

# Massachusetts State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

FFY 2013 Annual Report



**Creating Opportunities For  
Independent Living And Work**

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The Honorable Deval Patrick  
Governor of Massachusetts  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Patrick,

It is an honor to represent the Massachusetts State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in the submission of the Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2013.

This SRC report for FFY 2013 highlights the great value and work of individuals from all walks of life who volunteer as members of the Statewide Rehabilitation Council. As you read this report, you will recognize the incredible amount of dedication the Council members display to improve the lives of citizens with disabilities in our Commonwealth.

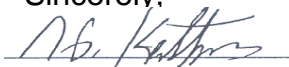
The SRC continues its commitment to partner with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). I would like to thank the employees of the MRC who have provided the SRC with advice that promotes the MRC's mission and vision outlined in the MRC's Strategic Plan. The SRC could not perform our mandated duties and responsibilities without this partnership on our mutual goal of serving people with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In Fiscal Year 2013, the SRC held four quarterly meetings across the state. The SRC standing committees met as required and the Executive Committee deliberated regularly on developing SRC Quarterly Meeting agendas. The goal of all our meetings and deliberations was to ensure people with disabilities receive the necessary vocational rehabilitation services needed to maximize their employment opportunities and live independently in their communities throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

I would like to thank the dedicated members of the SRC who make it possible for us to meet our objectives. The value of each SRC member is impossible to measure, on an individual basis, because they do their jobs so willingly; it makes all the members shine.

It remains an exceptional privilege to serve out my term and work with such dedicated staff and determined SRC members. Our collective goal, as always, is to take our responsibility to improve and expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities. I look forward to continuing our relationship with the Governor's Appointments Office to facilitate the appointment of members to the council. I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "N. Kaltsas", written over a horizontal line.

Nicholas G. Kaltsas, Esq., Chair

### ***A Message from the Director's Desk:***

It is a distinguished honor to be working for the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) as its director. As the SRC Director, I am highly involved in all activities of the SRC. I can attest to the dedication of the SRC statutory and ex-officio members. Most importantly, the solid partnership between the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the SRC continues to contribute immensely to the MRC functions through three outstanding and closely related divisions:

- The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Division which assures the provision of appropriate vocational rehabilitation services to eligible consumers seeking to enter part or full time competitive employment.
- The Community Living (CL) Division which houses many federally funded programs and state funded specialized programs supporting people with disabilities to live and work in their community of choice.
- Disability Determination Services (DDS) Division administers the Social Security Administration (SSA) grant; determines the eligibility of citizens of the Commonwealth for Social Security Disability Insurance SSDI and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

The SRC is committed to understand the vocational needs of individuals with disabilities, who want to live and work in the community, and gain a higher quality of life through resources and services administered by the MRC.

This SRC Annual Report highlights the accomplishments of the SRC deliberations through its standing committees. The SRC continues to advise the MRC on the creation of competitive career opportunities for its consumers based on their interests, choices and needs, through public education, individualized employment plans, and fundamental community advocacy.

This year's report highlights some of the recommendations presented to the MRC based on consumer needs and standing committee reports. These recommendations have significantly demonstrated that the Annual Consumer Conference has become a cornerstone of our partnership with the MRC and state, local, and federal agencies. At the annual conference, community-based private nonprofit contractors, and vendors network with consumers from across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This year's conference provided sixteen workshops in two daily sessions. Also, over forty exhibitors and government guest speakers took part in this exciting event. This conference was co-hosted by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) and the State Independent Living Council (SILC) and provided the state with wonderful opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

I believe that the partnership between the MRC and the SRC will remain solid in our endeavor to assist citizens of the Commonwealth with disabilities to achieve self determination through work and independent living practices. In FFY 2013, our partnership with MRC assisted the MRC agency in achieving a statewide outcome of 3,650 individuals gaining competitive work.

