



# SRC Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2018

Massachusetts Vocational Rehabilitation Division

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## Letter from Chairperson



The Massachusetts State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) works with and advises the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. The SRC was originally established in 1994, by the authority of then Massachusetts Governor William F Weld, who signed an executive order to create the MA SRC. This executive order provided compliance with the Federal Rehabilitation Act, as amended in 1992 by Public Law 102-56. A full Council consists of 21 members appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts and non-voting ex-officio members, each offering their unique experience with the intention of giving advice that will result in people with disabilities securing gainful employment and independent living opportunities. On July 22, 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was signed into law, reauthorizing the Federal Rehabilitation Act, as amended for six years, from 2015 through 2020 under which the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission SRC operates.

This Federal fiscal year 2018 report encompasses the dates of October 2017 thru September 2018. The Council met four times this year – in December, May, June and September - in spite of New England snowstorms. During this time, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Division, unfortunately, saw a decrease in federal re-allotment funding, staff reductions, and the tightening of other resources. These fiscal realities triggered a process to evaluate the need for an Order of Selection. An Order of Selection is the process the Regional Services Administration, the federal funding source, provides when a Vocational Rehabilitation Division does not have adequate resources to serve all eligible consumers. At our September meeting, the SRC voted to recommend that MRC proceed with implementing an Order of Selection. Moving forward, MRC will be developing policies and holding listening sessions and hearings for employees, consumers, and public input working toward Order of Selection implementation, which is scheduled to begin in January 2019. The SRC will continue to advise and monitor this progress so every person that comes through the door for employment services is knowledgeable of relevant/alternative resources and supports.

As a consequence of the SRC's need to advise and be engaged in the Order of Selection, the Council's energy usually put into providing recommendations or advice for the MRC staff to consider was diverted. There were four SRC working group meetings held in July and August to educate and inform ourselves about Order of Selection, the rationale for why we need to implement an Order of Selection, and the potential issues related to implementing this process.

A second major decision the SRC made was to use the same Federal FY 18 recommendations for the Federal FY 19 State Plan, and add an eleventh recommendation to continue to work with MRC on the implementation of the Order of Selection. These recommendations are listed in this report.

In March, Deputy Commissioner Kathleen Biebel joined the MRC staff with the SRC as part of her portfolio. We want to thank her, Commissioner Toni Wolf, and the other MRC staff members who have been crucial to the Council's work.

I wish to thank my colleagues on the Council for their support and patience as we have traversed some uneven paths this year. Finally we thank Mr. Alan Green, Business/Labor representative, for his many years of service including positions of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the SRC.

