# Massachusetts PYs 2020-2023 - Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Combined or General)

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## Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan [13] must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA:

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[13] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii) of WIOA

### a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

#### 1. Input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council’s functions;

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has an active and productive State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) through the monthly SRC committee meetings, quarterly meetings, and] Executive Committee meetings. With MRC, the SRC has conducted satisfaction and needs assessments surveys that have gathered consumer input to more effectively address the needs of individuals seeking the support of MRC to find employment.

The SRC, through the SRC State Plan and Executive committees, made the following recommendations to the Commission:

**Recommendation FY22-1: The** S**RC seeks MRC's support in developing a strategic vision, goals, and leadership competencies for the SRC that integrates and infuses Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Racial Equity principles and values. The work of the SRC specific to DEI/RE would inform and advise how best to reach, serve, and support unserved/underserved consumers and potential consumers.**

The SRC will evaluate its own work and review what MRC is doing for DEI work. The SRC requests that MRC provide the SRC with updated reports and other related DEI information on a quarterly basis. This information will be used by the SRC for:

a. Refining the Council’s definitions and vision/mission, including a focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

b. Recruiting diverse voting Statewide Rehabilitation Council members.

c. Developing structured processes for governing all activities of the SRC, ensuring a DEI lens.

d. Training on how to recognize disparate impact within organizational structures (e.g., policies and procedures) on Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC)

SRC Update on Recommendation FY22-1:

The Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) with the support of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) engaged a consultant to help the Council be intentional about applying Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles and to increase the competency of the Councils leaders and members around the federal mandates of the SRC. In May 2021, the consultants began to assess the Council’s strengths and weaknesses, revise our mission and vision to reflect a commitment to DEI, and compile and train us on DEI centric tools to assist the SRC with leadership and operational capacity building. As the SRC infuses DEI principles into its leadership and operational structure, we will be better equipped to support MRC as it performs vocation rehabilitation outreach and service delivery to unserved/underserved individuals with disabilities eligible for and receiving vocational rehabilitation, especially in communities of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC).

The consultancy wrapped up in December 2021 with the presentation of *The SRC Five-Year Roadmap to Practice and Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI): 2021-2025.*  The final version of the roadmap is on target for completion in February 2022 and will be discussed with the MRC Commissioner in March 2022. Three key initiatives that are aligned with the Roadmap include:

**1) the diverse recruitment of members from a BIPOC, disability type and geographic standpoint**;

The SRC’s goal to recruit diverse membership aims at aligning SRC member demographics with that of VR consumers. In December 2021, the consultants gathered demographic data on SRC members to compare it to VR consumer demographics which will allow for target recruitment. The DEI Roadmap sets forth strategies and timelines for diversifying the SRC membership.

**2) the development of a new consumer experience survey tool that would capture diverse voices in a culturally sensitive manner; and**

The Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee is representing the SRC in MRC’s effort to revamp the surveys used to assess satisfaction and needs of VR consumers. The Committee chair and its members are participating in the working group to assist with setting priorities for the new survey tool, offering guidance on cultural sensitivity in the development and implementation of the tool, and providing consumer feedback at different phases of the work. The work is currently in the bid submission and review stage of the Request for Response, hoping to award the contract by early March.

**3) the practice of dismantling white supremacy culture in Council meetings.**

The DEI trainings from the consultant have taught the SRC ways to practice equity in meetings. We agreed to forgo rigid practices except when required for official votes. Practices such as consensus decision making, round-robin techniques for gathering feedback, and written feedback as an alternative to verbal comments foster inclusion and promote equitable agendas and decisions.

**Recommendation FY22-2: Support employment of individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth through developing a baseline understanding of current data and trends, which can inform a high-level strategy to increase the numbers of state employees with disabilities. Include the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion lens in this work, and work with MRC to ensure the robustness of this effort.**

SRC Update on Recommendation FY22-2:

**Update:**

The committee learned that the state agencies tasked with addressing the equity of numbers for people with disabilities in commonwealth jobs has been organized and will provide an update about changes to the makeup and goals of the group; it continues to be a priority at MRC to facilitate this process at high personnel levels within participating agencies.

**Recommendation FY22-3 (formerly FY21-2): Increase availability and accessibility of SRC materials online and develop a robust communications, marketing, and branding strategy for SRC.**  **Make materials available to SRC for review related to accessibility to all including from a DEI lens.**

SRC Update on Recommendation FY22-3:

The committee has been able to connect with MRC’s Communications Department. There was discussion within the committee that the committee’s work must extend beyond review of SRC materials to MRC materials, as the role for the SRC is primarily about advisory guidance to the MRC. Committee members have advised that the Business and Employment Committee (BEO) focus upon reviewing VR materials that are specifically geared toward employers as opposed to just reviewing MRC’s overall rebranding strategy for VR or reviewing all of their materials, in order to capture the attention of employers and make them understand that there is a great pool of qualified people with disabilities with whom they can connect via VR.

**Recommendation FY22-4 (formerly FY21-3): Increase number of available vendors to better support consumer informed choice. Areas of focus should include the cultural and linguistic needs of diverse populations, as well as increasing vendors in geographic areas with historically limited choice. Additionally, there should be a transparent procedure in place to purchase services with limited delay when there is no contract in place.**

SRC Update on Recommendation FY22-4:

The Policy Committee’s action plan for this recommendation is to continue to monitor MRC’s improvements to the procurement process, to explore whether there are ways in which goods and services can be procured without delay when a service is not on contract, and to explore the potential for engaging with more vendors in underserved areas in the state and vendors that can meet the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of consumers.

During FY22 the Policy Committee has continued to learn about procurement so that it can be better informed about the barriers MRC faces when attempting to make improvements to the process. Additionally, the committee seeks to become better informed of systemic issues that consumers face relative to procurement, and if applicable, make additional recommendations about improving the process.

More recently the committee has identified four areas on which it will focus relative to the recommendation and has identified MRC staff that can offer more specific information and guidance in these areas.

• Is there a way to increase the number of CIES vendors that can adequately address linguistic and cultural needs of consumers?

• Is it possible to obtain feedback from VR counselors through a survey or forum on common issues in procurement that delay services for consumers?

• Is it possible to create a mechanism for purchasing higher cost services/items via a third party in instances in which there is not relevant state contract in place?

• Are there other resources available for finding tutors that could be placed on contract?

When the committee has completed its work on this goal it intends to offer some specific feedback to MRC on potential areas of improvement in the area of procurement.

**Recommendation FY22-5 (formerly FY21-5): Develop a baseline understanding of self-employment, including but not limited to assessing needs (consumer and counselor), data trends (state and national), and identified best-practices and partners, to inform a strategy for self-employment services within MRC**

SRC Update on Recommendation FY22-5:

MRC is appointing an operational leader to work with the committee to better understand the opportunities and constraints and has pledged to assign this to an Area Director as a lead Manager to liaison with the Business and Employment Committee (BEO) and the SRC. MRC reports that it has had some staff experts over the years who could do internal consultation on Self-employment plans but have lost institutional knowledge due to retirement of staff with that expertise, etc. It is reported that this manager-appointee will have the role of pulling other staff and consumers who have worked with MRC on self-employment plans to advise and guide the process with the BEO.

#### 2. The designated State unit's response to the Council’s input and recommendations; and

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has responded to the Statewide Rehabilitation Council's input and recommendations as follows:

**MRC Response to FY22-1**

MRC agrees on highlighting DEI work within the SRC – this maps on to a similar emphasis within MRC, as evidenced by DEI and Racial Equity focused work being one of five active Roadmap priority areas for the agency, our recent agency racial equity SWOT, etc. Our shared commitment is also demonstrated by the SRC’s current DEI consultation with HMA. MRC proposes to amend the recommendation as such:

* Edit recommendation to read, “Develop a strategic vision, goals, and leadership competencies for the SRC that integrate and infuse Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Racial Equity principles and values.” **– the SRC State Plan Committee (SPC) accepted this recommendation and has made the edit.**
* The “goals” statement above (paragraph 2) appears to be missing. MRC assumes that defining concrete “goals” specific to DEI/RE will be part of the work with HMA, so perhaps it is premature to define goals at this point in time. **The SRC SPC accepts this recommendation and has deleted this paragraph.**
* Edit language that discusses, “SRC will evaluate its own work and what MRC is doing for DEI work.” MRC is happy to share with the SRC, on a quarterly basis, ongoing DEI activities within the agency, but would like to exclude language specific to SRC evaluating MRC DEI efforts. **The SRC SPC has revised the language and used the word “review” instead of “evaluate”. It is assumed that SRC would offer feedback on any VR activity or policy as per the SRC’s role.**
* MRC would like the SRC to consider adding focus or a goal re: the work of the SRC specific to DEI/RE would inform and advise how best to reach, serve, and support unserved/underserved consumers and potential consumers (so adding a focus on consumers to this work). **The SRC SPC accepts this recommendation and has inserted this goal in the first paragraph.**

**MRC Response to FY22-2**

MRC continues to support and align with a high-level goal of supporting individuals with disabilities with employment via the Commonwealth. MRC is able to share data and trends of EHS agencies specific to rates of employment among those with self-identified disabilities. MRC would like to note that movement on this goal will require high-level engagement and strategy development across agencies (e.g., MOD, DMH, DDS, etc.) and partnership with other Directors and Commissioners. MRC is happy to partner with the SRC in that work. MRC has no modifications to this recommendation.