Sincerely,



**Emeka Nwokedi**  
**Director of Consumer Involvement**

## **2014 State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Officers**

**Alan Greene**, Chairperson, is a resident of Canton, Massachusetts. He is a retired Human Resources professional with over 20 years experience in the HR field. He is currently working as an Independent Educator/Substitute Teacher at the secondary level for the towns of Canton, Sharon, and Easton. Alan holds a B.A. from the University of Massachusetts Boston and an MS from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Dawn Clark, D. min.**, Vice Chairperson is a resident of Worcester, Massachusetts. Dawn has served many years in a variety of community and pastoral positions. She currently works for the City of Worcester as the Disability Intake Coordinator and lives with the life-long experience of having a disability. Dawn holds a B.A. from Ricker College, Houlton, Maine, a Master of Divinity from Boston University School of Theology, Boston, Massachusetts, and a Doctorate of Ministry from Bangor Theological Seminary, Bangor, Maine.

**Dr. Lusa Lo**, Secretary is a resident of Braintree, MA. Dr. Lo is an Associate Professor at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Lo holds a B.A. in Liberal Arts, an M.A. in Special Education from Holy Name University, Oakland, California and an Ed.D in Learning and Instruction from the University of San Francisco, California.

**Ms. Lisa Chiango**, Member at Large. Lisa is a resident of Billerica, MA. Lisa has a long employment history in the media and communication fields. Ms. Chiango holds a technical degree from Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York, a B.A. in Computer Science from Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C. and an M.A. in visual Media Arts-Video Production from Emerson College, Boston, MA.

**Ms. Naomi Goldberg**, Member at Large is a Massachusetts resident. Naomi is the Assistant Director, Client Services, Massachusetts Office on Disability and is the Director of the federally-mandated and funded Client Assistance Program (CAP) in Massachusetts. CAP specifically addresses information and advocacy concerns for clients and applicant of the Commonwealth's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Independent Living Programs (IL) Services.

## **Massachusetts State Rehabilitation Council Committee and Subcommittee Chairs**

### **Committees:**

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Committee  
Richard Colantonio, Chair

Consumer Satisfaction Committee  
Mike Ferriter, Chair

Joint Committee Business Development/Placement & Finance  
Alan Greene, Chair

Joint Committee on the State Plan and Interagency Relations  
Naomi Goldberg, Chair