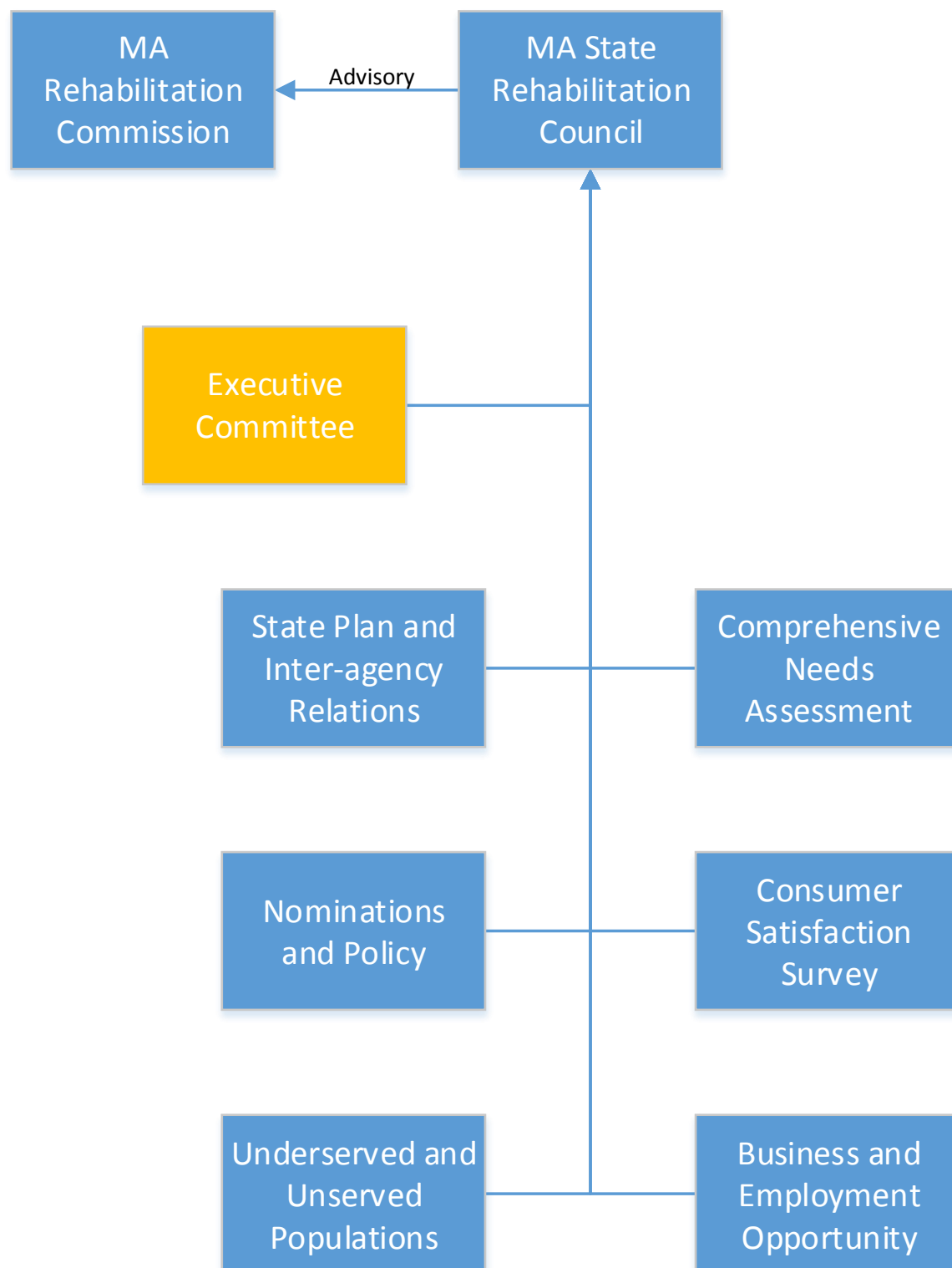
Once again, it has been my honor and pleasure to serve the Governor and the people of Massachusetts as we work together to provide employment services for our citizens with disabilities.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Dawn E. Clark, D. Min.*

SRC Chairperson

## MA State Rehabilitation Council Organizational Chart



# The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Accomplishments

## Community Living Division:

The Community Living 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, 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.

	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total consumers actively receiving services:</b>	12,267	14,284	15,054
<b>Total funds expended:</b>	\$49,640,740	\$50,116,672	\$48,186,551
<b>Cost per consumer served:</b>	\$4,047	\$3,509	\$3,201

## Disability Determination Services:

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.

	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total Budget:</b>	\$50,350,907	\$47,645,563	\$47,765,219
<b>Cost Per Case:</b>	\$549.34	\$571.63	\$568.79
<b>Total Disposition of SSI/SSDI Cases:</b>	91,657	87,054	83,977
<b>Accuracy of Initial Decisions:</b>	98.6%	96.2%	96.4%
<b>Federal Accuracy of Decision Standard:</b>	90.6%	90.6%	90.6%

\*Based on federal fiscal year.

## Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program 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 work site 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.

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Consumers actively receiving services:</b>	25,125	27,028	29,463
<b>Consumers enrolled in training/education programs:</b>	16,513	17,685	18,471
<b>Consumers with disabilities competitively employed:</b>	100% / 3,816	100% / 3,973	100%/4,053
<b>Consumers employed with medical insurance:</b>	95.9%	96.6%	98.7%
<b>Consumers satisfied with services:</b>	84.0%	86.0%	88.0%
<b>Average Age of Consumer:</b>	33	32.4	31.8
<b>Average Hourly Wage:</b>	\$13.18	\$14.11	\$14.65
<b>Average Work Hours Weekly:</b>	26.8	26.7	27.3

## Services for Youth in Transition

As a result of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's (WIOA) requirement of services to be spent on youth, the SRC has shared the following statistics:

- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program served 11,057 youths age 16 to 24 during State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2018.
- 1,060 of these consumers were placed in employment, with an average hourly wage of \$12.55
- Employed young consumers worked an average of 26.5 hours per week.
- MRC served 5,588 high school and post-secondary education students with disabilities aged 16 to 22 through its VR Area Offices.
- MRC also operated Pre-Employment Transition Service (Pre-ETS) contracts with 34 vendors across the Commonwealth serving 1,061 students. These programs offer work based learning experiences, job readiness and skills trainings, assistance with enrollment in post-secondary education and training programs, job exploration, and leadership/mentoring services to students with disabilities.
- MRC provided work-based learning experiences for 1,481 young consumers across the Commonwealth through its Local Area Office Internship Program, CVS Health Summer Internship Program, Pre-ETS Contracts, and Transitional Internship Program (TIP). These work-based learning experiences provide employment related skills and guidance, and references to facilitate permanent future employment opportunities.

<b>Ages Served</b>	<b>FY 17</b>	<b>FY18</b>
14-16 years old	0.8%	0.5%
17 years old	4.8%	4.2%
18 years old	13.0%	11.7%
19 years old	18.0%	17.4%
20 years old	16.4%	18.2%
21 years old	14.3%	14.9%
22 years old	12.6%	13.0%
23 years old	10.2%	11.1%
24 years old	9.8%	9.1%

<b>Disability Profile:</b>	<b>FY17</b>	<b>FY18</b>
Sensory/Communicative	6.7%	6.3%
Physical/Mobility	6.8%	6.9%
Cognitive/Psychological	86.6%	86.8%



## MA State Rehabilitation Council Members

### Governor Appointed Members:

Member Name	Seat Name
Ms. Rosanna Woodmansee	Business/Labor/Industries 1
Ms. Ellie Starr	Business/Labor/Industries 2
Ms. Barbara Cipriani	Business/Labor/Industries 3
Ms. Catherine D. O'Neil	Business/Labor/Industries 4
Ms. Naomi Goldberg	CAP
Mr. Stephen Aalto	Community Rehab Service Provider Rep
Ms. Lisa Chiango	Disabilities Rep 1
Mr. Youcef J. Bellil	Disabilities Rep 2
Mr. Richard Colantonio	Disabilities Rep 3
Mr. Matthew J. Bander	Disabilities Rep 4
Ms. Dawn E. Clark	Disabilities Rep 5
Ms. Heather A. Wood	Disabilities Rep 6
Ms. Heather Watkins	Disabilities Rep 7
Dr. Lusa Lo	Higher Education Rep 2
Ms. Roxanne Hoke-Chandler	Parent Training/ Info Center Rep
Ms. Bonnie M. Jones	SILC Rep
Jim Riley	Un-served/Underserved Rep 1
Ms. Katherine R. Queally	Un-served/Underserved Rep 2
VACANT	WIB Rep

### Ex-Officio Members:

Anne Marie Paulson

Hang Lee

Kevin Goodwin

Joseph Panciotti

Christiana Erekosima

Rita Sagalyn

Ruth Unger

Kristin Britton

## Council Committees

### Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Committee

Chairperson: Richard Colantonio

**Mission:** The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Committee works in collaboration with the MRC to conduct and Annual Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). The MRC conducts the assessment on an annual basis with the information and findings incorporated into MRC's State Plan, strategic planning, and quality assurance activities. The CSNA provides the agency with detailed information regarding the needs of the consumers served by MRC and to fulfill the federal requirements that the agency conducts a needs assessment at least every three years.

### Consumer Satisfaction Committee

Chairperson: Vacant

**Mission:** 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 consumers with closed cases on their satisfaction of MRC's services.

### Business and Employment Opportunity Committee

Chairperson: Alan Greene

**Mission:** The SRC Employment and Business Development Committee is responsible for providing advice and guidance to the MRC on methods and best practices for employment and employment services.

### Policy and Nomination Committee

Chairperson: Naomi Goldberg

**Mission:** The SRC Joint Committee of the By-Law and Nominations mission is to work toward determining and selecting interested persons eligible for membership in the State Rehabilitation Council in accordance to the SRC By-Laws. Further this committee meets with the MRC Consumer Involvement Director to develop a roster of interested persons who would be appropriate for future SCR needs.