**MRC Response to FY22-3**

MRC continues to agree there is more work to be done in increasing the virtual visibility and accessibility of SRC materials. SRC materials are included within the current rebranding work ongoing with MRC with consultant Think Argus. MRC is also partnering with MCB to develop a more systematic and agency-wide approach to ensuring accessibility of our materials, resources, and processes. MRC proposes to amend the recommendation as such:

* Edit recommendation to read, “Increase availability and accessibility of SRC materials online, as part of a robust communications, marketing, and branding strategy that is inclusive of and integrates DEI and Racial Equity best practices.” **The SRC SPC accepted this revision and has made the change.**
* MRC would like to work with the SRC to best determine which points of MRC communication would best inform the SRC. **The SRC SPC is interpreting that MRC is asking the SRC to provide MRC with more specific feedback on what the issues are with the SRC materials online.**

**MRC Response to FY22-4:**

MRC agrees with the importance of needing to have sufficient numbers and quality

of vendors to meet consumers’ needs, with particular understanding of the reality of an insufficient vendor pool to provide culturally and linguistically competent services and supports. We assert that “ensuring sufficient vendors” is a laudable goal, albeit a long-term one that will take more than one year to achieve. We propose some initial steps that include focusing on increasing our list of available vendors. Marketing will be key in these efforts. MRC proposes to amend the recommendation as such:

* Edit recommendation to read, “Increase number of available vendors to better support consumer informed choice. Areas of focus should include the cultural and linguistic needs of diverse populations, as well as increasing vendors in geographic areas with historically limited choice.” **The SRC SPC accepts this revision to replace the first two sentences.**
* MRC will need to better understand this component of the recommendation – “Additionally, there should be a transparent procedure in place to purchase services with limited delay when there is no contract in place.” MRC is bound by Commonwealth procurement practices, so there would need to be conversation to better understand the goals and intent of this statement. **The SRC SPC understands the limitations of the procurement system and the Policy Committee has been consulting with MRC about potential ways that services can be purchased when there is no relationship with the state. The committee will continue to research the matter and continue to offer feedback on potential solutions.**
* MRC’s Office of Fiscal Management and Budget can work with the SRC to both support understanding of procurement parameters as well as identify pathways and opportunities available. **The SRC Policy Committee has met with this department and others to learn about procurement process.**

**MRC Response to FY22-5:** MRC recognizes that interest in self-employment has increased during FY21 as a result of Covid-19 and individuals needing to pivot regarding employment. We also acknowledge that self-employment has traditionally accounted for a small number of goals (FY20=98) and placements (FY19=7; FY20=18) within VR. We propose that the focus of this goal is first to identify what is happening re: self-employment within other VR agencies – how are they responding, what resources are they using, etc. Additionally, counselors may need additional resources and tools to support to assist consumers with self-employment goals. MRC would like the focus more to be on considering how self-employment fits into a larger array of employment supports offered by the agency, as well as partner with other entities (e.g., DOL, ICI) who have a track record of focus on self-employment. As such, we propose to do some bigger picture thinking, with the SRC, before jumping into developing resources. MRC proposes to amend the recommendation as such:

* Edit recommendation to read, “Develop a baseline understanding of self-employment, including but not limited to assessing needs (consumer and counselor), data trends (state and national), and identified best-practices and partners, to inform a strategy for self-employment services within MRC.” **The SRC BEO accepts this revision.**
* We propose not focusing on developing targeted resources and/or translation of these resources until the above referenced baseline understanding and priority areas are fully formed. **The SRC BEO recommends finding ways for MRC to support people already involved with a Self-Employment Goal in an Individual Plan of Employment to be able to access the resources that are available in the community now.**

#### 3. The designated State unit’s explanations for rejecting any of the Council’s input or recommendations.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission reviewed and responded to all recommendations provided by the Statewide Rehabilitation Council.

### b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

#### 1. A local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;

Not Applicable - MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.

#### 2. The designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and

Not Applicable - MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.

#### 3. Requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Not Applicable - MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.

### c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

#### 1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

MRC does not have any formal cooperative agreements in place with State and Federal agencies outside of the statewide workforce development system.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission considers cooperation and collaboration with other agencies to be essential and beneficial to most effectively serve people with disabilities and to assist individuals with opportunities for employment based on their choices, needs, interests and preferences. Other agencies provide critical supports, necessary resources, and dedicated human service professionals all of which amplify and enhance the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. For many years, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has worked closely and cooperatively with the staff of other agencies in serving mutual consumers. Collaboration often extends well beyond services to particular individuals. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission works with other agencies to:

* Affect system change
* Increase resources, funding and service options
* Improve communication and mutual understanding among staff
* Change public attitude toward issues of disability
* Achieve common goals on behalf of those whom the agencies serve
* Enhance services for mutually served consumers to assist them in achieving their employment and independent living goals.

Agencies with which such collaboration has occurred and has remained active locally and at the Statewide level include, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Developmental Services, the Social Security Administration, the Massachusetts Autism Commission, Medicaid/Mass Health, Department of Public Health, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Adult and Community Learning Services, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as the Department of Correction and Department of Youth Services through MRC’s Supported Employment Programs.

With the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), MRC and DTA operate a program called Empower to Employ. The goal of this program is to establish an integrated employment model for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF benefits. This joint partnership provides resources to assist shared participants living with disabilities to be independent through employment.  The partner agencies use a jointly-funded model of client engagement and intensive co-case management to provide individualized and meaningful services. Through this collaborative effort, DTA and MRC are utilizing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to facilitate recruitment (pre-engagement), engagement, service delivery and placement.  The IRT informed approach includes:

* Individual and group outreach to recruit and refer participants who are a strong match for Empower to Employ and MRC VR services;
* Client-centered assessments that identify goals that are most meaningful to the participant, focus on the whole family, and tap into what motivates participants to achieve their goals;
* Flexibility to meet participants where they are and creativity in addressing challenges as they arise;
* Enrollment into specified training or vocational rehabilitation services to support the goals set with the participant during assessment; and
* Continuous co-case management between MRC and DTA teams that bolsters participant engagement and re-engagement, when necessary, and empowers them to navigate their pathway to economic stability.

#### 2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. The MRC VR program and MRC area offices have excellent relationships with these programs operated by the agency. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low—interest loans to consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology. These programs are available to and are used by MRC VR consumers.

#### 3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

There are no programs in Massachusetts carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

#### 4. Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

MRC does not have any formal cooperative agreements in place with noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission further collaborates with organizations that provide services, in whole or in part, to specific constituencies, including out of school youth. Among such organizations are the Massachusetts Association of Financial Aid Administrators, the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, the Arthritis Foundation, the Massachusetts Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Massachusetts Easter Seals, United Cerebral Palsy, the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts, the Epilepsy Association, and the Asperger/Autism Network (AANE). These collaborations may be informal or may include service contracts. The purpose, goals, and actions established in these contracts are very similar to the agendas set forth in interagency collaboration.

#### 5. State use contracting programs.

The Commonwealth operates a Supplier Diversity Program including the following categories: Minority (MBE), Women (WBE), Service—Disabled Veteran (SDVOBE), Veteran (VBE), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Business Enterprises (LGBTBE); and Disability—Owned Business Enterprises (DOBE). MRC participates in this program as part of statewide contracting as an equal opportunity initiative.

### d. Coordination with Education Officials

Describe:

#### 1. The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has established interagency cooperation between public education and public vocational rehabilitation agency regarding vocational rehabilitation services pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) to provide individualized transition services for students with disabilities that lead to successful post-school outcomes in competitive integrated employment, postsecondary education and training, independent living and community participation.

MRC continues to work to increase collaboration with educational officials, and has worked with DESE to outline interagency cooperation in a formal agreement entitled “Administrative Advisory on Pre-Employment Transition Services and Transition Services”.   MRC has a procedure to review this agreement with DESE and make changes as required.  MRC maintains updated Pre-ETS policies and procedures, and will make further edits to its policies and procedures as needed going forward.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) have developed this advisory to Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) as described below and in other sections of this document to:

1. Define and describe Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) offered through MRC for students with disabilities, including which students may be appropriate for these services
2. Establish collaborative practices between MRC vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors and Local Educational Agency (LEA) personnel for the provision of Pre-ETS.

MRC provides two types of services for students with disabilities, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), and transition services through an Individualized Plan for Employment.  Services may be provided directly by MRC or through a contracted service provider.

* All students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) may receive Pre-ETS, including but not limited to those receiving services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 plan, and are either eligible for MRC VR services or potentially eligible for MRC VR services. Pre-ETS are provided as generalized services to groups of students, or as individualized services.

