

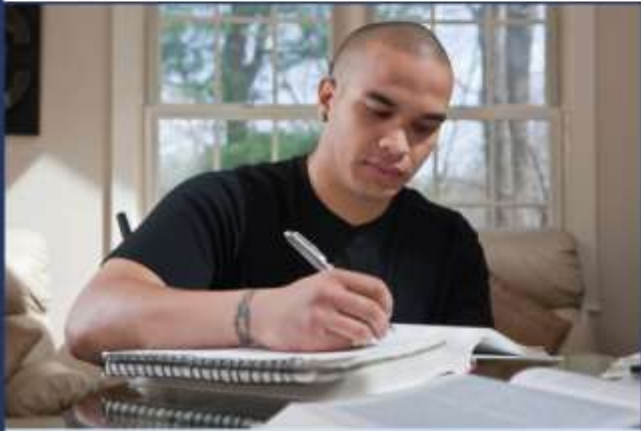
Statewide Rehabilitation Council

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Guidebook

&

Reference





SRC

Online Guidebook & Reference

Last revised, July 2020

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Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Massachusetts Statewide Rehabilitation Council (“SRC” or “Council”) and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), we would like to thank the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) and their many contributors for the primary content of this Guidebook. The NCSRC allowed us to revise their content to make it applicable to Massachusetts and use their template to provide foundational knowledge for the SRC to share with new members for orientation. The NCSRC compiled most of the information from promising practices, ideas, tools, and strategies shared with the NCSRC by SRCs across the United States and by guests who spoke to the NCSRC during webinars, teleconferences, and on-location conference trainings.

Should you need additional information, please contact the Massachusetts Statewide Rehabilitation Council using the contact information in this guide. As a member of the SRC, we hope you will take the opportunity to review this guide as a part of your member orientation and use it as a reference for continuing education about the SRC, MRC, and vocational rehabilitation. We hope that this foundational knowledge will provide you with the tools that will allow you to make the unique contribute to the SRC that will strengthen our partnership and collaboration with MRC.



Executive Summary

Welcome to the State Rehabilitation Council (“SRC” or “Council”) Guidebook. This guidebook provides information on the SRC’s mission, an overview of the operation of the Council, and the vocational rehabilitation regulations which guide our purpose and work. Each of the twenty-one (21) Council members appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts represents a specific constituency and thereby each member gives a unique perspective on ideas and resources which will enrich the vocational rehabilitation services in the Commonwealth.

Working together, these ideas and resources form the basis for the Council’s yearly recommendations the SRC submits to the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) for consideration. These recommendations aim to maintain and improve services provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. They further the mutual goal of building sustainable practices for career counseling, job development and placement, and the provision of other employment services designed to maximize the potential for people with disabilities to achieve gainful employment.

Our time commitment to the SRC should express a desire to celebrate the service gains thus far while offering a measured challenge to shape progressive and more effective vocational rehabilitation services for the future.

The reading and the understanding of the material in this guidebook with its attachments is encouraged so members will have a working grasp of their responsibilities. This knowledge will increase the productivity of our meetings, allowing the Council to accomplish more. We look forward to your feedback and questions.

Thank you for your willingness and commitment to serve!