### Joint Committee State Plan & Interagency Relations Committee

Chairperson: Joe Bellil

**Mission:** The mission of this Committee is to assure the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meets its obligations regarding input from consumers in the development of both the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Public Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan and the Unified Workforce State Plan. The committee also advises and assist in the development of the agency's

policies and regulations, including, but not limited to, scheduling procedures for public input and publications in the Massachusetts Register by the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

### Unserved/Underserved Population Committee

Chairperson: Dawn Clark

**Mission:** The mission of the Unserved/Underserved Population Committee is to identify unserved or underserved populations within the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Program and advise the agency on programs and services that may help meet the needs of these populations.

# State Rehabilitation Council Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2019 with Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Responses

## **Order of Selection Recommendation:**

*The council provided the following recommendation to MRC and was passed unanimously by gubernatorial members of the council.*

Whereas federal regulations require an Order of Selection policy be implemented when the VR Program does not have sufficient funds to serve all eligible consumers, and whereas the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is projecting a deficit in the VR Program for the 2019, it is recommended that the State Rehabilitation Council hereby grant authority to the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission to develop and implement an Order of Selection policy and procedures for use in the VR Program and until such time as the process is no longer needed.

*The council passed a motion to continue to monitor FY18 recommendations as the order of selection planning took precedence over the previous year recommendations activities.*

**Recommendation 1:** 'Gig Economy' jobs grow across our Commonwealth, the MA State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) recommends that the MA Rehabilitation Commission create a career pathway and provide support for MRC clients to enter these types of businesses. The gig economy is defined as a labor market characterized by the prevalence of short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs. One of the steps that could be taken to provide information to consumers about this type of work is by updating and marketing the "Self-Employment Guide" that was created as a recommendation from the SRC to include this information. The SRC would also like to see trainings or literature distributed to the vocational rehabilitation division on types of jobs that fall into the 'gig' economy category.

**RESPONSE to Recommendation:** The goal of the Vocational Rehabilitation program is to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive integrated employment. To satisfy the definition of "competitive integrated employment," the employment must satisfy the requirements for all three components of the definition as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Those criteria are:

- Competitive earnings;
- Integrated Location; and
- Opportunities for advancement.

Meaning if an individual's employment fails to satisfy any one of the above components, the employment will not meet the definition of "competitive integrated employment."

The question becomes does a 'Gig economy' qualify as competitive integrated employment? The answer is both interesting and multifaceted.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Division finds value in the 'Gig economy' as an informed choice work option for consumers. However, we feel that we need to get more guidance from Rehabilitation Services Administration as it relates to the 'Gig economy' and WIOA. This would include the WIOA common measures. Upon consulting the RSA, obtaining guidance, and if encouraged to pursue, MRC will develop best practice guidelines for the fast approaching 'gig' economy.

Furthermore, if the assignment long term, with an opportunity to advance then we believe it meets the definition. If the assignment is short term it might not meet the definition, even if the labor market is moving in that direction.

Consumers who have no work experience this might be an opportunity for the individual to gain skills or to assess consumers' ability to engage in work activities. This might then present as an opportunity for a training within various market sectors. Though the short term jobs might not lead to career advancement, it might provide an opportunity for consumers to test their readiness for work and/or provide work experience that can be added to a resume. Eventually leading to competitive integrated employment. Like the 'On the Job Training', (OJT), perhaps this work would be an opportunity to try out a job and demonstrate the ability to work. MRC's statistics show that 60% of the time, when used appropriately, OJT leads to competitive integrated employment. MRC would evaluate whether same or better outcomes are achieved through 'Gig economy' jobs.

This type of employment might also be utilized in the same manner we utilize an internship opportunity.