MRC provides the five Pre-ETS services required under WIOA:

* Job exploration counseling.
* Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school, after-school, or community-based opportunities such as internships. Work-based learning experiences must be provided in an integrated setting in the community to the maximum extent possible.
* Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs.
* Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living.
* Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

MRC makes Pre-ETS available to all students with disabilities statewide who are eligible or potentially eligible for MRC services. MRC will make every effort to provide or coordinate Pre-ETS services to ensure statewide availability.

MRC has counselors assigned to secondary institutions across the state. These counselors will review and discuss Pre-ETS service options with students and their families (if needed) to determine which services are most appropriate to meet to meet the student's transition needs. MRC will provide and coordinate Pre-ETS services in collaboration with local educational agencies.  MRC’s contracted Pre-ETS service providers also work with MRC and schools across the state to obtain referrals for MRC Pre-ETS services.

1. Students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) who are determined eligible for MRC Vocational Rehabilitation services can receive additional transition services that are not considered Pre-ETS (beyond the scope of the five Pre-ETS services) through an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) while they are still in high school and receiving special education services, and also afterwards when seeking employment, in employment, or in postsecondary education or training. Transition services delivered through an IPE might consist of vocational guidance, work evaluation, skills training at a college or community rehabilitation program, assistive technology, adaptive equipment, and/or benefits counseling.
2. The IPE must be developed within 90 days or with an extension that is documented in MRC’s case management system and approved by the MRC counselor and the student or Parent/Guardian. The IPE goal and appropriate services should be coordinated with a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan and include the provision of Pre-ETS. High school attendance and completion should be listed as a service on the IPE. The IPE should be completed prior to high school exit for a student determined eligible for MRC services and not under an order of selection wait list.

The Administrative Advisory outlines the procedures in which MRC partners with LEAs to provide Pre-ETS as follows:

* MRC and LEA’s are expected to maintain open and frequent communication between each other. High schools designate staff to facilitate sharing of information between MRC and the LEA.
* LEAs seek consultation and technical assistance from MRC VR counselors for LEA staff, students, and families. Consultation and assistance may be provided in-person or by using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls).
* LEAs will provide MRC staff with resources necessary for MRC’s work, such as access to meeting space, work space, and Internet connection as needed.
* LEAs will collaborate with VR counselors to identify students with IEPs or 504 plans who may be appropriate for Pre-ETS. MRC will cooperate with LEAs to reach out to identified students as early as possible during the transition planning process and will provide the student and family with information about MRC Pre-ETS services, the purpose of the VR program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided.
* LEAs will inform the student, parent/guardian, and other IEP Team members of the availability of Pre-ETS provided by MRC, and connect the student and family with the VR counselor.
* LEAs will invite VR counselors to participate in IEP and 504 planning meetings, as appropriate, and with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority. When invited to participate in these planning meetings, MRC counselors will make every effort to participate.
* LEAs will share information e.g., student and family contact and information, student assessment data, Transition Planning Forms, IEPs, and 504 plans, with MRC counselor, with the prior consent of the family or student who has reached the age of majority, and as consistent with applicable student records laws.
* LEAs and MRC are expected to collaborate to plan Pre-ETS for students with IEPs that are coordinated with each student’s individualized secondary transition services provided by the LEA. IEP teams are asked to document any agreed-upon VR services in the Action Plan of the Transition Planning Form, and may also document VR services in the Additional Information section of the IEP. LEAs and MRCs will collaborate to coordinate and deliver training activities and opportunities for students and families, where needed and appropriate. IEP documentation practices may vary among LEAs. See 34 CFR 300.154 and 34 CFR 300.324 regarding the relative responsibilities of LEAs and VR agencies to provide transition services.

#### 2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:

##### A. Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

The Administrative Advisory outlines ongoing communication and collaboration and technical assistance between the DESE and the MRC at the state and local level. Designated staff from the DESE and the MRC will communicate on a regular basis, to share information about legislative and regulatory changes and to review agency policy initiatives, resources, and other issues related to transition.

The following initiatives will foster local collaboration between the MRC’s staff and LEAs:

Training and Guidance:

DESE and MRC staff will collaborate on transition training activities for students, families, educators, rehabilitation counselors, and other involved staff, where needed and appropriate. DESE and MRC staff at the state level will collaborate, as needed and appropriate, to produce joint guidance on WIOA, and local collaboration.

MRC and DESE have encouraged LEAs through the administrative advisory to provide MRC staff with resources necessary for MRC’s work, such as access to meeting space, work space, and Internet connection as needed.

LEAs are asked to collaborate with VR counselors and contracted MRC Pre-ETS providers to identify all students with disabilities, including but not limited to those with IEPs or 504 plans who may be appropriate for Pre-ETS. MRC will cooperate with LEAs to identify students as early as possible during the transition planning process and will provide the student and family with information about MRC Pre-ETS services, the VR program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided.

LEAs are asked to inform the student, parent/guardian, and other IEP Team members of the availability of Pre-ETS provided by MRC, and connect the student and family with the VR counselor.

LEAs are asked to invite VR counselors to participate in IEP and 504 planning meetings, and with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority. When invited to participate in these planning meetings, MRC counselors will make every effort to participate.

LEAs are asked to share information e.g., student and family contact and information, student assessment data, Transition Planning Forms, IEPs, and 504 plans, with MRC counselor, with the prior consent of the family or student who has reached the age of majority, and as consistent with applicable student records laws.

LEAs and MRC are expected to collaborate to plan Pre-ETS for students with IEPs that are coordinated with each student’s individualized secondary transition services provided by the LEA. IEP Teams are asked to document any agreed-upon VR services in the Action Plan of the Transition Planning Form, and may also document VR services in the Additional Information section of the IEP. LEAs and MRCs will collaborate to coordinate and deliver training activities and opportunities for students and families, where needed and appropriate. IEP documentation practices may vary among LEAs. Any conversation regarding MRC Pre-ETS at the IEP meeting needs to be individualized to meet the student’s needs.

The MRC has designated staff in Area Offices to work cooperatively with LEAs to coordinate Pre-ETS and transition planning and services, and to disseminate information to parents/legal guardians and students about the MRC transition process as early as the student’s 14th birthday.

The MRC will provide consultation and technical assistance to LEAs, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conference and conference calls), to assist LEAs in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities and to coordinate Pre-ETS and other transition services. Pre-ETS can be provided to students who are eligible or potentially eligible for MRC VR services. If a student is determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, this consultation and technical assistance should result in the MRC’s development of an Individualized Plan for Employment ("IPE") before the student leaves the school setting.

This consultation and technical assistance might include but is not limited to informational sessions with students, families/legal guardians, and school personnel regarding MRC Pre-ETS and VR services, including referral and eligibility information; and assigning a counselor point of contact for each high school to provide information, receive referrals for Pre-ETS and VR services, and develop IPEs with students who are determined eligible for VR services.

##### B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

The administrative agreement covers compliance with state and federal laws and regulation for transition planning at the local level.

Under the agreement:

The DESE will provide ongoing guidance to LEAs regarding the responsibility to provide a free and appropriate public education ("FAPE") to students eligible for special education and Section 504 accommodation plans, as mandated by federal and state law. Guidance will include the requirements that IEPs specify needed transition services; that special education transition services be provided for each eligible student beginning at age 14; that representatives of participating agencies be invited to the IEP team meeting with the prior consent of the parent/legal guardian or student who has reached the age of majority; and that IEP Teams discuss the transfer of parental rights to the student at least one year before the student turns 18. The DESE will also provide guidance to LEAs to facilitate referrals to the appropriate agency for eligible students who will require ongoing supports and services from the adult service system.

On a regular basis, the DESE will monitor LEAs’ development and use of policies and procedures, including those regarding Section 504 and the transition requirements of IDEA. All monitoring reports will be made publicly available on the DESE’s web site. The DESE has provided guidance to LEAs, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, entitled “Administrative Advisory SPED 2017-1: Guidance Regarding the WIOA Prohibition on Contracting with Entities for the Purpose of Operating a Program Under Which a Youth with a Disability is Engaged in Subminimum Wage Employment” to inform LEAs that WIOA prohibits LEAs from entering into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in subminimum wage employment. The DESE assures that it will not enter such a contract or other arrangement.

##### C. Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) are mutually committed to promoting individualized transition services for students with disabilities that lead to successful post-school outcomes in competitive integrated employment, postsecondary education and training, independent living, and community participation.

MRC will contribute at least 15% of its financial resources towards providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday). The high schools will provide in-kind contributions of staff time, space, and transition services/resources. MRC will continue to work closely with DESE to ensure adequate financial resources are available in the schools for high school students.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), schools are responsible to provide secondary transition services in the areas of Postsecondary Education/Training, Competitive Employment, Independent Living, and Community Participation, as appropriate to the unique needs of each student. In many cases, schools provide employment skills development as part of secondary transition services. The goal of Pre-ETS is to prepare students with disabilities for successful competitive, integrated employment.