Respectfully submitted,

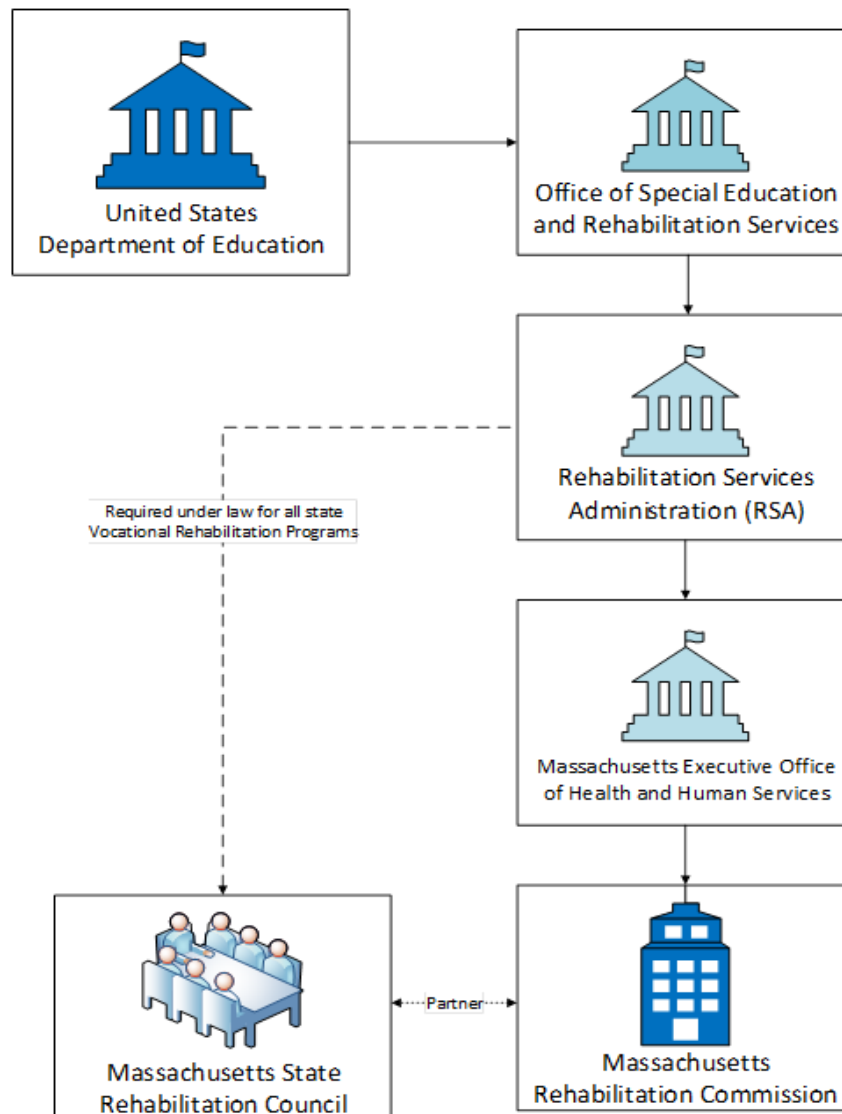
Dawn E. Clark, D.Min.

Chairperson



Organizational Structure

The [Statewide Rehabilitation Council](#) fits into a complex organizational structure that includes both federal and state oversight.



On the federal level, the SRC is under the [Rehabilitation Services Administration](#) (RSA) which administers the funding, monitors, and evaluates the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation programs, supported employment, and other related



programs for individuals with disabilities. The RSA is a subsection of the [Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services \(OSERS\)](#) which is tasked by [The U.S. Department of Education](#) with directing, coordinating, and recommending policy for special education and rehabilitative services research and activities. With regards to vocational rehab, the OSERS mission is “to provide leadership and resources to assist state and other agencies in providing vocational rehabilitation (VR) and other services to individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment, independence and integration into the community and the competitive labor market.” Vocational rehabilitation is one of the avenues by which the U.S. Department of Education “strengthen[s] the Federal commitment to ensuring access to equal educational opportunity for every individual.”

The Statewide Rehabilitation Council is established under the Code of Federal Regulations, we partner with the [Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission](#) (MRC) which is one of the designated state agencies¹ that administers a portion of the vocational rehabilitation funds allotted by the RSA to Massachusetts. MRC staff liaises with the Council to provide data as requested and administrative assistance as needed. MRC is under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, which is one of the many Secretariats under the Governor in the Executive Branch.

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

Vocational rehabilitation (VR) services assist individuals with physical, psychiatric, and/or learning disabilities face the challenges of the modern workplace. It reduces or removes barriers to help individuals with disabilities prepare for, secure, retain,

¹ The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) is the other state agency designated to administer vocational rehabilitation funds allotted by the RSA to Massachusetts. MCB has a separate council, The Rehabilitation Council, which serves the same purpose for the visually impaired residents of the Commonwealth.



advance in, or regain employment that is consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest, and informed choice. This may include identifying job goals based on individual interests and aptitudes, counseling and guiding individuals about career choices, developing and placing individuals in jobs, 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. 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.

Introduction & History

When the Rehabilitation Act Amendments were being considered by the 102nd Congress in 1992, disability rights activism had increased and recommended changes to the Rehabilitation Act that included persons with disabilities being at the table. As a result, Revisions to the act included individual dignity, self-determination, inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities. In addition, this included the establishment of a State Rehabilitation Advisory Council with a majority of the members (51%) being persons with disabilities.

By the 1998 Amendments, SRC's role and empowerment were recognized and strengthened. The name and role of the body of advocates was changed from the State Rehabilitation Advisory Council to the State Rehabilitation Council. The role changed from being advisory, to being involved in developing policies, planning activities, evaluation the program effectiveness and carrying out other functions related to the vocational rehabilitation program. This also included that the SRC, in conjunction with the VR agency, jointly conduct the comprehensive needs assessment of individuals with disabilities in the state, develop and agree to the State's annual goals and priorities, and evaluate the VR performance toward the



goals annually. The role of the SRC changed from advisory to working in partnership with the State VR agency.