**Recommendation 2:** Increase consumer awareness of transportation options and explore other options for consumer transportation. This includes looking at innovative approaches to using ride share programs such as Uber and Lyft for transportation of consumers. We also recommend MRC develop partnerships with the State and Federal Departments of Transportation. The council also feels that this partnership with the ride share programs could additionally provide employment options for consumers who are looking to find employment with flexible time requirements. This could include education on being self-employed; accessing an eligible vehicle; obtaining the proper assistive technology for the job functions; helping a client start a wheelchair accessible ride sharing entity, etc. This year's Needs Assessment demonstrates that transportation remains a significant need for many MRC consumers. MRC should refine and update its transportation fact sheets on MRC's website and incorporate these into training's and informational materials. Development of other informational materials and training should be considered to assist consumers in learning about other available resources including local Councils on Aging and the EOHHS Human Service Transportation (HST) Office. In addition, MRC should research collaboration with MassRides, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Career Centers, the HST office and other organizations on projects or programs that might be able to assist consumers with transportation, given that transportation is a systemic issue requiring collaboration on multiple levels.

**RESPONSE:** With the assistance of the new MRC Transportation Coordinator hired during calendar year 2017, most Regional Transit Authorities in the state are now allowing MRC counselors to approve applications for discount transit programs (TAP). This advancement is a major time, cost savings, and support for our consumers.

MRC will continue to utilize the expertise of the transition coordinator and will document lessons learned at the end of the 5 year grant period. In addition, MRC would like to work with the SRC to host council meetings with transportation experts from MassDOT to gain further insight in service demands.

MRC will update its transportation fact sheet on our website and will continue to be creative in assisting our consumers to identify transportation options for employment.

In addition to the above, we believe that the issue of transportation, is much larger than MRC and its Vocational Rehabilitation Division. This issue needs comprehensive and ongoing discussions and strategic thinking perhaps among Independent Living Centers, Commissioners of State Agencies, Executive Office of Health and Human Services Secretary, Governor level committees, Workforce Investment Boards and employers to devise strategies around transportation options. This would increase access to diverse talent addressing the skills gaps across the state. Areas across the state that have a high need for transportation related issues are the Pittsfield and Greenfield regions. Perhaps the SRC can work with the MRC offices in those areas to devise a strategy to outreach to the Governor's Office to establish a think tank to address transportation issues specifically to meet employment needs of business through an innovative approach to getting people to job locations.

**Recommendation 3:** Continue to promote on-the-job training and job driven training's to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities: MRC has demonstrated over the past several years that On-The-Job Training (OJT) and Job Driven Training's, are important and effective tools for training and employing consumers in competitive jobs in many industries and occupations. These are also effective tools to assist in eliminating stigma against consumers with disabilities by demonstrating the abilities and skills of individuals with disabilities directly to employers in their workplace. OJT and Job Driven Training's were identified as important services by 70% of consumers in the Needs Assessment survey and counselors have also identified the need for additional OJTs and Job-Driven Training's. MRC should also continue to evaluate the outcomes of its Job Driven Training programs with CVS Health, Advance Auto Parts, and other employer partners. MRC should continue to build off of these collaboration as a model to use with other companies to establish similar programs with the goal of increased employment outcomes for consumers and as a way to market the skills and abilities of individuals with disabilities to the private sector and to meet employer needs. MRC should also begin to look at trainings within the bio-tech industry in the state of MA, as this is an increasing field for potential jobs within MA. According to the Massachusetts Biotechnology Education foundation, an increase of 6.1% in open jobs in the bio-technology industry. As many additional consumers are receiving higher degrees, a connection should be made to assist consumers with finding jobs in these area.

**RESPONSE:** MRC continues to expand its Job Driven Trainings (JDT) opportunities for consumers. Our most recent experience is with MAPFRE Insurance Company for claims representatives and customer service positions. As funding allows we will continue to expand our JDT and OJT initiatives.

MRC is now required, under WIOA, to work closely with the Workforce Investment Board's and Career Centers. We will work jointly to look into labor market statistics to determine which districts/areas within the state have bio-tech opportunities, the types of positions available, entrance requirements for these positions and the viability for our consumers. Our findings will be shared with the SRC as we learn more about the bio-tech opportunities across the state.

Community colleges also have many training opportunities for individuals interested in this field. We will identify the programs available across the state and ensure that our counselors have this information and make it available to our consumers across the state.

**Recommendation 4:** Additional focus should be made to connect and refer the underserved populations of MA, with specific efforts put towards Asian communities. Over the past Comprehensive Needs Assessment Surveys of MRC consumers, the data has shown a need for outreach to the Asian Population. The SRC would like the MRC to plan and achieve a 3% increase in the number of Asian consumer referrals.

