed during the report period under the PABSS program?</b>	20	12	32
<b>Total number of individuals still being served at the end of the report period? (sum of section B1-a &amp; B1-b minus B1-c)</b>	6	6	12

<b>2. Services</b>	<b>Semi-Annual 1<sup>st</sup> half</b>	<b>Semi-Annual 2<sup>nd</sup> half</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Total PABSS issue area service requests open the start of the report period.</b>	15	6	21
<b>Number of new PABSS issue area service requests added during the report period?</b>	11	12	23
<b>(Calculated by Computer) Total number of issue area service requests during the report period? ( Sum of B-2-a and B-2-b)</b>	26	18	44

<b>Total number of issue area service requests closed during the report period?</b>	20	12	32
<b>Total number of issue area service requests open at the end of the report period? (sum of section B-2-a &amp; B2-b minus B-2-c)</b>	6	6	12

**Section C: Individual Demographics**

**Please provide counts of individuals received by Gender:**

	<b>Semi-Annual 1<sup>st</sup> half</b>	<b>Semi-Annual 2<sup>nd</sup> half</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Male</b>	4	4	8
<b>Female</b>	7	8	15
<b>Total individuals received. (Must equal count from Part I Section B-1b above.)</b>	11	12	23

**Please provide counts of individuals received by Ethnicity:**

	<b>Semi-Annual 1<sup>st</sup> half</b>	<b>Semi-Annual 2<sup>nd</sup> half</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Alaskan Native</b>	0	0	0
<b>American Indian</b>	0	0	0
<b>Arab American (Middle Eastern)</b>	0	0	0
<b>Asian</b>	0	0	0
<b>Black (Not Hispanic/Latino Origin)</b>	5	3	8
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	0	0	0
<b>Multi Racial / Multi Cultural</b>	1	0	1
<b>Pacific Islander</b>	0	0	0
<b>White (Not Hispanic/Latino Origin)</b>	5	9	14
<b>Other (IF SELECTED MUST SPECIFY)</b>	0	0	0
<b>Unknown</b>	0	0	0
<b>(Calculated by Computer) Total individuals received. (Must equal count from Part I Section B-1b above.)</b>	11	12	23

Please provide counts of individuals received by Age Bracket:

	Semi-Annual 1 <sup>st</sup> half	Semi-Annual 2 <sup>nd</sup> half	Annual
14 to 18	0	0	0
19 to 21	1	1	2
22 to 40	2	3	5
41 to 59	6	7	13
60 to 64	2	1	3
<b>Total individuals received. (Must equal count from Part I Section B-1b above.)</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>

Please provide counts of individuals received by Beneficiary Status:

	Semi-Annual 1 <sup>st</sup> half	Semi-Annual 2 <sup>nd</sup> half	Annual
SSI eligible	4	2	6
SSDI eligible	6	8	14
Dually eligible	1	2	3
<b>Total individuals received. (Must equal count from Part I Section B-1b above.)</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>

Please provide counts of individuals received by Primary Disability:

	Semi-Annual 1 <sup>st</sup> half	Semi-Annual 2 <sup>nd</sup> half	Annual
Absence of extremities	0	0	0
Autism	0	1	1
Auto-immune (lupus, thyroid, ALS, etc.)	0	0	0
Blindness (both eyes)	0	0	0
Cancer	0	0	0
Cerebral palsy	0	1	1
Deaf-blind	0	0	0
Deafness	1	0	1
Diabetes	0	0	0
Digestive disorders (chronic pancreatitis, esophageal stricture, fistulae, chronic liver, etc.)	0	0	0
Epilepsy	0	0	0
Genitourinary conditions (kidney, prostate, etc.)	0	0	0
Hard of Hearing (not deaf)	1	0	1
Heart and other circulatory problems including cardiovascular	0	1	1
HIV/AIDS	0	1	1
Mental illness (diagnosis according to DSM-IV)	7	6	13
Mental retardation	0	0	0