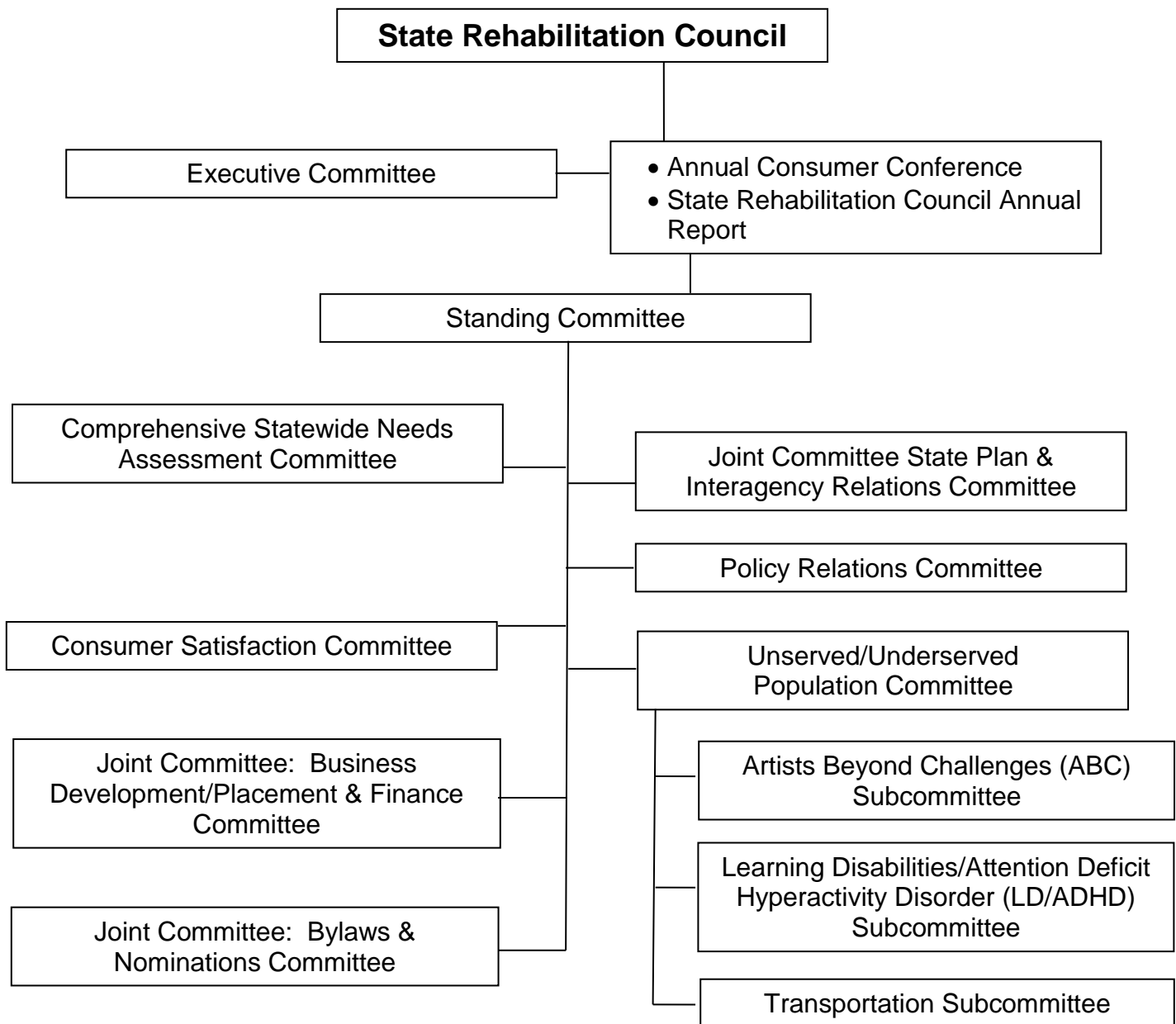
Unserved/Underserved Population Committee  
Dawn Clark, Chair

### **Standing Subcommittees of the Unserved/Underserved Population Committee:**

Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder LD/ADHD  
Subcommittee  
Jenna Knight, Chair

Transportation Subcommittee  
Kevin Goodwin, Chair

Artists Beyond Challenges (ABC) Subcommittee  
Raine Newman, Chair



## **ABOUT THE MRC**

### **MRC MISSION**

The MRC promotes equality, empowerment and independence of individuals with disabilities. These goals are achieved through enhancing and encouraging personal choice and the right to succeed or fail in the pursuit of independence and employment in the community.

### **MRC VISION**

The MRC provides comprehensive services to people with disabilities that maximize their quality of life and economic self-sufficiency in the community.

### **ABOUT US**

The MRC consists of three Divisions, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Community Living (CL) and the Disability Determination Services (DDS).

**Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** assists individuals with physical, psychiatric and/or learning disabilities in facing the challenges of the modern workplace. This may include identifying job goals based on individual interests and aptitudes, providing funds for college and vocational training, assessing worksite accommodations, educating an employer about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or assisting an individual returning to work. Vocational rehabilitation services can often reduce or remove barriers to employment. Priority is given to those individuals who have the most significant disabilities in areas such as communication, learning disabilities, mobility, work tolerance and work skills.

In Fiscal Year 2013 there were 22,100 individuals with disabilities actively receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

- 15,086 consumers were enrolled in training/education programs.
- 3,650 consumers with significant disabilities were employed in competitive integrated employment.
- 94.7% of consumers were employed with medical insurance.
- 82% of consumers were satisfied with services.

The earnings of these successfully employed in MA in the first year were \$63.94 million.

Estimated public benefits savings from people rehabilitated in MA were \$27.4 million.