Pre-ETS planning does not relieve LEAs or MRC of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that LEAs or MRC would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who are appropriate for Pre-ETS. For example, if the LEA ordinarily provides job exploration counseling to its students, that does not mean that the school should cease providing the service.

In cases where a question arises as to financial responsibility for services, MRC and the LEAs will work together to establish financial responsibilities, and have established a process for resolving disputes and for the coordination and timely delivery of services. MRC and LEAs will refer to state and federal laws, related regulations, and state and federal guidance to assist in resolving such issues in the best interest of the student.

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, nothing in this agreement will be construed to reduce the obligation under the IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) of a local educational agency (LEA) or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities. In accordance with IDEA, nothing in this agreement relieves the MRC of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the MRC’s eligibility criteria.

MRC has assigned qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to every public high school in the Commonwealth to coordinate the delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services for potentially eligible or eligible students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) and transition services for students determined eligible for VR services delivered through an Individualized Plan for Employment. The LEAs assign qualified education staff to coordinate communication with MRC and to provide transition services under IDEA and 504. Applicable administrative staff are also involved in this process.  MRC contracted Pre-ETS providers also work closely with schools and MRC staff as part of this process.

MRC and DESE have coordinated efforts with LEAs to address documentation requirements for students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment (in accordance with 34 CFR Part 397).  MRC has developed documentation forms, and has coordinated with DESE to develop and implement a process to ensure these forms are provided to MRC by LEAs in accordance with these requirements, and subsequently documented in MRC's Section 511 database.

##### D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

The MRC Area Offices provide outreach to high schools to assist in informing all students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) of the availability of MRC Pre-ETS and Vocational Rehabilitation services. Outreach to these students occurs as early as possible in the transition process. MRC outreach information includes a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, applicable eligibility requirements, referral and application procedures, and the scope of services that may be provided to eligible and potentially eligible individuals.   Contracted MRC Pre-ETS providers will also participate in this outreach process to identify students for MRC Pre-ETS services.

LEAs also collaborate with VR counselors to identify all students with disabilities who may be appropriate for Pre-ETS. MRC will cooperate with LEAs to identify students as early as possible during the transition planning process and will provide the student and family with information about the purpose of the VR and Pre-ETS programs, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided.

### e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission does not have any formal cooperative agreements with private non-profit organizations. MRC does work closely with nonprofits across the Commonwealth.

MRC has for many years worked in partnership with private nonprofit Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to develop a wide array of programs and services to assist people with disabilities to achieve suitable employment outcomes. The MRC and CRPs have collaborated to develop programs including: Vocational Services; Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES), contracted Pre-Employment Transition Service programs (Pre-ETS), and a wide array of support services essential in vocational rehabilitation.

MRC’s collaborative relationship with its CRP partners have been achieved through open communication, sharing of ideas and resources, mutual support and understanding and inclusiveness of all partners in the development of and implementation of service design.

The MRC develops programs and services with the participation of providers in several forums as described below:

1. Statewide Rehabilitation Council that meets quarterly.
2. Meetings with representatives of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers.
3. Periodic district wide meetings with community rehabilitation programs.
4. Interagency and cross—disability agency councils.
5. Task specific work teams.

MRC contracts with Qualified Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) as part of the Competitive Integrated Employment Service (CIES) program.  The CIES program is a procurement of a set of contracted services available for all individuals with disabilities served by the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Program.  Qualified CRPs provide the services to MRC consumers.

The MRC/CIES procurement program provides employment services for VR participants, and additionally through State funding the availability for extended ongoing supports after closure. CIES comprises six service components, each associated with a specific service outcome.  Specific service components are provided to consumers based on their individualized needs. Through the component based service delivery system, consumers are able to receive the comprehensive individualized services and supports they need to achieve and maintain successful employment. CIES services may carry over from year to year depending on the needs of the individual consumer and consumers may receive any number of components based on their needs and interests. CIES is often used to assist individuals with complex disabilities or situations into integrated employment opportunities with competitive wages paid by an employer.

CIES procurement service components include: Career Exploration and Engagement; Employment-Based Skills Training/Work Experiences; Job Development and Placement; Initial Employment Support services, Interim Flexible Supports (including peer support and job coaching), and Ongoing Employment Support services.

Providers are paid on a performance basis during the initiation and completion phases of services. Using a data management and billing system called EIM (Enterprise Invoice Management), and internal tracking, the MRC Business Improvement Partners, track program enrollment, expenditure and outcomes.

MRC has made adjustments to the CIES model based on lessons learned and input from its staff, CRP partners, and other stakeholders, such as adding Business Improvement Partners to assist with managing performance and provide assistance to MRC staff and providers to ensure the program is best meeting the needs of MRC and its consumers.  These adjustments are designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CIES services for MRC consumers. MRC also incorporated peer support and flexible supports into the CIES procurement and has developed key performance indicators for CIES and CIES-ACCS.  The CIES procurement is set to be a rolling RFR which opens four times a year to allow recruitment of additional vendors providing flexibility and maximum access for services.

MRC continues to work closely with CRPs on a collaborative effort with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to provide contracted employment services as a part of the CIES procurement program for consumers participating in the Department of Mental Health’s Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) model.  As part of MRC ACCS services through the CIES procurement program, MRC has entered into Business Associate Agreements (BAAs) with CIES ACCS providers to assist with facilitating and coordinating services between MRC, DMH, and providers for participating consumers.

MRC also works with CRPs and other nonprofits such as the Independent Living Centers through its Pre-Employment Transition Service (Pre-ETS) contracts. These contracts provide work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness training, job exploration counseling, instruction in self-advocacy/peer mentoring, and counseling on enrollment in post-secondary education. MRC’s Pre-ETS procurement is designed to allow MRC to provide students with exposure to the world of work.  This approach focuses on: 1) increasing the student’s awareness of the world of work and their own employment interests, skills, and needs; 2) providing exploration and exposure opportunities related to work experiences; and 3) better preparing students for employment and postsecondary success.  This approach is tiered to ensure that students of all abilities can access and engage in Pre-ETS services based on their interests and needs.

### f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

Describe the designated State agency’s efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The MRC Supported Employment Program provides Supported Employment Services to consumers statewide through its Area Offices and through a network of qualified community rehabilitation providers. MRC has developed links with the local school system for transitioning youth, and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health (DMH), through its clubhouse programs and through collaboration with DMH on Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS).

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission continues to promote the collaboration with stakeholders regarding supported employment services and extended services. This is also evidenced in the number of joint funded programs that have been established. Some examples of these collaborative programs are joint funding of services for individuals with intellectual disabilities between the MRC and the Developmental Disability Services (DDS); for individuals with mental health needs between MRC and the Department of Mental Health (DMH); for individuals who have traumatic brain injuries between the Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission; and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

MRC has Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with DDS and the Department of Mental Health (DMH). These MOUs are designed to improve collaboration, coordination, and utilization of joint agency resources in ensuring quality service delivery and long term supports that result in competitive/supported employment outcomes for mutual consumers. This collaboration is at the Regional and local levels. Through developing a process for conducting joint-service planning, local liaisons/training and joint service planning, all consumers and specifically transition aged individuals be better served and able to achieve successful employment outcomes.

Evidence of Collaboration regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services:

MRC provides supported employment services through its Area Offices across the commonwealth. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has developed a process to provide extended support services to assist individuals with disabilities in maintaining and advancing in their careers utilizing state funding, comparable benefits, and natural supports for long-term extended support services after federal funds can no longer be used. Paid extended supports are provided through a network of qualified community rehabilitation providers as well as partnering with other state agencies such as the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Developmental services.

Funding for extended long term support services is available from several sources depending on the nature of the consumer’s disability and the resources available. Sources include:

1. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission State Ongoing Support Funding
2. IRS Section 44
3. Department of Mental Health
4. Department of Developmental Services
5. Private Sector Business Natural Supports
6. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Statewide Head Injury Program
7. Social Security Work Incentives/PASS Plan
8. Impairment-Related Work Expenses
9. Natural Supports or supports from an employer
10. Other Comparable Benefits
11. Medicaid Waiver Supported Employment Services
12. Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

### g. Coordination with Employers

Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

#### 1. VR Services; and

MRC’s Job Placement Unit operates a robust account management system that is designed for MRC to hear first from employers regarding their specific labor market needs.  This gives MRC staff access to job openings that we can assist individuals with disabilities in meeting their employment goals as well as assisting our employer partners by providing them with access to qualified individuals to help fulfill their staffing needs.  As part of this system, MRC has several employer advisory boards strategically located across the Commonwealth through which we receive labor market information and to collaborate on strategies for hiring of people with disabilities. MRC’s account management system involves numerous employers across the Commonwealth in a variety of different sectors.  There are statewide employer partners as well as local employer partners we work with, including those in STEM occupations such as Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, MassGeneral-Brigham, and Red River Technologies, among others.  Many of these partners participate in MRC’s employer advisory board meetings. Additionally, as part of MRC’s Empower to Employ Program in partnership with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), MRC has hired dedicated Employment Service Specialist staff for this project. The Job Placement unit also works with numerous smaller employers across the Commonwealth to assist with direct job placement of MRC consumers.