Multiple sclerosis	0	0	0
Muscular dystrophy	0	0	0
Muscular / Skeletal impairment (arthritis, fibromyalgia, osteogenesis imperfecta, osteomyelitis, etc.)	1	1	2
Neurological disorders (brain tumors, convulsive disorders, Parkinson, etc.)	0	0	0
Other emotional/behavioral (Provide detail)	0	0	0
Other intellectual such as ADD/ADHD (Provide detail) ADHD*	1	0	1
Physical / orthopedic including spinal cord injuries, paraplegia, quadriplegia, back problems, etc.	0	1	1
Respiratory disorders (emphysema, asthma, pulmonary hypertension, cystic fibrosis, etc.)	0	0	0
Specific learning disabilities (SLD)	0	0	0
Speech impairment	0	0	0
Spina bifida	0	0	0
Substance abuse (alcohol or drugs)	0	0	0
Tourette syndrome	0	0	0
Traumatic brain injury (TBI)	0	0	0
Visual Impairment (not blind)	0	0	0
Disability not known/Other than Above (Specify)	0	0	0
<b>Total individuals received. (Must equal count from Part I Section B-1b above.)</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>

**D. Major Source of Concern – Service Requests – Reason for Receipt**

Please provide counts of all PABSS issue area service request receipts by major source of individual's concern for the current report period:

	Semi-Annual 1 <sup>st</sup> half	Semi-Annual 2 <sup>nd</sup> half	Annual
State Vocational Rehab Agency (public VR program)	0	3	3
Employment Networks (SSA contractor)	0	0	0
Agencies other than 1. or 2. above	0	0	0
Employment discrimination – hire, fire, promotion	0	0	0
Employment wages and benefits	0	0	0
Housing	0	0	0
Healthcare (not 5 above)	0	0	0
Insufficient/improper benefits planning	5	0	5
Transition services (Student beneficiary between 14-18 (or under age 22) engaging/needing a transition plan)	0	0	0
Post Secondary accommodation	0	1	1
Transportation	0	0	0
Social Security benefits cessation based on SGA (including CDR's) – not Overpayment	0	1	1

<b>Benefits Questions/Work Incentives – Not 12 or 14</b>	0	0	0
<b>Work Related Overpayment</b>	6	7	13
<b>Other (individual’s disability status changed)</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total issues/service requests of individuals receipted. (Must equal count from Part I Section B-2b above.)</b>	11	12	32

**Section E: Closed Issue Area Service Requests**

What was the problem/sub-problem area?

	Semi-Annual 1 <sup>st</sup> half	Semi-Annual 2 <sup>nd</sup> half	Annual
<b>a. [AT] Assistive Technology</b>	0	0	0
• [Education] Transition school to work	0	0	0
<b>b. [Employment] Discrimination in employment benefits</b>	0	0	0
<b>c. [Employment] Discrimination in hiring</b>	0	0	0
<b>d. [Employment] Unlawful termination / firing</b>	0	0	0
<b>e. [Employment] Other employment discrimination</b>	0	0	0
<b>f. [Employment] Reasonable accommodation – not d, e, or f from above</b>	0	0	0
<b>g. [Employment] Service provider issues – not c-g above</b>	0	0	0
<b>h. [Employment] Wage and hour issues</b>	2	1	3
<b>i. [Financial Entitlements] SSI: Overpayments based on work issues</b>	2	0	2
<b>j. [Financial Entitlements] SSDI: Overpayments based on work issues</b>	2	3	5
<b>k. [Financial Entitlements] (other) – Specify – SSI &amp; SSDI overpayments</b>	1	0	1
<b>l. [Healthcare] Medicaid only issues</b>	0	0	0
<b>m. [Healthcare] Medicare/Medicaid issues</b>	0	0	0
<b>n. [Healthcare] Medicare only issues</b>	0	0	0
<b>o. [Healthcare] Private Insurance Issues</b>	0	0	0
<b>p. [Housing] Accommodations in housing</b>	0	0	0
<b>q. [Housing] Subsidized housing/Section 8</b>	0	0	0
<b>r. [Housing] Rental termination – not q .</b>	0	0	0
<b>s. [Housing] Other – Specify</b>	0	0	0
<b>t. [Childcare]</b>	0	0	0
<b>u. [Rehab Services] Related to State VR</b>	0	2	2
<b>v. [Rehab Services] Related to Employment Network (EN)</b>	12	0	12
<b>w. [Rehab Services] Related to Agencies other than State VR or Employment Network (EN)</b>	0	0	0
<b>x. [Post-Secondary Ed] Accessibility</b>	0	1	1
<b>y. [Post-Secondary Ed] Funding issues</b>	0	0	0
<b>z. [Post-Secondary Ed] Grievance Against College – Not y or z above</b>	0	0	0

aa. [Post-Secondary Ed] Other – Specify	0	0	0
bb. [Services] Personal assistance – not Employment	0	0	0
cc. [Transportation]	0	0	0
dd. [Benefits Planning] referral / access to BPAO services	1	5	6
ee. [Other] (IF SELECTED MUST SPECIFY)	0	0	0
(Calculated by Computer) Total closed issue area service requests. (Must equal count from Part I Section B-2c above.)	20	12	23