Average Hourly Wage	\$12.75
Average Work Hours Weekly	26.42

### **Who Are Our Consumers?**

Psychiatric Disabilities	37.4%
Substance Abuse	9.0%
Orthopedic Disabilities	10.7%

Learning Disabilities	19.8%
Developmental Disabilities	2.2%
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	7.1%
Neurological Disabilities	2.7%
Traumatic Brain Injury	2.0%
Other Disabilities	9.1%
Average Age	34
Female	47.1%
Male	52.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.8%
Black	16.1%
Hispanic	9.6%
Native American	0.6%
White	80.5%

**The Community Living (CL) Division** is comprised of a variety of programs, supports, and services that address the diverse needs of adults and transition age youth with disabilities to fulfill their desire/need for community integration, to gain maximum control of their destiny, and to participate fully in their community. These programs include Consumer Involvement, Independent Living & Assistive Technology, Home Care Assistance, Home and Community-based Waiver Management, Protective Services, the Statewide Head Injury Program, Nursing Home Initiative, and Transition for Youth with Disabilities.

In Fiscal Year 2013 there were 11,637 individuals with disabilities served through MRC's Community Living programs in Massachusetts.

6,294 were served by Independent Living Centers

535 were served by Turning 22 Services

641 were served by Assistive Technology

411 were served by the Housing Registry

180 were served by Supported Living Services

1,699 were served by Brain Injury Services

1,322 were served by Home Care Services

401 were served by Protective Services

154 were served by the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Waiver

**The Disability Determination Services (DDS) Division** is funded by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and determines the initial and reconsideration applications (first level of appeal after a denial), and continued eligibility for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. Special outreach efforts are made to homeless clients, individuals with HIV/AIDS, and veterans injured during military service.

In Fiscal Year 2013, there were 85,854 SSI/SSDI claims processed with the MRC/DDS.

- 85,854 total disposition of cases processed
- 57,906 initial claims filed
- 58,020 initial claims disposed
- 40.9% allowed
- 8,968 Continuing Disability Review (CDR) receipts
- 7,848 Continuing Disability Review (CDR) Dispositions
- 95% accuracy of initial decisions

**Establishment of the Massachusetts State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was created in March 1994 by an Executive Order of the Governor to implement the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by Public Law 102-569.

The Council carries out its purpose by performing the following duties and responsibilities:

- Advise the MRC regarding the administration of the public vocational rehabilitation program under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, particularly regarding eligibility and order of selection.
- Advise the MRC regarding its relationship with other state agencies that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve their vocational rehabilitation goals and objectives.
- Advise the MRC concerning the preparation of the Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan (which plans for vocational rehabilitation services), and amendments thereto, and any reports, needs assessments and evaluations required by Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.
- To the extent feasible, conduct review and analysis of consumer satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services and the functions performed by state agencies and other public and private entities serving.
- Prepare and submit an annual report to the Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Governor on the status of vocational

rehabilitation programs operated within Massachusetts and make the report available to the public.

- Coordinate with other organizations in Massachusetts that plan or oversee the provision of services for people with disabilities, including the Statewide Independent Living Council established under Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act, the advisory panel established under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Massachusetts Mental Health Planning Council.
- Advise the MRC concerning coordination and establishment of working relationships between the Commission and the Statewide Independent Living Council, and Centers for Independent Living within Massachusetts.

In pursuing these purposes, the Council encourages participation by all concerned individuals.

The Council is composed of twenty appointed members, the MRC Commissioner and one vocational rehabilitation counselor who are ex-officio members. The Council encourages public participation in its general Council meetings and has established 15 positions as ex-officio memberships. The ex-officio members serve to contribute in the business of the Council but shall not exercise the options to vote on Council decisions. Each ex-officio member is nominated annually and must represent a disability related advocacy group.

### **The SRC Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee addresses major issues facing the Council and can make preliminary decisions to be considered by the Council.

- The Executive Committee also works through the State Rehabilitation Council's standing committees to review, analyze, advise, and partner with VR and complete other Council requirements.
- The Executive Committee is composed of the SRC Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Member at Large, and the Chairs of the standing committees.