MRC produces a labor market summary for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and analyzes placement and employment trends on an annual basis by Standard Occupational Code. MRC also tracks information on labor force participation and unemployment for people with disabilities in comparison to those without disabilities. MRC continues its efforts to strengthen agency use of labor market information and continues to strive to reduce the gap in labor force participation between people with and without disabilities. Going forward, MRC plans to continue working with its workforce partners, including the MassHire Career Centers and Local Workforce Investment Boards to analyze labor market trends and statistics to identify job sectors to focus outreach efforts on. MRC also uses its Employer Advisory Board network and other marketing efforts to promote MRC’s employer services and the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

Employer feedback has led MRC to operate an annual statewide hiring event to help connect a talent pool with the needs of our employer partners. MRC also holds regular local office briefings with employers on local labor needs. All of these enhance the agency’s knowledge on local and statewide labor market needs. MRC utilizes a new application developed with Symplicity to assist with job matching efforts, resume development, and other related areas to accommodate the needs of our consumers and employer partners.

MRC participates in a business strategy workgroup between key workforce partners as part of the Commonwealth’s effort to coordinate services to employers amongst partner agencies. MRC subscribes to the established key principles to guide business services amongst key partner agencies and will continue to work closely with WIOA core partners to expand services to employers.

MRC is continuing to target new employers and expand its employer account management system. Examples include job driven training programs with multiple employers, such as the MRC Pharmacy Technician Training Program in direct partnership with CVS Health, and a job driven training program with Red River Technologies among others. MRC also is an active member of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)’s National Employment Team network, which strives to create a coordinated approach to serving business customers through a national VR team that specialized in employer development, business consulting and corporate relations. The National Employment Network team also comprises the Talent Acquisition Portal providing access to jobs across the country and connects with national employers. MRC works with Cisco to obtain advice and support for employment of individuals with disabilities in the Cybersecurity and technology industries.

MRC’s Placement Team also has a very active and vibrant partnership with the Mass PCA Program. This program also offers CNA training and other career options and trainings. These trainings are free to consumers.  MRC also works with registered Apprenticeship Programs in the state to secure apprenticeships for consumers. MRC is also working to assist consumers with obtaining career ladder employment in the field of addiction recovery and human services.

MRC’s Job Placement Unit operates an annual Federal Hiring Event in partnership with MCB, and other workforce partners, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in their Boston and Hartford offices to assist consumers with securing competitive employment comparable with their interests and abilities. MRC prepares consumers to interview for available jobs with employers participating in the event. This is a hiring event that focuses on direct job placement with participating employers. It differs from a career fair because consumers must apply for at least one job for which they are qualified to be eligible to participate. Employers are motivated to hire because they are presented with a set of diverse, qualified individuals from whom they can select to fill vacancies. In 2022, MRC will be completing its 10th annual Hiring Event. Since 2013, Over 575 individuals have been successfully employed across the Commonwealth through participating in this annual one-day event. The aggregate annual wages of all successfully employed consumers through the hiring event since 2013 is approximately $12.7 million.  Consumers have been employed in a variety of occupations ranging from office and administrative support, health care, protective service, human services, and management occupations, amongst others.

Job-Driven Trainings:

MRC is committed to the use of industry-based training to assist its consumers in finding competitive employment opportunities through employer engagement. Over the past 8 years, MRC has conducted over 1,000 OJTs with employers and approximately 500 consumers have completed Job-Driven trainings with MRC employer partners. MRC continues to develop and utilize Job-Driven Trainings (JDT) and on-the-job (OJT) training and evaluations. MRC has created job driven training programs to date with the CVS Health, multiple human services organizations including customized JDT’s for Substance Use Disorders amongst other employers. In addition, MRC holds job-driven trainings for human service and IT jobs.  MRC continues its cyber security job-driven training program partnership with CISCO Academy and is working on developing new job-driven training programs with BJ’s Wholesale Club, and is developing a partnership with Amazon. MRC has found that many consumers who participate in an OJT or Job-Driven training obtain employment with the OJT or JDT.  Other participants are able to obtain employment elsewhere as a result of their participation in the OJT or JDT because they gained a recent work experience and/or developed job-specific skills.

MRC also holds annual employer trainings to strengthen relationships with existing employers and to develop new ones. The intent of these trainings include promoting MRC’s employment services to employers, encouraging employer partners of MRC to promote the hiring of people with disabilities to other employers and reducing stigmas related to employment of people with disabilities. All of the activities mentioned in this section provide guidance for the delivery of best practices for the employment of individuals with disabilities with employers of various sizes across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

#### 2. Transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

MRC continues to work with employers to coordinate transition services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students and youths with disabilities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in partnership with its contracted Pre-ETS vendors

Through its Pre-ETS vendors, MRC offers internship opportunities for high school students with disabilities in partnership with employers across the Commonwealth as part of its Pre-ETS programming.

In addition, MRC staff coordinate with MRC Pre-ETS providers and with employers to provide work experiences such as internships and job tours for students and youths with disabilities receiving VR and/or Pre-Employment Transition Services through MRC.  These services provide work-based learning experiences and workplace readiness training. It also provides valuable work experience and mentorship opportunities for participants.

MRC recently completed a 5 year federal demonstration grant entitled Transition Pathway Services to promote best practices for Pre-ETS and Work-Based learning. MRC will use lessons from this grant to incorporate best practices for coordinating Pre-Employment Transition Services and transition services to students and youths with disabilities going forward.

### h. Interagency Cooperation

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

#### 1. The State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

MRC and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Office of Medicaid, the state agency responsible for administering the state’s Medicaid program have a well-established and long-standing relationship. MRC and the EOHHS’ Office of Medicaid are committed to the promotion of independence and self-sufficiency through access to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) services for individuals with disabilities.

MRC and the Office of Medicaid have developed and signed a Cooperative Agreement to work collaboratively to promote the provision of services and long-term supports for individuals with disabilities who require such services to obtain and maintain competitive employment in accordance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA). The Cooperative Agreement will be revised as needed in the future.

This Cooperative Agreement is in accordance with Section 412(a)(7)(H) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, which requires a state’s VR agency to have a formal cooperative agreement with the state’s Medicaid agency with respect to the delivery of VR services for individuals who have been determined to be eligible for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) under a Medicaid HCBS waiver.

MRC and EOHHS’ Office of Medicaid, through joint planning and sharing of information, will collaborate to promote access to competitive integrated employment and will work to increase the number of successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities needing, and eligible to receive, long-term supports in order to find and keep a job.

MRC provides the following services to individuals who apply for and are determined eligible for VR services, based on individual needs:

1. vocational assessment
2. vocational counseling and guidance
3. funds for training/education, job placement
4. follow-up supports after training.

EOHHS through its Office of Medicaid administers, and MRC serves as the Operating Agency for, certain HCBS Waivers through which individuals with disabilities may receive long term services and supports in the community. The availability of such supports works to enable individuals with disabilities to achieve independence and economic self-sufficiency in the community. Many individuals receiving VR services from MRC are also enrolled in Mass Health (the state Medicaid program) and through Mass Health are supported in their efforts to live and work as independently as possible in the community.

Through participation in one of MassHealth’s HCBS waivers and/or utilization of MassHealth State Plan services, disabled MassHealth members may receive services that support their efforts to obtain competitive integrated employment. These services may include, as appropriate:

1. Community Living Supports: A range of MassHealth state plan and HCBS waiver services that enable an individual to live in the community as an alternative to institutional care and which may include such services as home health aide, homemaker services, individualized home supports, independent living supports, home/environmental accessibility modifications, and personal care.
2. Pre-vocational Services: A range of learning and experiential type activities that prepare an individual for paid or unpaid employment in an integrated, community setting. Services may include teaching such concepts as attendance, task completion, problem solving and safety as well as social skills training, improving attention span and developing or improving motor skills.

Additionally, the following services may be available to eligible individuals receiving VR services from MRC or who are enrolled in a MassHealth HCBS waiver, subject to the rules and regulations governing each program:

1. Vehicle Modification
2. Transportation
3. Home/environmental accessibility modification
4. Supported Employment Services

Designated MRC and EOHHS Office of Medicaid staff will communicate on an ongoing basis to share information about legislative and regulatory changes and to review agency policy initiatives, resources, and other issues related to long term supports for mutual consumers under a MassHealth HCBS waiver program.

#### 2. The State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

MRC and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) work collaboratively to assist individuals with developmental disabilities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MRC and DDS have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to work collaboratively through joint planning and sharing of resources to expand access to integrated employment services to increase the number of successful job placements for individuals with intellectual disabilities, especially those of transition age who have a goal of competitive employment. The MOA will be reviewed annually by the leadership of both agencies to identify areas for clarification, improvement, or additions to further promote collaboration and successful employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities eligible for services from both agencies.