**2. What was the reason for closing the individual’s issue area service request?**

	Semi-Annual 1 <sup>st</sup> half	Semi-Annual 2 <sup>nd</sup> half	Annual
Issue Resolved in Individual’s Favor	11	3	14
Issue Partially Resolved in Individual’s Favor	2	5	7
Issue Lacked Legal Merit	2	2	4
Individual decided not to pursue resolution or Individual Withdrew Complaint (Not e-g below)	2	0	2
Other Representation Obtained (Individual found other representation)	0	0	0
Individual Not Responsive to Agency / Individual refused to cooperate with P&A	3	1	4
Services Not Needed Due to lost contact, Death, Relocation, etc.	0	0	0
Advocacy efforts/appeals were unsuccessful (Issue not resolved in Individual’s Favor)	0	1	1
Other (IF SELECTED MUST SPECIFY)	0	0	0
Total closed issue area service requests. (Must equal count from Part I Section B-2c above.)	20	12	32

**3. What was the highest intervention strategy used?**

	<b>Semi-Annual 1<sup>st</sup> half</b>	<b>Semi-Annual 2<sup>nd</sup> half</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Short Term/Technical assistance</b>	12	9	21
<b>Informal Resolution</b>	0	1	1
<b>Investigation/Monitoring</b>	8	0	8
<b>Negotiation</b>	0	2	2
<b>Mediation / Alternative Dispute Resolution</b>	0	0	0
<b>Administrative Remedies</b>	0	0	0
<b>Legal remedy / Litigation</b>	0	0	0
<b>Class Action Suits</b>	0	0	0
<b>Systemic / Policy activities</b>	0	0	0
<b>(Calculated by Computer)</b>			
<b>Total closed issue area service requests. (Must equal count from Part I Section B-2c above.)</b>	20	12	32

**4. As a result of P&A intervention, the following major outcome was achieved: (Choose ONE outcome for each closed issue area service request!)**

	<b>Semi-Annual 1<sup>st</sup> half</b>	<b>Semi-Annual 2<sup>nd</sup> half</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Individual gained / maintained access to services including those of VR, EN or other agency</b>	8	3	11
<b>Individual obtained employment</b>	0	0	0
<b>Individual regained employment</b>	0	0	0
<b>Individual maintained employment</b>	0	0	0
<b>Individual advanced in employment</b>	0	0	0
<b>Individual's employment opportunities increased</b>	0	0	0
<b>Individual obtained an increase in salary and/or benefits</b>	0	0	0
<b>Validity of discrimination complaint was upheld</b>	0	0	0
<b>Overpayment situation addressed (it doesn't matter if it was waived or the efforts weren't successful)</b>	1	1	2
<b>Individual acquired knowledge concerning his/her rights</b>	10	7	17
<b>Outcome information is not available</b>	1	1	2
<b>Other outcome:</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total outcomes of closed issue area service requests. (Must equal count from Part I Section B-2c above.)</b>	20	12	32

## **PART II – NARRATIVE**

**Section A: Description of Progress and Status Update: [Please provide a brief overview of overall project status, staff changes, staff training or other major developments with regard to the PABSS program. This could include information about boards and committees where decisions are made concerning disability service delivery and local policy.]**

VOPA is pleased to report that during FY2008 we have provided case level services for 44 Social Security beneficiaries. VOPA has provided information and referral to an additional 871 individuals.