The Massachusetts State Rehabilitation Council (“SRC” or “Council”) is federally mandated under [34 CFR §361.16](#) to partner with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) to deliver vocational rehabilitation (VR) services in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 105 (the Act), as amended. The primary goal of the SRC is to partner with MRC to ensure that people with disabilities are provided with an equal opportunity to receive the programs, services and supports needed to gain competitive integrated employment. The SRC provides a forum for consumer input resulting in recommendations and advice to the agency. We aim to provide a path to high quality, value-based, vocational rehabilitation services that lead to meaningful, sustainable, and competitive employment for consumers with disabilities.

Having a good understanding of the SRC is important not only to actively and effectively contribute, but is essential for the SRC leadership, members, and staff to assist in enhancing VR services in Massachusetts as well as other states and territories. Every person involved has a vital role in fostering the successful and efficient functioning of the SRC. Whether you are a new or long-time member or staff person, this manual was designed to give those involved a better understanding of the responsibilities of the SRC.

Bylaws

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Advisory Council was created in March, 1994 by [Executive Order 368](#) of the Governor to implement the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by P.L. 102-569. That initial body has evolved into the present-day Statewide Rehabilitation Council. Under the order, the mandate of the Council is to advise the Commissioner of Rehabilitation and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission concerning the operation and delivery of vocational



rehabilitation services. Bylaws were adopted to establish and order the process of accomplishing the mandate of the Council.

The Statewide Rehabilitation Council [Bylaws](#), govern and set forth the structure of the SRC. Our Bylaws establish rights, determine day-to-day rules, provide comprehensive guidance to ensure effective operations, and may protect the SRC in the event a problem arises. Bylaws direct and clarify SRC procedures, actions, and organizational structure.

Please review and be familiar with the Bylaws. Important questions regarding voting, meetings, and membership are answered in accordance with the Bylaws.

Membership

Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended) requires consumers, advocates and other representatives of individuals with disabilities to participate in the administration and oversight of a state's VR program. The SRC fulfills this mandate in all states and territories. Forming a Council is required for Vocational Rehabilitation programs to be eligible for and maintain federal VR funding. The SRC must consist of at least fifteen (15) members appointed by the Governor.

In Massachusetts, the SRC is composed of twenty-one (21) voting members, the majority of whom must be people with disabilities, appointed by the Governor to serve staggered terms. Voting members can serve up to two consecutive three year terms. The Council may have up to fifteen (15) non-voting (ex-officio) members. The SRC makes every effort to ensure demographic, geographic, minority and cross-disability representation within the Council's membership.

Click on [current membership](#) to view the active members of the Council.



Section 361.17 CFR Requirements

The members of the Council are selected in a way that ensures the mandates of [§361.17](#) of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at met. The federal regulations require that the Council have representatives from specific individuals, groups, and organizations; the regulation reads as follows:

(b) Composition—

(1) General. Except as provided in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, the Council must be composed of at least 15 members, including—

(i) At least one representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council, who must be the chairperson or other designee of the Statewide Independent Living Council;

(ii) At least one representative of a parent training and information center established pursuant to section 682(a) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

(iii) At least one representative of the Client Assistance Program established under part 370 of this chapter, who must be the director of or another individual recommended by the Client Assistance Program;

(iv) At least one qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation programs who serves as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council if employed by the designated State agency;

(v) At least one representative of community rehabilitation program service providers;

(vi) Four representatives of business, industry, and labor;

(vii) Representatives of disability groups that include a cross section of—

(A) Individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities; and



(B) Representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves;

(viii) Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services;

(ix) In a State in which one or more projects are funded under section 121 of the Act (American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services), at least one representative of the directors of the projects in such State;

(x) At least one representative of the State educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities who are eligible to receive services under this part and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

(xi) At least one representative of the State workforce development board; and

(xii) The director of the designated State unit as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council.

(2) Employees of the designated State agency. Employees of the designated State agency may serve only as nonvoting members of the Council. This provision does not apply to the representative appointed pursuant to paragraph (b)(1)(iii) of this section.

When viewing the [current membership](#) roster, members are able to readily note the statutory appointments and vacancies on the Council.

Time Commitment

The time commitment of a member includes, at a minimum:



- Δ Attendance at the four SRC Quarterly meeting for two hours each which are held virtually or at locations across the state, and
- Δ Membership on one or more of the Standing Committees. Members should assess both their skills and interest when choosing the Committee on which to serve.

Should a member take on a leadership role, additional time commitments may involve:

- Δ As the Chair, executing the duties set forth in the Bylaws and detailed in this guide to carry out the mission of the Council;
- Δ As Officers, serving on the Executive Committee; and
- Δ As Standing Committee chairpersons, serving on the Executive and the State Plan & Interagency Relations Committees.

Committees meet for about two hours, virtually or at MRC headquarters. Agendas, minutes and calendar of meetings can be found on the [SRC website](#).