MRC and DDS are in the process of finalizing a new updated MOA which will be signed by the Commissioner’s of both agencies and implemented later in 2022.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Department of Developmental Services through joint planning, and sharing of resources, are working to expand access to integrated employment services and increase the number of successful job placements for individuals with intellectual disabilities, in particular those individuals of transition age, who have a goal of competitive employment and are eligible for services from both agencies.

MRC and DDS are working to achieve the following outcomes through collaboration:

1. Increase the number of transition age individuals with intellectual disabilities who obtain and maintain competitive employment.
2. Improved collaboration, coordination and utilization of joint agency resources in ensuring quality service delivery and long term supports that result in competitive employment outcomes for our mutual consumers. This will include funding from MRC for the up­ front employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services to help individuals successfully maintain competitive job placements.
3. Adherence to the DDS Home and Community Based Waiver Program requirements for the delivery of supported employment services.
4. Improved outreach, communication and coordination with local schools, individuals with developmental disabilities, families, employers and other stake holders in serving our mutual consumers.
5. Enhanced communication between DDS and MRC.

Criteria for mutual MRC/DDS consumers:

1. Individuals who have been determined eligible for MRC Vocational Rehabilitation services by an MRC counselor who are also receiving services from the Department of Developmental Services.
2. Individuals who have a goal of employment in an individual, competitive, integrated job working full-time or part-time. (Individuals would be hired by the business/employer, earning at least minimum wage and eligible for the benefits other employees in similar positions receive.)
3. Individuals who can benefit from the employment services provided by MRC to reach their employment goal. This includes individuals who may need long-term, ongoing, job supports from DDS to enable them to successfully maintain employment.

MRC and DDS are targeting individuals aged 18 to 22 who are moving from school to adult life, and individuals up to age 24. With a particular focus on assisting students/young adults who have had work experience while in school, MRC and DDS assists them in directly entering a job upon completion of school and/or to maintain a job obtained during their last year of school. With adults who are over the age of 24, who are eligible for services from both DDS and MRC and have a goal of working in competitive employment, the agencies provide similar services.

Referral Process from DDS to MRC:

1. For students, the DDS Area Office/Transition Coordinator will make a referral to the local MRC office at least one year before the student is scheduled to leave school.
2. MRC counselors may also identify individuals who have been referred to their agency for services to determine if they are also DDS eligible, and will contact the local DDS Area Office to confirm eligibility.

Services Provided:

1. Both the DDS Transition/Service Coordinator and MRC Counselor will be participating members of relevant individual planning team processes, (including IEP—Individual Education Plan; ITP—Individual Transition Plan; IPE— Individual Plan for Employment; ISP— Individual Support Plan).
2. Individuals may be eligible for the full array of services available through MRC based on MRC policy and their needs.
3. Based on an individual’s needs, it is expected that MRC will fund the upfront employment services which may include assessment, skills training, job placement, and initial job coaching and on-the-job supports.
4. For individuals who will require ongoing job coaching and employment supports to successfully maintain employment, DDS will provide funding for these long-term, ongoing employment services. These services will be provided by DDS after the individuals exit MRC services, which will not occur before the 90-day job retention period.

Communication and Coordination of Services between Agencies:

1. There will be regular communication between MRC and DDS local area staff to facilitate collaboration, joint planning for service delivery, cross-agency information sharing and training to ensure all parties have current information about agency policies and practices including those related to referrals, eligibility requirements, and other pertinent information.
2. Area Directors and/or other lead designated staff will identify a process for identifying referrals and for regular communication to monitor services and other collaborative initiatives.
3. MRC and DDS have worked to clarify the expected responsibilities and roles of staff in each agency to support local service planning and service delivery. This will be determined by DDS and MRC managers at the local level. It is expected that both the MRC counselor and DDS Service Coordinator will work closely together with individuals when joint services are being provided, communicating regularly, participating in planning meetings, etc., to ensure an integrated and responsive approach when working with individuals and their families/guardians. This will promote a strong partnership to assist in addressing problems or concerns that might arise both on-the-job and outside of work that may have an impact on performance, as well as facilitate planning for ongoing employment support.
4. MRC counselors and DDS staff will abide by agency practices regarding regular communication, participation in planning meetings and collaboration in ensuring an integrated and responsive approach to working with consumers, their families/guardians and other community resources.

Reporting/Data Collection:

A system for tracking the services provided to individuals jointly eligible for MRC and DDS services has been developed and implemented in order to assess the referrals, outcomes, impact and effectiveness of services provided to individuals who receive services as part of the MOA. Each MRC and DDS Area Office will be required to provide documentation on a regular basis.

#### 3. The State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) both recognize that employment is essential to the independence, dignity, and recovery of persons with serious mental illness and continue to work collaboratively to increase employment opportunities and positive employment outcomes for the individuals they mutually serve. Through enhanced interagency communications throughout their organizational structure, engaging in joint service planning at the individual and program levels, and formalizing a plan for ongoing collaboration, MRC and DMH are working collaboratively to coordinate and improve services to shared consumers to assist them in their efforts to obtain employment and live independently in the community.

MRC and DMH have developed a Memorandum of Understanding to guide efforts to work collaboratively to identify the individuals that they mutually serve through implementing an ongoing data collection system, to foster joint service planning and interagency training to increase employment opportunities and positive employment outcomes for individuals with severe mental illness. The MOU will be revised as needed.  In addition, MRC coordinates employment services for individuals with mental health needs served by the Department of Mental Health’s Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program in collaboration with DMH and its vendors.  MRC entered an Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) and a Business Associate Agreement (BAA) with DMH to provide funding for MRC ACCS services.

The MRC/DMH Employment Initiative is designed to build an integrated employment framework that inspires and engages innovation to ensure full employment for people with mental health needs at the same rate of employment as the general population.  The focus of this initiative is on individuals served by DMH through Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS).  These individuals are being referred to MRC for Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services. To serve these individuals, MRC is using an Integrated Resource Team approach, where partner agencies and supports come together to craft and jointly own a job seeker’s employment goal, to coordinate wrap-around services and ongoing collaboration and communication. MRC has hired dedicated staff with funding through the ISA to work with ACCS referrals.  These counselors will have smaller caseloads and will work with CIES providers, DMH providers, DMH, and other MRC staff to rapidly engage with consumers, develop a plan for employment, and coordinate services designed to assist these consumers in achieving successful employment outcomes.

To date, MRC has seen much success with this program, including decreased timeframe to complete eligibility and IPEs, improved rates for successful employment outcomes, and reduction in unsuccessful closures, both prior to eligibility and after service delivery. MRC will continue to closely evaluate program performance going forward.

The MOU and ISA outline collaboration between MRC and DMH as follows:

1. Through the MOU and through the ACCS initiative, MRC and DMH have developed a system for ongoing collaboration and communication at the local and state level.
2. MRC and DMH continue to work on ways to enhance systems to regularly identify the individuals they mutually serve, in general and for the ACCS initiative.
3. MRC and DMH continue to implement processes that will facilitate DMH and MRC timely referring to each other individuals who could benefit from receiving both MRC and DMH services, including consumers to be referred to MRC for MRC ACCS services.
4. MRC and DMH continue to develop and implement a process for conducting joint-service planning for individuals mutually served by both agencies to enhance the individuals’ employment opportunities.  For consumers participating in the ACCS initiative, the Integrated Resource Team approach is used to develop and coordinate services, including wrap around services.
5. To promote referrals, consultations regarding referrals and joint-service planning when appropriate, MRC and DMH will continue to ensure that all staff at both agencies and service provider staff are informed and trained on the services the respective agencies provide.
6. MRC and DMH have implemented an ongoing data sharing agreement to track employment service delivery and the outcomes associated with mutually served individuals and to help the Agencies assess the effectiveness of their collaboration.  Additionally, the ISA for the ACCS initiative outlines key performance indicators and data collection areas for track services and outcomes for the new MRC-DMH Employment Initiative.  These indicators are used to track outcomes and improve services and are reported out on a monthly basis and broken down to the MRC Office and DMH site level.
7. Continue to explore, develop, and implement further joint initiatives beneficial to the individuals mutually served by the Agencies, including but not limited to the pursuit of new resources.
8. Consumer Input. MRC and DMH acknowledge the importance of consumer input and will incorporate such input in the evaluation of their collaborative efforts.

Local Liaisons/Training/Joint Service Planning:

1. Each DMH Site Office, DMH facility, and MRC Area Office will designate a liaison(s) to serve as a central point of contact and resource for the other Agency.

The liaison will:

1. Provide their counterparts with information about and answer questions regarding their Agency’s eligibility or referral process and the services they provide.
2. Provide guidance to and/or confer with their counterparts, or designees, about the appropriateness of referring a specific individual served by one of the Agencies to the other for additional services; and when appropriate, helping to facilitate the filing and processing of the required application or referral forms.