In addition, VOPA has provided outreach to State operated mental health institutions in Virginia about work incentives, including employment in discharge planning, and the availability of benefits planning. These topics have also been covered in presentations to local clubhouses, one for people with mental health issues and one for people with traumatic brain injuries. Nearly 580 individuals with significant disabilities received PABSS related information from these presentations. All PABSS presentations in the community include information about Virginia's Medicaid Buy-In program, "*Medicaid WORKS.*"

### **FY2008 – 1<sup>st</sup> half**

VOPA's PABSS' Disability Rights Advocate went to the SSA Partners Summit in Louisville, KY in March 2008. The purpose of the training was to give all of the potential Partners of those who work with individuals with disabilities information about the new Ticket to Work Regulations. The staff person made some good networking at the conference. VOPA staff met some of the people from Region III who could be helpful in collaborating about a PABSS case.

### **FY2008 – 2<sup>nd</sup> half**

There has been one staff change in last six months. LaToya Blizzard has assumed fiscal responsibilities in September 2008. This personnel change is a supporting role for PABSS administration. These personnel changes do not change the scope of our project or the ability of VOPA to meet our objectives.

## **Section B: Detail of Actions Taken on the Project:**

**1. Issue Area Service Requests Summaries: [Please provide summaries of three Issues/Service Requests undertaken as part of the PABSS project. Indicate clearly the issue or problem, the PABSS intervention, and the results if known]**

### **FY2008 – 1<sup>st</sup> half**

VOPA represented a young man with Autism who is PABSS eligible (receives SSI benefits). The client has a secondary disability of Congenital Heart Disease. VOPA advocated that he receive appropriate Independent Living Skills (ILS) training through the Department of

Rehabilitative Services (DRS). A meeting with the DRS Counselor resulted in our client being provided ILS training through a “Job Coach” from a DRS vendor. Our client needs this type of training before he can go forward with his plan for working in a mailroom. Once the ILS training advanced, the Job Coach reported they were moving into new areas of job training. This case was successfully closed as our client is effectively receiving the training he was seeking. This training will help him to maximize his employment.

VOPA represented a woman with Mental Illness who receives SSI as her disability benefit. The client contacted VOPA because she received conflicting information about losing her SSI if she increased her work hours. VOPA provided Technical Assistance and provided her the contact information for the WIPA (Work Incentive Planning and Assistance) Project and the Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) in her area. The case was closed successfully.

VOPA’s client is a young woman with Mental Illness. VOPA is currently assisting her to increase her awareness and understanding of her SSI benefits as she prepares to be discharged from a state operated mental health facility. VOPA will refer her to the CWIC in her area. VOPA will encourage the CWIC to work with her and to attend discharge planning meetings. She wants to work in the area of housekeeping when she leaves the hospital.

In another case, an SSA beneficiary felt that she was being discriminated against by the local DRS office on the basis of her disability and race, regarding the assistance they were providing to her with finding employment. The client felt that her assigned counselor in particular was exhibiting a negative bias towards her, which was carrying over into the services he was willing to provide to assist her to obtain employment. The client had requested a new counselor from DRS on her own, with no success. Furthermore, the client’s vocational rehabilitation file was later closed with DRS as “successful” even though the client had expressed several times to the counselor that she did not consider her employment outcome to be successful. Pursuant to federal and state regulations, as well as DRS policy, a case can only be closed when the DRS counselor and individual “consider the employment outcome to be satisfactory and agree that the individual is performing well on the job.” Our client did not consider her employment outcome as satisfactory or agree with the case closure; thus, DRS violated our client’s rights.

Another VOPA client filed for a Fair Hearing on her own behalf, requesting that DRS keep her file open in order to continue providing her with employment assistance, and to assign her a new counselor. VOPA then entered into an agreement to represent her at this Fair Hearing related to the disability issues and employment gaining effort. At a pre-hearing meeting, VOPA successfully negotiated with DRS to keep the client’s file open as requested, and with a new counselor. This allowed our client to continue to maintain her employment status.

## **FY2008 – 2<sup>nd</sup> half**

VOPA was contacted by a young man’s mother concerning a community college refusing to accommodate her son with his disability related needs. The college suggested that the young man observe classes before actually enrolling as well as asking the man to demonstrate his

ability even though he has already received an acceptance letter from the college. The college officials admitted that they never asked any other student to go through those steps before admission and officials believed they were protecting the man from failure by making sure he was ready for the requirements of the classes. Ultimately, the college officials agreed with VOPA that this student should not have been treated any different from other students. The young man is currently attending classes and reports that everything is “terrific” and the college is meeting his needs for career development.