## **SRC Standing Committees**

### **Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Committee**

The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Committee works in collaboration with the MRC to conduct an annual Comprehensive Statewide Annual Needs Assessment (CSNA). The MRC conducts the CSNA on an annual basis with the information and findings incorporated into MRC's State Plan, Strategic Planning, and Quality Assurance Activities. The CSNA provides agency management with detailed information regarding the needs of the consumers served by the MRC, and to fulfill the

federal requirement that the agency conduct a needs assessment at least every three years as part of the State Plan.

The CSNA process consists of a survey of active consumers, focus groups, analysis of key statistical and demographic information and facts, and collaboration and discussion with the SRC and other key stakeholders. The committee is comprised of MRC staff, SRC representatives, and other stakeholders to manage the CSNA process to ensure the CSNA is comprised of a wide array of information to fully evaluate the service needs of citizens with disabilities within Massachusetts as well as provide input on the assessment of the needs of consumers served by the MRC. The subcommittee reviews the CSNA process each year to enhance and modify the process as needed to ensure it captures a wide range of information, both quantitative and qualitative, from a wide range of participants.

The goal of the CSNA is to provide the MRC and SRC with short and long term data on consumer needs to drive improvements to Vocational Rehabilitation and other related MRC programs. In addition to assessing the overall needs of the MRC's consumer population and individuals with disabilities in Massachusetts, the CSNA process seeks to identify the VR service needs of individuals with significant disabilities, including the need for supported employment; individuals with disabilities from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds; individuals who may be underserved or unserved by the MRC's VR program; individuals with disabilities served through the overall Massachusetts workforce investment system; and to evaluate the need to create and improve community rehabilitation programs.

#### Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Committee Accomplishments

In FY2013, the Needs Assessment Committee worked in collaboration with the MRC to enhance the CSNA process to ensure that it best captured the needs of individuals with disabilities served by MRC.

The committee worked with MRC to review technical assistance from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and best practices on the CSNA. Based on this review, the committee worked with MRC to make modifications to the Needs Assessment process and to improve its quality and to make it a more comprehensive and useful process for the agency, its consumers, its providers, and individuals with disabilities across Massachusetts.

Specific enhancements to the 2013 CSNA process included incorporation of findings and data from other reports including the MRC Consumer Satisfaction Survey Report, an annual survey of community rehabilitation programs in Massachusetts, an annual survey of MRC counseling staff, information from MRC's SWOT/Strategic Plan, summary of findings from MRC's client case reviews, information on staff training needs, findings from performance-based contract reviews, the RSA Standards and Indicators, and other related information.

In addition, based on the successful implementation of a pilot consumer focus group as part of the Needs Assessment Process in 2012, upon recommendation of the committee, MRC implemented focus groups as a regular component of the CSNA process. This year, a focus group session was conducted during the 2013 MRC Annual Consumer Conference. The focus group consisted of a diverse group of MRC consumers representing all regions of the state. Consumers were asked a series of questions based on the questions contained in the Needs Assessment Survey. Based on the result of the focus group, in addition to the annual focus group, a series of more targeted focus groups for specific populations (region, MRC office, disability group, ethnic groups) to allow MRC to better assess the needs of specific populations was recommended.

Based on the committee's recommendations from the 2012 CSNA report, which were incorporated into MRC's State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation, a number of actions were taken by MRC in 2013. These included; the one year extension of the Donated Vehicle Program operated by Good News Garage; increased efforts to collect valid email addresses for VR consumers; translation of marketing materials into various languages including Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Khmer, Vietnamese, Russian, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole; collaboration with the Centers for Independent Living to conduct a summer employment and internship program for youth consumers; expansion of a learning disability support group; and efforts to improve information on services available to transition youth and their families through the completion of a guidebook entitled "A Family Guide to Transition Services in Massachusetts".

### **Consumer Satisfaction Committee**

The mission of the Consumer Satisfaction Committee (CSC) is to ensure consumer perspectives are included in the process of evaluating MRC consumer satisfaction and to serve in an advisory capacity to improve services provided to consumers. On an annual basis, the MRC surveys all closed consumers in status 26 and status 28 on their satisfaction. To achieve this mission, the CSC will:

- Work in collaboration with the MRC to develop and refine evaluation tools and analyze data collected for the purpose of assessing consumer satisfaction with services provided by vocational rehabilitation staff and contracted service providers.
- Make recommendations on the basis of the consumer satisfaction data collected annually and follow up with the MRC to facilitate the provision of high quality value-based training and meaningful and sustainable competitive employment opportunities.