**RESPONSE:** MRC Research and Development is creating focus groups in the Braintree Area to gather information regarding the needs of the Asian population as it relates to employment. Data received from this focus group and available financial resources, will guide MRC programming for diverse populations.

Currently, MRC has bi-lingual counselors working in areas where there is a growing population. We will continue to monitor the growth and outcomes of this population. MRC will work with the SRC to conduct outreach to ensure representation from the Asian Community on the SRC.

The MRC Offices have bi-lingual and/or bi-cultural representation and we will continue to do outreach to diverse communities to increase the representation in the VR program.

Offices with staff representing the Asian community include the following:

- The Lowell and Salem offices have bi-lingual Khmer clerks and counselors to assist with the walk-ins, calls, and employment services.
- The Salem office has a bi-lingual Japanese counselor.
- The Braintree Office has two bi-lingual counselors in Vietnamese and Chinese dialects;
- The Fall River Office has a bi-lingual Khmer Counselor
- Downtown has a bi-lingual Chinese Counselor.

The counselors will continue to reach out to these populations and work to break down barriers to seeking and enrolling in vocational rehabilitation services.

In addition, as populations grow MRC will track long term trends and have discuss plans to build additional bi-lingual caseloads as appropriate.

Lastly, we will work with MRC's Diversity Committee to review and revise the Commonwealths Multi Cultural Population Resource Directory. This directory offers culturally and linguistically appropriate services for many diverse populations.

**Recommendation 5:** MRC should create a partnership with other New England states' State Rehabilitation Councils to gather new ideas surrounding the vocational rehabilitation programs and share best practices for the council and employment opportunities that could be used by other states. This recommendation also includes the MRC providing support for the MA SRC becoming a participating member in the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils.

**RESPONSE:** Assistant Commissioner Phillips requested Josh Boardman, MRC/SRC Liason, to attend the National Coalition for State Rehabilitation Councils conference in November 2017 to get information regarding what other states are doing and to meet reps of the SRC's from across the country. Josh can obtain names of New England counterparts and begin to meet regularly to share ideas and brainstorm around strengthening the Massachusetts SRC.

We will invite vocational rehabilitation and community living staff to the meetings of the SRC meetings to better engage conversation. We hope to increase the visibility of the SRC with field staff and to ensure staff is aware of the SRC. Staff will actively work to recruit consumers to support SRC activities.

Lastly, we will share best practices across the country with the SRC through our working relationship with the Institute of Community Inclusion and new "pilot projects". If the SRC is interested, we can invite researchers of the Institute of Community Inclusion with MRC staff to an SRC meeting and together share insights regarding future interventions, MRC will be piloting across the MRC areas.

**Recommendation 6:** The SRC/ MRC to develop a document (To include Braille, Video, Audio, etc. as needed), on how to use the College Disability Services Programs for use by VR Consumers that are or will be attending College. This could include a handout that is given to anyone attending colleges on what is expected from the MRC and what the Disability Services Programs at colleges offer and requiring all counselors to provide general information about the disability services office for consumer who are attending any college programs.

**RESPONSE:** Although this is a good idea, MRC does not currently have the financial resources for extensive marketing materials. Colleges have materials and information



available on their websites that SRC/MRC can review, and as appropriate direct consumers to access.

MRC can also contact the Department Education and Secondary Education to determine if they already have this information in a format that can be utilized by MRC and shared with our consumers.

However, MRC with the support of the SRC would like to collaborate with other entities who are focusing on college bound opportunities for individuals with disabilities. For example, we have met with Work Without Limits who is starting a new pilot program, C2C, working with colleges to identify students with disabilities and connect them to employers to hire as interns. Other potential partners are the Autism Commission, Easter Seals, and Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDS). We have recently met with these partners to focus on a collaborative resource sharing project with DDS to engage college navigators supporting individuals on the autism spectrum. We would like to engage the SRC with these projects.

MRC recommends the SRC assist by contacting public colleges across the state and collecting/documenting information found for each school. A resource to utilize is “Think College.” The information would be made available to VR staff via our internal website. This information would be a great resource for transition students and possibly be integrated into Pre-Employment Transition Services curriculum for use by Pre-Employment Transition Services vendors and MRC counselors.