Referrals between agencies:

MRC and DMH have agreed:

Referrals to MRC from DMH shall be made in good faith with the reasonable expectation that the person referred is interested in competitive, integrated employment, has the potential to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services, including supported employment services, in order to achieve competitive employment.

Referrals to DMH from MRC shall be made in good faith with the reasonable expectation that the person referred is interested in, and in need of the services DMH offers, and is likely to meet criteria for DMH services.

MRC and DMH have agreed to mutually facilitate the coordination of employment related services provided by DMH, MRC or contracted providers to individuals mutually served by the Agencies; assist in resolving issues that may arise regarding an application for services, a referral for services and/or the coordination of care; notify or ensure notification to their counterpart/and/or the referral source as to the outcome of an application or referral filed on behalf of an individual being served by the other agency; and ensure that the agencies MOU contact persons have updated contact information for them.

Training, As part of the partnership, MRC and DMH continue to conduct ongoing training on best practices, collaborative efforts, and ACCS employment initiative

Joint Service Planning:

At the State Level: DMH and MRC operate a workgroup staffed by both agencies and contracted providers, as applicable, to establish protocols for the Agencies that will ensure that the care of mutually served individuals in need of enhanced support to obtain or retain competitive employment will be coordinated to the extent practical and feasible.  MRC and DMH also work closely together on the state level on the MRC-DMH ACCS Employment Initiative. At the Regional Level, each DMH Area Director and MRC District Director or their designee, meet with their counterparts regularly to discuss the new MRC-DMH Employment Initiative, any communication or collaboration issues, and to address opportunities for additional collaborations.

At the Local Level: DMH Site Directors and MRC Area Directors, Supervisors, and MRC ACCS counselors ensure that regular and as needed communications occur between MRC and DMH to facilitate collaboration on the MRC-DMH Employment Initiative and other efforts, joint planning for service delivery, and cross agency information sharing.

### i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

#### 1. System on Personnel and Personnel Development

##### A. Qualified Personnel Needs

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

###### i. The number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

The MRC tracks and maintains staffing information by classification, vacancy rate and information to determine its staffing level based on the distribution of new referrals and active clients. This information is updated regularly.

The Commission currently employs 322 individuals in the VR Program. Of this number, 209 are VR counselors and first line supervisors, 25 are managers and 88 are program, technical, or administrative staff. All numbers represent full and part-time staff, not FTE. 31.9% of MRC staff are from minority backgrounds, 74% are women, 12.5% are persons with disabilities, and 3% are Veterans.

Most counselors carry “general caseloads” consisting of consumers representing all disability populations; a smaller number of counselors carry “specialty” caseloads consisting primarily of consumers with the same/similar disabilities (i.e., psychiatric disabilities), including dedicated counselors for the deaf and hard of hearing and for particular language groups. MRC actively served 21,357 consumers in SFY2021/PY2020.  The average caseload size per VR counselor was 88 as of the end of SFY2021/PY2020

###### ii. The number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

MRC monitors the number of active consumers and its available resources on an ongoing basis and sets its staffing pattern based on these factors. The MRC will act as needed to ensure sufficient staff to serve the caseload based on the projected number of consumers with active individualized employment plans (IPEs) based on available resources and review from the leadership team.

MRC projects it will need to maintain a staffing level of 380 individuals (379.5 FTEs) in the VR Program. Of this number, 252 (251.5 FTEs) are VR counselor, first line supervisors and placement unit staff, 30 (30 FTEs) are managers and 95 (95 FTEs) are program, technical, or administrative staff, and 3 benefits specialists funded through VR.

###### iii. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Over the next 5 years, MRC will continue to monitor the number of active consumers and its available resources and will set its staffing pattern based on these factors. The MRC will act as needed to ensure sufficient staff to serve the caseload based on the projected number of consumers with active individualized employment plans (IPEs) based on available resources and review from the leadership team.

MRC continues to experience turnover as a result of retirements of counselors, supervisors, and managers.  It appears this trend will begin to decrease as we move into the mid-2020s. MRC is expecting approximately 40-50 counselors, supervisors, and administrative staff in the VR program to retire or leave the agency over the next five years. MRC has developed strategies to backfill critical positions across the VR program and is working on strategies to develop a more mobile workforce with new technology to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our staff and the employment experience of consumers.

MRC projects it will need to maintain a staffing level of 380 individuals (379.5 FTEs) in the VR Program. Of this number, 252 (251.5 FTEs) are VR counselor, first line supervisors and placement unit staff, 30 (30 FTEs) are managers and 95 (95 FTEs) are program, technical, or administrative

##### B. Personnel Development

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

###### i. A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

Universities in Massachusetts that have Rehabilitation Counseling programs at the bachelor and masters’ level are: University of Massachusetts at Boston, Springfield College and Assumption College. Salve Regina is in Rhode Island. Through these institutions, MRC has access to a pipeline of qualified individuals to meet the agency’s recruitment needs.

###### ii. The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

In a given academic year, upwards of 100 undergraduate students and 125 graduate students are enrolled in degree programs either full-time or part-time as rehabilitation “majors” at the colleges and universities referenced.

A breakdown of the students per institution enrolled and majoring rehabilitation counseling programs is as follows:

Undergraduate:

Assumption College: 40

University of Massachusetts - Boston: 30

Springfield College:  25

Salve Regina University:  5

Graduate:

Assumption College: 50

University of Massachusetts - Boston: 35

Springfield College:  30

Salve Regina University:  10

###### iii. The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Each year, upwards of 50 undergraduate students are awarded the Bachelor’s degree and upwards of 60 graduate-level students graduate with credentials to qualify for certification by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification and/or licensure by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts broken down by institution as follows:

Assumption College:   20 undergraduate students, 25 graduate students

University of Massachusetts - Boston: 15 undergraduate students, 18 graduate students

Springfield College: 10 undergraduate students, 12 graduate students

Salve Regina University: 5 undergraduate students, 5 graduate students

#### 2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

MRC operates with a learning and participatory performance culture with an emphasis on high performance teams, individual performance/contribution/impact, and engaging in activities to promote and support a program/division/agency. In addition, MRC is an agency committed to diversity, equity, inclusion and racial equity, as well as innovation and transformation and change, and creating a culture of agility, excellence, and belonging. These principles are built into MRC’s plan for recruitment and retention of staff. MRC continues to develop new initiatives such as a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Council to focus on efforts related to equity and inclusion, including staff recruitment.

The MRC’s plan for recruitment includes meeting with representatives from the Commission’s Learning and Development Team. MRC communicates with officials of the CORE accredited rehabilitation departments and officials responsible for minority outreach at Assumption College, Springfield College, Salve Regina, and the University of Massachusetts at Boston regarding pertinent information on the preparation of rehabilitation professionals and for the specific purpose of recruiting graduates for employment in the federal/state VR Program. Special emphasis will be given to students with disabilities and students from minority backgrounds. Additionally, MRC staff also are available to address rehabilitation students providing them with an overview of the agency and the public rehabilitation program. Internal job postings are automatically sent to these institutions informing them of job openings and procedures to apply. A number of rehabilitation students have completed their field placement and practicum experience within MRC affording them a realistic view of work at MRC.

MRC also maintains relationships with nearly 40 minority referral sources and routinely forwards all job postings to them thereby encouraging application for employment at all job levels from persons from minority backgrounds. MRC has developed a program to reach out to educational organizations to recruit professionals reflective of our communities with a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA). Position openings can be advertised in newspapers (i.e. Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Worcester Telegram and Gazette) and posted internally and externally on the Internet in a variety of locations (MASSCareers, Indeed, Monster, SimplyHired, and LinkedIn).

#### 3. Personnel Standards

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

##### A. Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is utilizing a state approved certified Human Resource Division classification standard, to recruit and employ qualified counseling staff as required by WIOA. There are three levels of classifications in the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (QVRC) series. Incumbents of classifications in this series administer functional, skills analysis and other vocational assessment tests; review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews and observations; develop, implement and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs); and provide job placement assistance and job development skills.

The basic purpose of this work is to evaluate individuals with physical, emotional, or other impairments or multi-impairments to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act. QVRC- I is an entry-level position. QVRC- II is the fully competent level classification in the series and QVRC III is a supervisory level position. The following is the state certified Human Resource Division classification standard to recruit and employ qualified counseling staff as required by WIOA.  MRC also has slightly different postings for QVRC IIs for Job Placement Specialists and for Mental Health Specialty QVRC for the MRC-DMH Employment Initiative.  MRC also has 3 levels of Employment Service Specialist (ESS) positions, Employment Service Specialist I who assists with outreach to employers to identify job opportunities for MRC consumers,, ESS-II which focuses on job placement services to be provided to MRC consumers. and ESS-III which are supervisory level positions for MRC’s Job Placement unit

1. QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR I:

Distinguishing Characteristics: This is the entry-level classification in this series. Employees in this series evaluate individuals including transition age students with physical, emotional, or other impairments or multi-impairments to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014; administer residual functional capacities assessments, interest tests, aptitude tests, transferable skills analysis and other vocational assessment tests; review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews, and observations; develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment through onsite visits and conferences in a manner that allows the eligible consumer the opportunity to exercise Informed Choice in employment outcomes; recommend the purchase of equipment and materials including Assistive Technology for program and/or service use; provide service and skills training in individual and group settings; provide job placement assistance and job development; and confer with public and private organizations including other professionals, specialists, agency staff, employers, and others to promote and market agency programs and to review the suitability of client services, and related work as required.