### **Consumer Satisfaction Committee Accomplishments**

The CSC worked with the agency's marketing department to develop a VR Consumer Orientation Video and rewrite the VR Consumer Handbook. This VR Consumer Orientation Video will be used at all orientation programs in all area or field offices. The video highlights essential elements of the Consumer Handbook and VR process.

The recommendations proposed in the most recent Consumer Satisfaction Survey report include the following:

- Overall, the vast majority of consumers (82%) were satisfied with the services they received from the MRC and would recommend the MRC to other individuals with disabilities.
- VR Counselors, Job Placement Specialists, Employment Services Specialists and consumers could benefit from more knowledge about the current labor market in Massachusetts, and the types of jobs that are available in different geographic regions. This has been accomplished through the development of labor market reports and an analysis of the Standard Occupational Codes with respect to MRC consumer goals.
- Consumer satisfaction with counselors' knowledge, skill and supportiveness was a theme in the 2012 Consumer Satisfaction Survey. Counselors were acknowledged for their ability to provide supportive and professional services in the face of significant challenges, such as large caseloads, limited resources and a changing workforce caused by a large number of retirements.
- MRC improved its succession planning efforts by expanding the paid graduate intern program that brings new counselors into the system and replaces those who are retiring, as well as implementing a series of supervisor and aspiring supervisor trainings.

#### Consumer Satisfaction Survey Recommendations

Frequently mentioned areas for improvement included enhancing job preparation and support through job club groups and soft skills workshops, enhanced communication between consumers and counselors by ensuring up to date contact and email addresses, and improvements in promptness of services, specifically for those with psychiatric disabilities.

#### Joint Committee Business Development/Placement & Finance

The SRC Joint Committee Business Development/ Placement & Finance Committee provides support and guidance to the MRC and to the full Council on related matters while identifying innovative solutions for, and the advancement of, vocational rehabilitation programs and the placement of people with disabilities into competitive employment.

The Joint Committee Business Development/ Placement & Finance met three times over the last year and advised the MRC in the following areas:

### Joint Committee Business Development/Placement & Finance Accomplishments

- Led the effort that produced a highly successful consumer conference at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel in Norwood in June 2013.
- Worked with the Director of Placement to advise in the effort to successfully increase the number of individuals with disabilities hired by the private sector.
- Took a strong stance against removing the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) from the Department of Education to the US Department of Labor. The Committee contacted Senator Elizabeth Warren regarding this issue.
- The committee continued to collaborate with the MRC Marketing Strategy Team (MST) as part of MRC's ongoing marketing initiatives.

### Joint Committee Business Development/Placement & Finance Recommendations

- Develop recommendations for the utilization of social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, etc., by the MRC.
- Recommend that MRC procure software that can be used for job matching, which was accomplished through the purchase of Resumate.
- Replace obsolete MRC staff computers as needed over a three year period.
- Recommend that there is computer access for consumers at the annual consumer conference.
- Recommend the development of survey tools to identify areas of improvement for the MRC website.
- The MRC should consider including corporate and consumer testimonies on the public web site from the consumer needs and satisfaction surveys and other sources.
- Develop strong regional relationships/partnerships with regional transit authorities to address the MRC consumers' employment barriers regarding transportation.

### Joint Committee on the State Plan and Interagency Relations

The mission of this Committee is to assure the SRC meets its obligations regarding input from consumers in the development of both the MRC Public Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan and the Unified Workforce State Plan.

## Joint Committee on the State Plan and Interagency Relations Accomplishments

Based on committee recommendations, MRC is now using social media such as Facebook, has begun efforts to review and enhance the agency web site, and has purchased Resumate software that can be used for job matching and to make it easier for employers to hire MRC consumers. Based on committee recommendations, MRC staff were trained on best practices emerging from the Transition Works grant, continues to develop the Youth Leadership Network, and has begun work to improve information on transportation options for consumers, including the creation of transportation resource fact sheets.