VOPA worked with a client residing at Eastern State Hospital. This client wanted VOPA to find out who was her payee for her SSDI and SSI benefits. VOPA informed the client that ESH is the payee for her benefits and would remain the payee as long as she remains at ESH. VOPA talked in detail with the client about discharge planning, her rights to work and ability to continue to draw benefits. The client is very happy with the prospects of leaving ESH and will be undergoing a vocational evaluation with DRS upon discharge. The client was very pleased to gain more understanding about her rights regarding her benefits.

In the last six months, VOPA represented three (3) people to make sure they receive appropriate benefits planning prior to their discharge from institutions. VOPA attended treatment team meetings and worked to ensure that the client received appropriate benefits information and appropriate employment services in their discharge plans. In one case, VOPA ensured that two local DRS offices, the office where the institution is and the office serving where the client will be discharged, collaborate to determine whether the client is eligible to receive DRS services.

VOPA represented seven (7) people at risk of having their social security benefits reduced or discontinued due to an alleged overpayment. In each case, VOPA provides information and referral assistance to Social Security beneficiaries about work incentives. VOPA also represented clients in requests for Waivers of overpayment or requests for payment plans. When necessary, VOPA advocates for SSA to reduce or remove the over payment.

VOPA represented two (2) people through the administrative process who had their social security benefits reduced or discontinued due to an alleged overpayment. In cases where VOPA requests a Waiver, it submits evidence and a letter brief supporting the client’s request. In one case, VOPA advocated for a client’s overpayment to be removed because SSA improperly determined that the client was not eligible for benefits. SSA determined that the client could not receive benefits because he had been arrested and put in jail. However, SSA regulations say they can only remove a client’s benefits when he has been in jail for more than thirty days. VOPA’s client was not in jail for thirty days. The over payment assessment was rescinded. In another case, VOPA received a favorable ruling from an Administrative Law Judge which resulted in a client’s entire over payment being removed and benefits restored.

VOPA staff drafted an article about Medicaid Buy-In. The article is currently in the internal review process and it is planned to be publish in many different Virginia regional newspapers. The end result of this effort is to inform the public of this under utilized program.

**2(a). Outreach Statistics:**

	<b>Semi-Annual 1<sup>st</sup> half</b>	<b>Semi-Annual 2<sup>nd</sup> half</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Total Number of Outreach/Presentations</b>	16	7	23
<b>Total Number of Persons Reached by Outreach/ Presentation Events</b>	446	133	579

**Other Information Dissemination Activities: (Number of Instances)**

	<b>Semi-Annual 1<sup>st</sup> half</b>	<b>Semi-Annual 2<sup>nd</sup> half</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Radio/TV appearances by PABSS staff</b>	0	0	0
<b>Newspaper/Magazine/Journal articles prepared by staff (VOPA newsletter article)</b>	1	1	2
<b>PSAs/videos/films aired by the Agency</b>	0	3	3
<b>Reports disseminated</b>	0	0	0
<b>Publications/Booklets/Brochures disseminated</b>	1,012	240	1,252
<b>Number of Website hits</b>	10,593	14,567	25,160
<b>Other media activities (IF SELECTED MUST SPECIFY)</b>	0	0	0

**2(b).Outreach Narrative: [Describe the agency’s outreach efforts. Describe the trainings presented by the staff including information about the topics covered, the purpose of the training, and a description of the attendees. Describe media events, informational materials developed or other activities undertaken as part of the PABSS project.]**

**FY2008 – Annual**

VOPA maintains a website that posts all of our federal grants’ priorities, goals, and objectives, including PABSS. This website also has the notices for the Board of Directors’ and VOPA’s Advisory Councils meetings. Job vacancies, announcements, VOPA publications, quarterly newsletters, and disability-related links are also available.

The VOPA newsletter mailing list was reviewed and updated to better reflect inclusion of underserved populations. The newsletter mailing list is not a static work product. VOPA considers it to be an on-going project that will consistently be reviewed and updated to best reflect the disability communities in Virginia.