Officers

Article VII of the Statewide Rehabilitation Council [Bylaws](#) confers authority upon five officers to manage the governance of the Council: The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and two Members at Large. The general duties written into the Bylaws are listed in more detail below.

The **Chair** shall preside at all meetings of the Council and the Executive Committee, act as a liaison between the Council and the MRC Commissioner to help ensure the Council's directives and resolutions are carried out, and exercise and perform such other powers and duties as may be from time to time prescribed by the Council. More specifically, the Chair:



- Leads the Council and Executive Committee to carry out its governance functions, sets priorities, and ensures the Council has approved policies to promote sound and compliant governance and management
- Creates agendas for meetings of the Council and Executive Committee
- Calls and presides over all Quarterly meetings of the Council, regular, monthly Executive Committee, and any special meetings
- Establishes Committees as he/she or the Council deems necessary, appoints the Chair of each Committee, and may serve as an ex-officio member of all Committees
- Directs specific assignments, timetables, and reporting procedures to support Council initiatives
- Partners with the MRC Commissioner to lead the development and refinement of vocational rehabilitation performance criteria
- Assures ongoing recruitment, development, and contributions of Council members
- Serves as an ambassador of the Council and advocates for its mission to internal and external stakeholders

The **Vice Chair** shall, in the event of the absence or disability of the Chair, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Chair.

- Prepares and stands ready to fulfill the office of Chair should the Chair be absent or if that office becomes vacant
- Assists the Chair in the execution of his or her duties
- Serves on Committees, as requested, to learn the operations of the Council
- Works closely with the Chair and Council to transfer knowledge and history to prepare for leadership succession



- May perform other duties requested by the Chair or Council from time to time

The **Secretary** keeps the minutes of the meetings of the Council and shall give notice of all such meetings as required in the [Bylaws](#) and in accordance with the [Open Meeting laws](#). Typically, the Secretary will:

- Record minutes of meetings; (Minutes are important organizational documents and provide a memorialized chronology of key information such as Council actions, elections of officers, and certain reports from committees and staff. The secretary should be well-equipped to record accurate minutes and be aware and sensitive to any special or confidential information discussed at a meeting.)
- Know and comply with notice requirements for scheduling meetings, giving proper notice of any meetings and timely distribution of materials such as agendas and meeting minutes
- Maintain a Council binder containing the governing documents, key governance policies, minutes of Council meetings, and other frequently referenced materials
- Manage important organizational records (governance documents, annual reports, operating manuals, meeting materials, etc.); maintain accurate documentation; and secure electronic storage of key documents as a backup
- Review and update documents as necessary, ensuring all documents are safely stored and readily accessible for inspection
- Ensure an adequate number of meetings are held per year, in accordance with federal regulations and the organization's Bylaws
- Work with the Chair to develop and distribute the Council calendar before the start of each year

A **Member-at-Large** is a member whose duties and responsibilities that vary according to the needs of the Council and as directed by the other officers of the



Council with the goal of improving the overall quality of the organization. Generally, a Member-at-Large may be asked to:

- Attend all Council meetings because of the scope of their responsibilities
- Have a clear understanding of the current needs of the Council to most effectively assist with various assignments
- Assume various positions should an officer be temporarily unavailable or unable to complete their responsibilities
- Work closely with Committee chairs to serve as a liaison between the Committee and Council members
- Occasionally, fill the role as Committee chair should an unplanned vacancy occur
- Help orient new members for a quicker and easier transition and serve as a mentor to new Council members since they have a wider scope of experience and operate in many different capacities within the Council
- Spearhead special projects at the request of the Chair and educate other Council members on these projects

Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest may occur when a Council member is in a position to influence a SRC decision that would result in personal or financial gain for themselves or a relative. Under [M.G.L. 268A](#), Council members are considered public employees and are subject to the conflict of interest law. Upon appointment, Council members are provided with instructions to complete online conflict of interest training. Members must complete this training within thirty (30) days of their appointment and then every two years. If you have not completed this training, please do so as soon as possible. You can access the state employee training



through the [State Ethics Commission Online Training Module](#). Generally, to avoid conflicts of interests:

- △ Council members should have no personal agenda with the VR agency.
- △ Council members should avoid any activity, investment, or association that might interfere or conflict with their judgment or duties.
- △ Conflicts of interest must be disclosed as soon as possible.
- △ Members should recuse themselves prior to discussion or voting on any matters where there is a conflict of interest.

If you have questions about the requirements of this law in Massachusetts, your obligation for disclosure, or questions about whether a specific circumstance creates a conflict of interest, you should contact the [State Ethics Commission](#) to obtain an advisory opinion.