**Recommendation 7:** The SRC would like the MRC to make an internal VR Peer Mentoring program, where another VR Consumer who has had positive employment and/or educational outcomes, and mentors other MRC Consumers and provide the resources, a helping hand, support, encouragement and information to new or existing VR Consumers. This would include, but not limited to, MRC developing a training program for VR Peer Mentors.

**RESPONSE:** The VR program offers peer mentoring programs through collaboration with the Independent Living Centers (ILCs). MRC will continue to ensure consumers are appropriately referred to the ILC’s for Peer mentoring services including mentoring around employment.

MRC does not have the resources to develop a training program, but can have discussions with the ILCs to determine if this type of mentoring happens, and if not, how we can ensure a structure is put in place. With future collaborative projects with the Department of Mental Health, we would like to utilize the Peer Specialist Model within our VR offices, thus adding a very different mentoring feature to Vocational Rehabilitation.

**Recommendation 8:** It has been a year since The Commonwealth of MA passed an 'employment bill' that requires the Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) to consult with the MA Office on Disability (MOD) to establish goals for participation of individuals with disabilities in all areas of state procurement contracting. There have been no goals published by the MOD. The MA State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) recommends that the MA Rehabilitation Commission no longer just wait for goals to be published, but to take a proactive approach and offer to assist MOD and SDO with this process. This could be a wonderful opportunity to engage MRC clients and counselors in providing input to these state entities in regards to the state's application, hiring, marketing and other processes as it relates to this legislation.

**RESPONSE:** MRC will recommend to MA Office on Disabilities and MA Supplier Diversity Office to follow the same guidelines/criteria as the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). MRC understands we need to wait for MOD and SDO to establish the guidelines before our consumers and counselors can become involved.

**Recommendation 9:** Continue to evaluate and research computer and technology skills training's, or web-based training's and assessments for consumers to assist in obtaining employment. As the world becomes more mobile and electronic, it becomes increasingly important the MRC assist consumers in preparing for employment by developing and refining skills in using technology. A number of consumers indicated the desire for training's and workshops on computer skills and other technology. The MRC should continue to evaluate results of its efforts in terms of employment outcomes and its overall benefit to consumers, and continue to research computer and technology skills training's, and web-based assessment, training, and evaluation solutions to assist consumers with preparing for and obtaining employment.

**RESPONSE:** The ManPower Training and Development Center and the INFOR Talent Science Instrument are on-line tools developed to allow for competitively based assessments and trainings for consumers. MRC accesses both of these tools regularly to evaluate needs of the consumers. Unfortunately due to funding restraints, MRC is not currently able to provide additional resources in this area.

**Recommendation 10:** MRC should increase their usage of their social media accounts for consumer use. This would also include revisiting the MRC Mass.gov website, so it is user-friendly and accessible to all disabilities.

**RESPONSE:** Several activities are currently in play to address this recommendation. First, the MRC website is being updated to be more user friendly and have improved readability. Secondly, the Commissioner has just assigned Joy McMahon, training coordinator, and Josh Boardman, MRC/SRC Liaison, to lead all communications in the organization including social media. The VR division will look to them for leadership and guidance in this area. The third way we are addressing this is our Commissioner has done a phenomenal job with her monthly YouTube video for staff. We can investigate the feasibility of expanding this to the broader MRC audience in the near future. Though the VR division does not currently have staff

assigned to marketing, we will provide information to support any and all social media endeavors.

# Join the MA State Rehab Council **TODAY!!!**

*Committee descriptions can be found on page 9-10*

Website:

<https://mrc.formstack.com/forms/srcapp>

Email:

consumer.involvement@mrc.state.ma.us

Call:

617-204-3665



**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.

**Vision:**

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

Charles D. Baker  
***Governor***

Toni A. Wolf  
***Commissioner***

Kate Biebel  
***Deputy Commissioner***

Joan Phillips  
***Assistant Commissioner,  
Vocational Rehabilitation***

Josh Mendelsohn  
***Assistant Commissioner,  
Community Living***

Pat Roda  
***Assistant Commissioner,  
Disability Determination***

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