VOPA routinely provides training and speaking engagements through our Speakers Bureau. The Speakers Bureau is comprised of VOPA staff who are available to provide training and presentations that are related to the Office’s current Goals, Focus areas, and Objectives (priorities). The Speaker’s Bureau currently has its own page on the VOPA website and there is link for the public to make request a for a Speaker’s Bureau presentation. VOPA also provides exhibits and/or materials for fairs, conferences, and other functions. Whenever a

presentation is conducted about VOPA in general, it addresses some of the work we do related to work incentives and Social Security issues.

VOPA's outreach and training related to PABSS work was completed in conjunction with other funding streams. This was due to VOPA's awareness that the PABSS funding was limited. VOPA concentrated its remaining PABSS funding on providing information and referral and case level advocacy.

Public comment was received during the priority planning process. VOPA was told of the ongoing problem of youth with disabilities aging out of foster care into inadequate community based services. VOPA staff provided foster care social workers with information about disability-related rights for individuals receiving community based services, such as transition services and preparing youths with disabilities to transition from educational settings to employment. Although not entirely focused on PABSS work incentives or using PABSS funding, this effort under another funding stream clearly would benefit PABSS-eligible individuals.

VOPA staff routinely present at State institutions, speaking to consumers about their discharge rights and employment options on discharge. These presentations cover SSI and SSDI work incentives as well working with DRS to acquire gainful employment. Materials provided to attendees include: VOPA general information brochure, VOPA publication about CAP, DRS brochure on services provided, list of SS offices in Virginia with contact information, contact information for CWICs, 2008 SSA Substantial Gainful Activity amounts, and Impairment Related Work Expenses developed by Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc.

**Section C: Problems encountered and steps taken to resolve problems: [Please provide detail information about problems encountered in implementing or administering the PABSS program and actions you have taken to resolve the problems you encountered.]**

**FY2008 – Annual**

VOPA is carefully monitoring its PABSS funding as it usually runs out before the PABSS fiscal year ends.

**Section D: Planned activities: [Please provide activities you plan to undertake to further the objectives of the PABSS project.]**

**FY2008 – Annual**

VOPA plans to continue to provide information and referral, trainings about work incentives, and to represent beneficiaries attempting to gain, maintain and re-gain employment.

Objectives for next fiscal year include:

- Develop a training program to educate children with disabilities in foster care, their parents, foster parents, and advocate about their rights to receive proper transition

services to help them go from school to work or post secondary education. Trainings will focus on the children's rights to receive proper vocational rehabilitation and social security benefits planning services.

- Develop a training on social security benefits planning for residents of state mental retardation facilities, their parents, guardians, and advocates.
- Represent residents of institutions to ensure that they receive appropriate social security benefits planning as a part of their treatment plans or discharge plans or to ensure that the benefits planning components of their treatment or discharge plans are implemented.
- Develop a publication for job coaches on a beneficiary of social security's rights to work and not lose benefits. After approval by SSA, distribute to all providers of job coaching services.
- Develop and provide presentation on 1619(b) and Medicaid Buy-in as a part of the "office hours" program at eight (8) locations. Assist attendees of office hours program to participate in 1619(b) and Medicaid Buy-in.

**Section E: Diversification activities: [Please provide a description of activities undertaken to address the needs of individuals with disabilities from diverse ethnic and racial communities.]**

**FY2008 – Annual**

VOPA has two Advisory Councils known as the Disabilities Advisory Council (DAC) and The Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illnesses (PAIMI) Advisory Council. The Councils' primary responsibility is to advise the protection and advocacy system on policies and priorities to be carried out in protecting individuals with disabilities. This function helps VOPA to identify underserved and unserved Virginians.

In late FY07, VOPA staff provided the PAIMI Advisory Council with a training on employment discrimination issues related to mental illness. The training covered interview, accommodations, and separating from a job. When consulting with the PAIMI Advisory Council about resources and linkages, the Council members voiced much more concern about the misinformation that PAIMI eligible individuals receive from providers about working and Medicaid. PAIMI Advisory Council members reported numerous anecdotes about individuals they knew, who had been scared out of trying to work, as providers had warned them they would lose their Medicaid benefits and SSI. Because of this feedback and other complaints that VOPA has received, VOPA considers PAIMI individuals as underserved. We have partnered our PABSS work with PAIMI funding to assist in developing appropriate institutional discharge planning that includes linkages to vocational assessments and training and work incentives. Our outreach this year with PABSS funding has focused on this issue predominantly. See earlier in report for details.