Meetings

The SRC convenes four (4) meetings a year, one in each quarter, in locations determined by the Council. Unless there is a valid reason for an executive session, the meetings must be publicly announced, open, and accessible to the general public, including individuals with disabilities. Notice should be given in accordance with *the [Open Meeting Law Guide and Educational Materials](#)* published by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General. In the same manner, the SRC may conduct forums or public hearings, as appropriate. Meetings are conducted in accordance with [Robert's Rules of Order](#). For those whom are unfamiliar with Robert's Rules, a simplified reference sheet of the most frequently used motions, points and proposals may be found [here](#).

[View or Download the Calendar of Scheduled Meetings](#)

[See Upcoming Events](#)



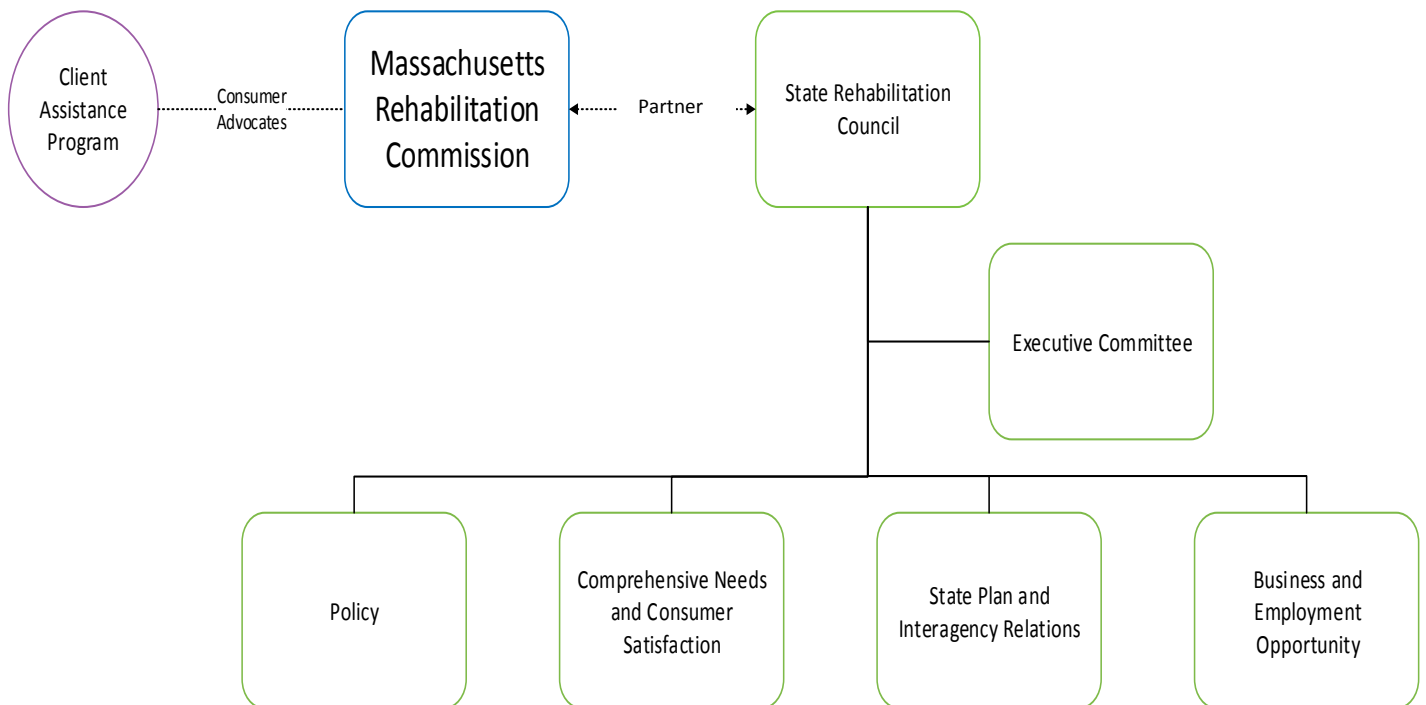
The Bylaws require regular participation by SRC members in Council activities in order to conduct business. Absence from two (2) consecutive Council meetings will be considered grounds for dismissal from the Council. With prior approval, remote participation may be permissible. Members participating remotely will be considered present at the meeting and will be able to vote on Council matters.

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Committees

The State Rehabilitation Council Organizational Structure is depicted in the following chart:



In accordance with the Bylaws, the Council members must actively participate in at least one Committee. The majority of the innovation and ideas that the SRC partners with MRC to accomplish are formed and fleshed out in the work of the various Committees. Here, SRC members add value to the process and service delivery improvements for vocational rehabilitation.

Committee Meetings are open to the public and therefore are subject to the Open meeting laws.

