

February 8, 2023 minutes

Statewide Rehabilitation Council

Business and Employment Opportunity (BEO) Committee

1:00 – 2:00 pm

Attendees:

- SRC Members: Steve LaMaster (Committee Chair), Joe Bellil, Heather Wood
- MRC staff: William Allen, Paula Euber, William Noone, Graham Porell, Amy Karr
- Other individuals present: Amelia Dillon, Jessica Gordon, Jeanne Perrin (CAP), Christine Tosti, Sarah Wiles (CAP)
- Absent members: Dawn Clark

Meeting was held remotely.

Meeting called to order at 1:03 pm.

1. Introductions and announcements (as needed)

The agenda time of two hours is a max time. For the February meeting, we have 60 minutes slated.

Jeanne Perrin introduced herself as a new Client Assistance Program (CAP) Advocate.

Jessica Gordon introduced herself as a psychotherapist from Avita Integrative Psychology Care.

2. Approval of December 2023 minutes

Mr. LaMaster called for a motion to approve the December 2023 minutes. Mr. Bellil motioned to approve the minutes. Ms. Dillon seconded. Mr. LaMaster asked whether there were any additional corrections to the minutes. The December 2023 minutes were approved with no corrections.

3. State Plan Recommendations Discussion

Recommendation FY24-5: SRC will actively partner with the MRC to analyze results of MRC Consumer, Employer, and Provider survey data and strategies regarding dissemination.

As part of this recommendation, the BEO committee will review the draft of the Provider Survey and offer feedback and recommendations.

The Provider Survey is part of MRC's survey project. There are surveys for consumers, employers/businesses, staff, and service providers. The goal is to help improve service delivery to consumers.

The Consumer Survey is for consumers of all MRC services, not just those who receive vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. The Employer Survey is being finalized and then it will be piloted with employers.

Today's discussion is about the Provider Survey. This will survey more than just providers of competitive integrated employment services (CIES). A survey of just CIES providers has been done previously. This survey is to be sent to providers of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, and also to providers of community living (CL) services. This includes assistive technology providers, some clinical service providers, and Medicaid waiver providers. The goal this time is to survey MRC providers across the board, with the ultimate goal of helping to improve the process of working with vendors.

MRC is looking for input about the survey, such as suggestions about revising existing questions or adding new questions, and suggestions regarding who should receive the survey. MRC does already have a list of contracted service providers.

It may be interesting to note who is completing the survey for the company or organization. Supervisors of service providers will have different levels of understanding and different perspectives than those directly providing services. There have been discussions about getting the surveys to the right people at each company. There was a suggestion to ask for the respondent's role or position.

The vendor, Market Decision Research, is contracted by MRC to do the survey. However, MRC does receive the raw data and can do deeper dives. The survey is anonymous; MRC will not know how a particular vendor responds.

Mr. LaMaster shared a copy of the survey, which had also been sent to members. **(See MRC Vendor Survey 2024 DRAFT - 2-2-2024.docx.)**

Mr. LaMaster initially looked at the survey as being intended for just providers of employment services, and that the survey seemed broad. It was unclear for whom the survey was intended. Because the survey is intended for both VR and CL providers it does need to be broad. Perhaps clarification about for whom the survey is intended can be added to the introduction.

There is the ability to use skip logic, where the answer to a question determines the question(s) that follow. While the survey is for the providers of both VR and CL services, some questions are more relevant to certain provider types. skip logic could be used to tailor questions based on what type of services are provided. While the SRC may be specifically interested in VR service providers, some consumers receiving VR services can also benefit from CL services.

In the survey, the questions are organized into domains. The survey questions were discussed in order, section by section.

Introduction Questions

Question 1: How familiar would you say you are with MRC services?

Would a contracted provider be unaware of MRC services? The question may relate to familiarity with the array of services MRC provides. This question may be clarified by providing a checklist of services and supports provided by MRC and having respondents check the ones of which they are aware.