There were several opportunities for the public to provide input to the MRC on the State Plan and recommendations. There was a public hearing in Boston and an open input session during the SRC quarterly meeting in June. In addition, the public was offered other ways to provide input, including email, phone or written testimony. In the future, we look forward to increased access for the public to provide input at various MRC offices throughout the state via videoconferencing.

## Joint Committee on the State Plan and Interagency Relations Recommendations

- The SRC recommends that MRC should continue to enhance its job matching software.
- The SRC recommends that the MRC work to foster strong partnerships with regional transit authorities to address consumer transportation barriers including the need for night and weekend transportation for people with disabilities who work in the late shifts and weekends. The SRC also recommends that MRC explore establishing a pilot program that may include a consumer small business to furnish transportation to individuals with disabilities who live in rural areas.
- The SRC recommends that the MRC continue to expand on LD/ADHD support programs.
- The SRC recommends that the MRC develop survey tools to improve the content and organization of the MRC website.
- The SRC recommends that the MRC continue to ensure that a smoother transition process for youth with disabilities is in place. The SRC encourages the MRC to continue incorporating best practices obtained from the Transition Works grant, to start the transition planning process while students are still in school and to support self-determination.

## Unserved/Underserved Population Committee

The mission of this Committee is to advise the MRC regarding residents of the Commonwealth who are unserved/underserved due to their disability, culture, ethnicity, race, language, creed, religion, class, sexual preference, age or economic status.

## Unserved/Underserved Population Committee Accomplishments

The committee spent much of the year learning more about various resources within the Vocational Rehabilitation Department including details on MRC services and Statewide Employment Services.

In addition, the committee presented on MBTA transportation services for people with disabilities and the restructuring of MRC Consumer Involvement Regional Advisory Councils into three District Consumer Advocacy Councils.

## **SRC Unserved/Underserved Standing Subcommittees**

The Unserved/Underserved Committee is comprised of three subcommittees; Learning Disabilities/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (LD/ADHD); Transportation; and Artists Beyond Challenges (ABC).

### **LD/ADHD Subcommittee**

The mission of the LD/ADHD Subcommittee is to promote education, advocacy for and advocacy by people with Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (LD/ADHD), to enhance community inclusion, independence and economic self-sufficiency. The LD/ADHD Subcommittee aims to:

- Increase LD/ADHD consumer involvement in the LD/ADHD subcommittee that can assist in weaving in new aspirations for LD/ADHD consumers for better employment and independent living outcomes.
- Assist the MRC in enhancing its existing soft skills and Employment Readiness/Soft Skills program to ensure it meets the continuing needs of individuals with learning disabilities. As part of this effort, the committee will work with the MRC (Youth) Transition Planning group to ensure that such skills and training are consistent across all MRC Regional Districts.
- The committee will work with MRC to ensure that assistive technology is available for consumers with Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and that employers understand the complex nature of learning disabilities.

### **LD/ADHD Subcommittee Accomplishments**

- The Committee coordinated training for VR Counselors through the MRC Training Department in order to improve services of consumers with LD/ADHD.
- The Committee provided recommendations, based on findings from the consumer needs, satisfaction, and counselor satisfaction surveys, for the MRC State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation.

- The Committee worked with MRC on the development of the Community College Disability Services Survey and Report.
- The Committee represented consumers with Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder on a variety of SRC Committees.

### **Transportation Subcommittee**

The Transportation Subcommittee's mission is to advocate, educate and empower people with disabilities and the general public regarding transportation options and issues. Transportation continued to be an ongoing issue for consumers getting to work and other places.

### **Transportation Subcommittee Accomplishments**

- Through the development of a new protocol, transportation was made available for all SRC members to attend meetings. The Committee received an educational presentation from the Human Service Transportation, the entity responsible for the protocol. Questions and responses assisted both parties in addressing concerns raised by members and transportation to meetings is now much smoother.
- The Committee assumed responsibility for the work of the Transportation Task Force, as this remains an ongoing need for consumers.
- The Committee focused on work-related transportation solutions, with medical and recreational transportation, and worked with community groups to provide information on transportation resources for people with disabilities.
- A list of Transportation services and resources is being developed by the MRC staff to be used by agency staff and consumers, including information on the RIDE, Access plan, and general transportation resources.
- The committee, with the assistance of the MRC, conducted a survey of consumer transportation needs.