Executive Committee



The Executive Committee ensures the Council acts in accordance with federal and state vocational rehabilitation regulations; manages the affairs of the Council in the interim between meetings; reviews the appointment categories the Council has vacant and maintains a list of potential candidates to fill the vacancies; and submits selected candidates for the following year to the Governor for consideration.

The Executive Committee consists of the Chair of the Council, the MRC Commissioner, and the chairs of Standing Committees. Membership for this Committee is restricted. Unless the Executive Committee is in Executive Session, Committee meetings can be attended by other Council members and the public. However, Council members in attendance may not vote on matters before the Committee unless they are chairs of Standing Committees and therefore, members of the Executive Committee.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Consumer Satisfaction Committee

The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and Consumer Satisfaction Committee ensures consumer perspectives are included in the process of evaluating MRC vocational rehabilitation services. MRC and SRC jointly conduct an annual needs assessment. Information and findings are incorporated into the MRC vocational rehabilitation section of the Massachusetts WIOA Combined State Plan, MRC strategic planning efforts, and the agency's quality assurance activities. The Committee provides the agency with detailed information regarding the needs of the consumers served by MRC vocational rehabilitation and fulfills the federal requirements that the agency and the SRC jointly conduct a needs assessment at least every three years. As part of this process, a Consumer Satisfaction Survey is sent annually to consumers to gauge their satisfaction with MRC's vocational rehabilitation services.

Business and Employment Opportunity Committee



The SRC Business and Employment Opportunity Committee provides advice and guidance to the MRC on methods and best practices for employment and employment services.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee reviews and analyzes Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) policies and procedures to ensure service delivery aligns with federal and state VR regulations and policy guidance. The Committee recommends revisions to and the development of policies that help consumers better understand the VR process and what is necessary to attain competitive integrated employment. Also, it recommends changes to policies to fix systemic matters as appropriate. Finally, the Committee periodically reviews and recommends updates to the Council Bylaws.

State Plan & Interagency Relations Committee

The mission of this Committee is to ensure the SRC meets its obligations regarding input from consumers in the development of both the MRC public VR State Plan and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan.

Additional Committees may be established as deemed necessary and appropriate in accordance with the Council's Bylaws.

View the most recent [SRC Annual Report](#) to learn more about the work of current SRC Committees.

Role and Responsibilities



A primary goal of the SRC should be to ensure that people with disabilities are provided with an equal opportunity to receive the programs, services and supports needed to realize competitive employment. We should be working diligently in our pursuit of ways in which vocational rehabilitation services can be improved or developed while striving to achieve the mission, vision and goals of the Council and vocational rehabilitation for the benefit of consumers.

Functions

The Council does not assist in the resolution of any individual case issues. The role of the State Rehabilitation Council is clearly outlined under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Workforce Investment & Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. According to [Section 105 \(c\) of the Rehabilitation Act](#) the functions of the Council are as follows:

*(c) **FUNCTIONS OF COUNCIL**—The Council shall, after consulting with the State workforce development board—*

(1) review, analyze, and advise the designated State unit regarding the performance of the responsibilities of the unit under this title, particularly responsibilities relating to—

(A) eligibility (including order of selection);

(B) the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and

(C) functions performed by State agencies that affect or that potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under this title;

(2) in partnership with the designated State unit—

(A) develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities; and

(B) evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit reports of progress to the Commissioner;

(3) advise the designated State agency and the designated State unit regarding activities authorized to be carried out under this title, and assist in the preparation of the State plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by this title;



(4) to the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with—

(A) the functions performed by the designated State agency;

(B) vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this Act; and

(C) employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this title, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes;

(5) prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State, and make the report available to the public;

(6) to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, coordinate activities with the activities of other councils within the State...;

(7) provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between the designated State agency and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the State; and

(8) perform such other functions, consistent with the purpose of this title, as the State Rehabilitation Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.

Primary Duties

To help member understand their duties in more practical language, the responsibilities of the SRC can be grouped into the following broad categories:



- △ **WIOA Combined State Plan:** One of the most important responsibilities of State Rehabilitation Councils is to jointly develop and agree to the vocational rehabilitation goals for the WIOA Combined State Plan. The SRC advises MRC on the development of the VR Services Portion of the State Plan. The overall purpose of the State Plan is to assure that State and Federal government play a leadership role in promoting employment for persons with disabilities and to ensure a link between citizen participation and the legislative process.
- △ **Evaluation and Recommendations:** The SRC reviews, analyzes and evaluates the performance of VR programs. Particular focus is given to eligibility, service provision, and activities that impact employment outcomes. As a result of this process, the SRC adopts recommendations which are submitted to MRC for serious consideration. These recommendations should inform the vocational rehabilitation priorities in the State Plan. Learn more about the recommendations by reviewing the Annual Reports on the SRC website [here](#).
- △ **Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment:** To identify and assess the needs of individuals with disabilities, the SRC collaborates with MRC staff on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, which is completed annually and submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration every three years.
- △ **Consumer Satisfaction Surveys:** The SRC must be an integral partner with MRC to assist in the development and dissemination of the Consumer Satisfaction Surveys. The Council should be given a written evaluation of those surveys results and provide follow-up feedback.
- △ **Policy Consultation:** The Council should have a significant role in the development, understanding and implementation of the MRC's policies and procedures. Any significant policies that impact the consumer should be brought before the Council for discussion. MRC should provide detailed information to the Council members on why the policy is needed, the