Question 2: How long have you worked with MRC?

Does this refer to the length of the relationship between the vendor and MRC, or between the particular respondent and MRC? Mr. Porell said this question is intended to be about the relationship between the vendor and MRC.

Question 3: How did you first hear about MRC?

There was a discussion about whether this question is necessary. Ms. Tosti feels this question is important. She has researched vendors herself and helped them become contracted vendors with MRC. Consumers can be good at finding vendors themselves.

Question 4: What type of services do you provide?

The current services list is initial. It will be revised to make it a more comprehensive list of services; the list could be very long. It was suggested that for question logic and sorting, to start with broader categories of services. For example, a section of the list could be for vocational services, such as training providers, job training, and workplace accommodation. Mr. Porell liked the idea of breaking out the list into different categories. A massive list of services may turn people off.

Vocational providers and community living providers may both deliver certain services so there may be some overlap. MRC may want to send the survey to different people in the same organization if different contacts within the organization provide different categories of services.

There was a suggestion to move this question earlier in the survey to be a delineator for provider type.

Experience and Communication

Mr. Porell stated that open-ended questions about experience and communication with MRC will be added to this section. Initially, there were going to be open-ended questions only for those who indicated dissatisfaction, but it is important to enable all to provide open-ended responses.

The communication questions seem to relate to communication between the vendor and MRC, not between MRC and the consumer, or between the vendor and the consumer. The focus seems to be primarily on the relationship between the vendor and MRC in service delivery. MRC wants to learn whether they are doing a good job of partnering with service providers.

Additional overall feedback

- The drop-off rate may be higher for an eight-page survey than for a briefer survey. The response rate may be lower with a longer survey. Mr. Porell acknowledged that.
- Ms. Tosti's concern as a consumer is the lack of choice in selecting vendors, particularly regarding self-employment. She had no choice in the business consultant vendor MRC provided and would not have chosen that vendor. The SRC may advocate the use of delineators related to vendor choice in the Consumer Survey. The Consumer Survey does include questions about choice, but maybe not specifically about vendor choice. Ms. Tosti does not feel this is sufficient because often dissatisfied people do not want to complete a survey or provide feedback.
- Vendors may feel they are performing well, but some consumers may have bad experiences. Ms. Tosti wants to catch that mismatch. Perhaps the only way that information can be captured may be through a separate survey for MRC consumers.

It was discussed whether there could be some type of self-evaluation question in the Provider Survey, such as asking vendors whether they feel that they were able to deliver effective services to MRC clients. There is a need to consider the audience and how such a question would be worded. Asking providers questions such as "Was your client satisfied?" and "Did your client benefit?" may not be the best way to get the information sought. The answers may not be accurate. The consumers would have to answer about the effectiveness and helpfulness of services. Perhaps the survey could ask the vendors if they are satisfied with the services they delivered. There may be reasons vendors do not feel satisfied, such as poor communication with MRC or lack of needed support.

Mr. Porell reminded the committee that this is an initial draft. MRC is open to feedback and suggestions about how to improve the final product.

Mr. Porell and Ms. Euber are the feedback contacts. There is time for people to continue to review the survey. The goal is to get the Provider Survey out this spring. There will probably be a pilot survey sent to a few vendors, then it will be fully rolled out. The intent is to send this out annually or at most twice a year.

Mr. LaMaster encouraged members to send any questions or comments about the survey to him. He will aggregate them and send them to Mr. Porell and Ms. Euber. If desired, he can set up a meeting for additional discussion about the survey via Zoom or Teams. Mr. LaMaster has his own comments and questions to send to Mr. Porell.

4. Open Mic

Ms. Tosti noted that February is Black History Month. She reflected that she learned about racism from the play “Twelve Angry Men.” She recommends watching the play; it is available on YouTube, along with analyses of the characters.

The next BEO meeting is on April 11th at 1:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 pm.