

STATEWIDE



MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION
REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Chairperson

Dawn Clark

**Vice
Chairperson**

Secretary

Members at Large

Steve Aalto

Business and Employment Opportunity Committee

600 Washington Street Boston MA, 02111

February 14, 2019

1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order/Introductions

Attendees:

- Dawn Clark (SRC), Rich Colantonio (SRC), Steve Aalto (SRC), Barbara Cipriani (SRC), Theresa Casey (MRC)

Remotely

- Joe Bellil (SRC), Jim Riley (volunteer), Michael Stepansky (DMH)

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Joe B. asked that the minutes be tabled due to members not all having the minutes.
- All approved.

New Business

- The committee reviewed the Business Employment Opportunity Committee mission statement. The committee needs to work with one another as well as the MRC to ensure that we are fulfilling the committee's mission.
- The State Rehabilitation Council Recommendations were read and discussed.

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.

- The committee discussed the following:
 - Have an updated response from MRC to present at the State Rehabilitation Council meeting on March 21, 2019?
 - Has the document gone to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)?
 - How does the SRC address the workings of the recommendations?
 - Is Gig being evaluated with any kind of data?
 - Clarification on what qualifies as a Gig job?
 - Who can the committee connect with regarding businesses such as Uber to assist with employment through Gig?
 - Does MRC have staff that are knowledgeable with Gig?

Jim R. suggested to wait until the committee gets information on the identification of what a Gig job is before moving forward. The committee feels that they can do productive work if they have representation from MRC VR staff. Without answers to their questions, the committee feels that they cannot fulfill their mission statement to best assist consumers with services.

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.

- The committee discussed the follows:
 - Updates are needed from Kate on the progress of creating these partnerships
 - What are other state are doing to create partnerships?
 - What other states are doing to form the partnerships and how are they doing it?

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.

- The committee discussed the following:
 - MRC has the resources to reach consumers through trainings, website and councilors
 - MOD had a meeting to discuss ideas for state related jobs. Who represented MRC? Will MRC be represented in the future?
 - Do we have a written report from this meeting on what was discussed at the meeting and what was the conclusion?
 - What information should go out to consumers to inform them of job opportunities?
 - What communication source should be used to best reach out to the consumer?
 - Is MRC involved with Encore?
 - Can state employment opportunities be sent to the consumer with an attached link?
 - What is the structure of the Federal Regulations?
 - While Bill Allen is out of the office who will be filling in for him (he is back one day week). His role working with the committee is a key factor so replacement is key.
- MRC may want to rewrite their responses to include who will be doing the work, how are they going to get it done and when will the work be done?
- Answers will be provided to the committee in writing no later than 10 days after the questions are submitted

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.

- The committee discussed the following:
 - The use of Facebook
 - The use of Twitter

- Will texting consumers with a link to employment opportunities be an option?
- Website
- There is concern that there is not a link to the Benefit Specialists on the website. This is important for the consumer who is going to work so that they understand what will happen to their benefits when they do start to work.

Next Steps

The Committee, along with MRC's assistance, will research to find the answers to the following questions:

- What is defined as a Gig job?
- What employment advisory does MRC work with?
- What advisory agencies are they, and what do they do?
- What are other VR agencies doing to build employment for their consumers?
- Is MRC doing a better job than the other agencies?

Meeting Adjourned

2:40 P.M.

Next meeting TBD