implication of any change in a written policy, reasoning if a policy is being deleted or amended. *This should be a routine portion of the agenda for each Council meeting.*

- Δ **Coordination and Participation:** The SRC actively engages with other councils and advisory bodies to enhance the number of individuals served. SRC members are encouraged to participate in work groups, public meetings and stakeholder forums also.

National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC)

In November 2005, a handful of people affiliated with State Rehabilitation Councils shared lunch during the Conference of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Conference in San Diego. We began considering the benefits and drawbacks of establishing a national organization. As a result of tenacious commitment by several SRCs, the hard work became a realization in October at the CSAVR 2007 Fall Conference held in San Antonio, Texas.

Common ground and the power of our collective potential is what led a motivated core of individuals to move us from brainstorming to organizing the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). A Board of Directors was formed having representation from numerous states and territories making a commitment to develop a network for SRCs. With the support of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), national conference calls for all State Rehabilitation Councils convene on a bi-monthly basis. In addition, the NCSRC Board of Directors meets on a regular basis to further the structure and development of the NCSRC and to plan the Spring and Fall conferences. If you are interested in participating on these calls, the call-in number and schedule are on the home page of the NCSRC website.



NCSRC Website

Also, the Board of Directors worked diligently with a consultant to create and launch a more inclusive website in November 2018. The site, www.ncsrc.net, provides users with the capability of linking to any SRC or the NCSRC Board of Directors. This website allows SRCs to request information that can be sent to the list serve for input. If your Council needs information, guidance or data, requests may be placed on the site and will be forwarded to all SRCs giving each the opportunity to share resources.

NCSRC Training Conferences

In partnership and coinciding with the Conference of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Spring and Fall conferences, the NCSRC conducts two full days of training for SRC members on Saturday and Sunday. SRCs are highly encouraged to request funding from their respective VR agencies to attend the national conferences to help educate their members about the role of the Council and broaden their knowledge of responsibilities and mandates. The result manifests in a foundation already being built which will position all of us to be more effective within our respective states and as a national entity.

A fee is charged for these conferences to cover the costs of the sessions. Details regarding conferences are posted on the NCSRC website. All out-of-state travel is subject to Rehabilitation Services Administration "Prior Approval" procedures. Therefore, any out of state travel by SRC members **MUST** have prior approval by your state or territory first and then the RSA.

Councils should coordinate with their state or territory for specific data that is needed to meet this requirement. This information may vary depending on the state or territory. The prior approval for anyone traveling should be submitted at least two (2) months prior to the out-of-state event allowing your state or territory and RSA time to process the request. This guidance is laid out in [RSA Prior Written Approval TAC 18-02](#).



SRC members interested in attending a NCSRC Training conference should contact the Chair of the Council. The member(s) should be prepared to explain how their attendance at the conference will add value to the mission and vision of the SRC. The Chair will then work with MRC staff and the member(s) interested in attending to determine costs, to coordinate the information needed for prior approval and to finalize the logistics of attending. In the event there are limited resources, any decisions to approve or deny a request will be made by the Executive Committee.

Upon returning from the NCSRC Training Conference, the SRC member(s) will provide an oral and/or written report at the Executive Committee meeting. The report should contain the highlights of the conference, key takeaways, and/or best practices that the Council can implement in our effort to partner with MRC and to serve people with disabilities in Massachusetts more effectively. Also, the Chair may request that the member(s) present a portion of the information to the full SRC at a Quarterly Meeting.