This survey report was produced at the initiative of the Transportation Subcommittee of the Underserved and Unserved Consumers Committee of the State Rehabilitation Council. Transportation is often identified as a barrier to employment among people with disabilities. In the most recent Consumer Needs Assessment Survey, 32% of consumers identified transportation as a potential barrier to employment. Consumer respondents indicate a number of different reasons as to how they see transportation as a barrier to employment. Some of the most common reasons included the inability to access employment opportunities in areas with no or limited public transportation; the cost of transportation, including the high price of gasoline, maintenance, registration and insurance; recent increases in public transportation and paratransit fares; the fact the consumer does not own or have access to a vehicle; the consumer lacks a driver's license or needs driver's education; health conditions and/or the nature of the consumer's disability; and the reliability and time needed to travel via public transit or paratransit.

As part of its efforts to address this need, the MRC has contracted with Good News Garage to provide refurbished, donated vehicles to eligible MRC consumers. Since 2010, the program has provided 277 vehicles to consumers to assist them with gaining and maintaining employment. This program improves consumers' lives by allowing increasing access to employment and opportunities for longer hours and increased wages.

In addition, the MRC is actively working with University of Massachusetts initiatives to improve transportation options and transportation coordination statewide. The MRC is also actively involved with the Executive Board of the Accessibility Advisory Commission of the MBTA, and collaborates with District Consumer Advocacy Councils (DCAC) on issues related to transportation.

Survey findings included:

- Two-thirds of the respondents to the transportation survey said it was easy or somewhat easy to get transportation in their neighborhood, but this varied by geography. Respondents in the western part of the state were less likely to find it easy to get around.
- The transportation survey, and the most recent Consumer Needs Assessment survey, indicated the most common transportation options used reported by consumers were: their own vehicle, public transportation, walking and rides from family and friends. Additionally, the transportation survey indicated respondents who owned a car also were less likely to have transportation problems. About two out of five respondents owned a car and about 15% had access to one. Respondents in the western part of the state were most likely to own cars, as were older respondents and those with higher levels of education.
- In terms of transportation services and options needed by consumers, according to the most recent Needs Assessment Survey, the most needed transportation

services are the donated vehicle program (20%), public transit (16%), driver's education and training (13%), information about transportation options (8%) and the Ride/Paratransit service (8%).

- Nearly half the respondents felt restricted by the transportation options in their community and two out of five felt that public transit was not available to them. Respondents in the western part of the state and the Cape Cod area were most likely to feel that public transit was not accessible to them. This was least likely to be true for New Bedford and the Greater Boston areas.
- Respondents in both the Needs Assessment survey and the Transportation survey expressed a need for more information about transportation options, learning how to use public transit, and to assist with reading schedules.

### **Artists Beyond Challenges (ABC) Subcommittee**

The mission of the Artists Beyond Challenges Subcommittee is a group of people from diverse disciplines working toward creating linkages between artists with disabilities and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.

### **Artists Beyond Challenges (ABC) Subcommittee Accomplishments**

- Approved art work for the 2013 MRC calendar.
- Developed a prototype for an Artists Beyond Challenges website.
- Consumers exhibited art at Boston City Hall, Newton YMCA and partnered with Very Special Arts of Massachusetts with a booth at Abilities Expo 2013.
- Developed a workshop for artists at Bentley College.

### **2013 Consumer Conference**

The 2013 Consumer Conference theme was Moving Beyond the Barriers: Secrets to Successful Employment. Approximately 400 people attended this conference at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel in Norwood, MA in June, 2013. This conference was co-hosted by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Statewide Independent Living Council. An evaluation of conference attendees indicated that there was overall satisfaction with the provided content, trainings and facilities.