Acronyms

The Act – Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as Amended)

ABI – Acquired Brain Injury

ACCS – Adult Community Clinical Services

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act (as Amended)

AT – Assistive Technology

CAP – Client Assistance Program

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations

CL – Community Living

CRP – Community Rehabilitation Providers

DDS – Disability Determination Services (also known as **MRC|DDS**)

DDS – Department of Developmental Services (formerly DMR)

DESE – Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

DMH – Department of Mental Health

DTA – Department of Transitional Assistance

EOHHS – Executive Office of Health & Human Services (also known as EHS)

ESS – Employment Services Specialist

ICC – Individual Consumer Consultant

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP – Individual Education Plan

ILC – Independent Living Center

IMPACT – Informed Members Planning and Accessing Choices Together

IPE – Individual Plan for Employment

ITP – Individual Transition Plan

JPS – Job Placement Specialist

JDT – Job Driven Training

MRC – Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

NCSRC – National Coalition of Statewide Rehabilitation Council

OJE – On the Job Evaluation

OJT – On the Job Training

QVRC – Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

RFR – Request for Response

SES – Statewide Employment Services

SHIP – Statewide Head Injury Program



SILC – Statewide Independent Living Council

SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps)

RSA – Rehabilitation Services Administration

SRC – Statewide Rehabilitation Council

SSDI – Social Security Disability Income

SSI – Supplemental Security Income

TAP – Transition to Adulthood Program

TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury

T-22 – Turning 22

TDD – Telecommunication Device for the Deaf

TTY – Text Telephone

VR – Vocational Rehabilitation

VRC – Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

WIB – Workforce Investment Board

WIOA – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (as Amended)



Key Terms

- *Applicant* means an individual who submits an application for vocational rehabilitation services.
- *Comparable services and benefits* mean services and benefits, including accommodations and auxiliary aids and services, that are provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other Federal, State, or local public agencies, by health insurance, or by employee benefits; are available to the individual at the time needed to ensure the progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome in the individual's individualized plan for employment; and are commensurate to the services that the individual would otherwise receive from the designated State vocational rehabilitation agency.
- *Competitive integrated employment* means work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment) and for which an individual
 - Is compensated at a rate that is not less than the higher of the rate specified in the Fair Labor Standards Act or the rate required under the applicable State or local minimum wage law for the place of employment;
 - Is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and
 - In the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and
 - Is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees; and
 - Is at a location typically found in the community; and where the employee with a disability interacts for the purpose of performing the duties of the position with other employees within the particular work unit and the entire work site, and, as appropriate to the work performed, other persons (e.g., customers and vendors), who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with these persons; and presents, as appropriate, opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.
- *Designated State agency or State agency* means the sole State agency, designated, in accordance with §361.13(a), to administer, or supervise the local administration of, the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. The term includes the State agency for individuals who are blind, if designated as the sole State agency



with respect to that part of the Unified or Combined State Plan relating to the vocational rehabilitation of individuals who are blind.

- *Designated State unit* or *State unit* means either—
 - The State vocational rehabilitation bureau, division, or other organizational unit that is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and that is responsible for the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program of the State agency, as required under §361.13(b); or
 - The State agency that is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities
- *Eligible individual* means an applicant for vocational rehabilitation services who meets the eligibility requirements of §361.42(a).
- *Employment outcome* means, with respect to an individual, entering, advancing in, or retaining full-time or, if appropriate, part-time competitive integrated employment, as defined in paragraph (c)(9) of this section (including customized employment, self-employment, telecommuting, or business ownership), or supported employment as defined in paragraph (c)(53) of this section, that is consistent with an individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.
- *Individual with a disability* means an individual—
 - Who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
 - Who has a record of such an impairment; or
 - Who is regarded as having such an impairment.
- *Individual with a most significant disability* means an individual with a significant disability who meets the designated State unit's criteria for an individual with a most significant disability. These criteria must be consistent with the requirements in §361.36(d)(1) and (2).
- *Individual with a significant disability* means an individual with a disability—
 - Who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;
 - Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and
 - Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord conditions (including paraplegia and quadriplegia), sickle cell anemia, intellectual disability, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.



- *Physical or mental impairment* means—
 - Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculo-skeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine; or
 - Any mental or psychological disorder such as intellectual disability, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.
- *Substantial impediment to employment* means that a physical or mental impairment (in light of attendant medical, psychological, vocational, educational, communication, and other related factors) hinders an individual from preparing for, entering into, engaging in, advancing in, or retaining employment consistent with the individual's abilities and capabilities.
- *Transition services* means a coordinated set of activities for a student or youth with a disability—
 - Designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, competitive integrated employment, supported employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;
 - Based upon the individual student's or youth's needs, taking into account the student's or youth's preferences and interests;
 - That includes instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation;
 - That promotes or facilitates the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the student's or youth's individualized plan for employment; and
 - That includes outreach to and engagement of the parents, or, as appropriate, the representative of such a student or youth with a disability.
- *Vocational rehabilitation services*—If provided to an individual, means those services listed in §361.48; and If provided for the benefit of groups of individuals, means those services listed in §361.49. See, Oregon VR Orientation video for help understanding the process: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIL7JzaYQRU>. Massachusetts follows this process with minimal differences.

Please review [34 CFR §361.5](#), for a complete list of terms used in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.