MRC is a learning and participatory performance culture with an emphasis on high performance teams, individual performance/contribution/impact, and engaging in activities to promote and support a program/division/agency (e.g., committee membership, Roadmap workgroup membership, presenting at Town Halls, achieving learning and performance goals). In addition, MRC is an agency committed to diversity, equity, inclusion and racial equity, as well as innovation, transformation and change, and creating a culture of agility, excellence, and belonging.

Supervision Received: Employees of positions at this level receive direct supervision from a Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor III or other employees of a higher grade, who provides training and guidance on procedures and policy, assigns work and reviews performance through conferences and reports for effectiveness and conformance with agency policy.

Incumbents may receive general direction from other work units to ensure accuracy and compliance with funding requirements.

Supervision Exercised: Incumbents may provide functional guidance to new employees. Functions Performed: At this level, Incumbents are expected to perform one or more of the following:

1. Employees meet with consumers who have physical, emotional, psychiatric or other disability, on a regular basis to conduct intake interviews and vocational counseling & guidance sessions, work collaboratively developing the IPE, and provide assistance with securing competitive employment.
2. Employees determine eligibility within agency time standard for vocational rehabilitation services through the review and analysis of records, tests, observation, and interviews to determine occupational interests and abilities and the extent of disability and eligibility for agency services and programs to make recommendations to meet consumer needs. Complete standardized functional assessment to determine need and priority of service category.
3. Explain & answer inquiries of consumers & their families and other interested parties relating to agency rules and regulations, policies and procedures, objectives and services.
4. Employees develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Plan for Employment with the consumer within the agency time standard to result in an employment outcome. The employee may recommend purchase of equipment and materials; provide service and skills training; provide job placement assistance and job development; and follow up services. Employees may serve as transition liaisons for potentially eligible and VR eligible transition students.
5. Represent the agency in dealing with community groups, public and private organizations, vendors, and other public agencies.
6. Employees provide outreach to high schools to provide pre-employment transition services; training and education for teachers. Employees typically deal with individuals who are in transition or have disabling physical, medical or emotional disorders and may be exposed to physical or verbal threats and communicable diseases. Provide advocacy and referral to other agencies as needed, ensuring comparable benefits are explored.
7. Employees develop & maintain liaisons with public and private organizations, including employers, service providers, career centers, and community groups to exchange information, resolve problems, promote agency services, and to evaluate the suitability of educational programs, employment and other consumer placement resources.
8. Employees perform related duties such as scheduling, attending meetings & conferences, maintaining records, preparing reports/case notes in a professional manner to be read by consumer, family member, supervisory staff or an advocate.
9. Employees adhere to MRC rules and regulations regarding requests to attend training, vacation leave, personal leave and sick leave requests.
10. Familiarity with and ability to create/develop resumes and cover letters.
11. Employees operate personal computers and other relevant technological devices.

Key Accountabilities: Incumbents at this level have the decision-making authority to:

Knowledge, Education and Experience:

Applicants must have a (A) Master’s degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor or (B) the substitution listed below.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver’s license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Master’s degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

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Incumbents are required to have the following at the time of hire:

1. Rehabilitation Counseling Knowledge: Knowledge of the principles & practices of assisting people in coping with physical and/or mental disabilities to meet their vocational, social, and independent living needs, including evaluation, monitoring, testing & training. Knowledge of the methods & techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills and occupational preferences.
2. End User Applications: The use of Microsoft Office computer applications and ability to adapt to MRC’s client case management system.
3. Active Listening Skills: Listening to what other people are saying and asking questions as appropriate.
4. Verbal & Written Comprehension: Understanding information and ideas, reading and understanding information and ideas presented in writing.
5. Verbal & Written Expression: Communicating information and ideas in writing so that others will understand.
6. Complex Skills and Processes: Evaluating information against a set of standards and verifying that it is correct.
7. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving : Using logic and analysis to identify strengths & weaknesses of different approaches.
8. Interacting with Others, maintaining relationships, working with others: Developing constructive and cooperative working relationships with others; ability to deal tactfully with others; actively looking for ways to help people; being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react the way they do; dealing directly with the public, including receiving clients or others doing business with the agency.
9. Work Style: Being open to change (positive or negative) and to considerable variety in the workplace; being careful about detail and thorough in completing work tasks; being sensitive to others' needs and feelings, and being understanding and helpful on the job; being pleasant with others on the job and displaying a good-natured, cooperative attitude;
10. Work Style: Being reliable, responsible, and dependable, and fulfilling obligations; being honest, avoiding unethical behavior, and maintaining confidentiality; persistence in the face of obstacles on the job; maintaining composure in very difficult situations; and dealing calmly and effectively with high stress situations.
11. Ability to work well with diverse populations in diverse settings in a manner that builds trust and supports increased collaboration.
12. Knowledge of the methods & techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills and occupational preferences.
13. Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information.

2. QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR II:

This is the mid-level position of this job series, known as the Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Employees in this series evaluate individuals, including transition age students, with physical, emotional, or other impairments or multi-impairments to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 ; administer residual functional capacities assessments, interest tests, aptitude tests, transferable skills analysis and other vocational assessment tests; review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews, and observations; develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment through onsite visits and conferences in a manner that allows the eligible consumer the opportunity to exercise Informed Choice in employment outcomes; recommend the purchase of equipment and materials including Assistive Technology for program and/or service use; provide service and skills training in individual and group settings; provide job placement assistance and job development; and confer with public and private organizations including other professionals, specialists, agency staff, employers, and others to promote and market agency programs and to review the suitability of client services, and related work as required. Employees will have sign off authority for their caseload once there is a record of satisfactory compliance and will be assigned complex cases. Employees may be assigned special duties by the area director or supervisor.

MRC is a learning and participatory performance culture with an emphasis on high performance teams, individual performance/contribution/impact, and engaging in activities to promote and support a program/division/agency (e.g., committee membership, Roadmap workgroup membership, presenting at Town Halls, achieving learning and performance goals). In addition, MRC is an agency committed to diversity, equity, inclusion and racial equity, as well as innovation and transformation and change, and creating a culture of agility, excellence, and belonging.

Distinguishing Characteristics: This is the fully competent professional level classification in this series. Incumbents have thorough knowledge of policies, practices, and techniques and have mastered the technical job content, perform work of greater complexity, exercise greater independence in making decisions and receive less supervision and review. At this level incumbents have sign off authority for individual caseloads and handle complex cases or transferred cases requiring exceptional mastery.

Supervision Received: Employees of positions at this level receive direct supervision from a Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor III or other employees of a higher grade who provide training and guidance on procedures and policy assigns work and reviews performance through conferences and reports for effectiveness and conformance with agency policy.

Supervision Exercised: Incumbents may provide functional direction to Qualified Vocational Counselor Level I or other employees of a lower grade through advice, guidance and assistance with tasks and participate in the training and mentoring of new employees and interns.

 Essential Functions Performed:

* Employees meet with consumers who are physically, emotionally, mentally or otherwise disabled, on a regular basis to conduct intake interviews and vocational counseling & guidance sessions, work collaboratively developing the IPE, and provide assistance with securing competitive employment.
* Employees determine and approve consumer eligibility within agency time standard for vocational rehabilitation services through the review and analysis of records, tests, observation, and interviews to determine occupational interests and abilities and the extent of disability and eligibility for agency services and programs to make recommendations to meet consumer needs. Complete standardized functional assessment to determine need and priority of service category.
* Explain & answer inquiries of consumers & their families and other interested parties relating to agency rules and regulations, policies and procedures, objectives and services.
* Employees develop, implement, authorize, and monitor Individualized Plan for Employment with the consumer within the agency time standard to result in an employment outcome. The employee may recommend purchase of equipment and materials; provide service and skills training; may authorize closure documents, and financial documents that result in the commitment of state and federal funds and authorize changes in the type and level of services offered to consumers; provide job placement assistance and job development; and follow up services. Employees may serve as transition liaisons for potentially eligible and VR eligible transition students.
* Represent the agency in dealing with community groups, public and private organizations, vendors, and other public agencies.
* Employees provide outreach to high schools to provide pre-employment transition services, training and education for teachers; Employees typically deal with individuals who are in transition or have disabling physical, medical or emotional disorders and may be exposed to physical or verbal threats and communicable diseases. Provide advocacy and referral to other agencies as needed, ensuring comparable benefits are explored.
* Employees develop & maintain liaisons with public and private organizations, including employers, service providers, career centers, and community groups to exchange information, resolve problems, promote agency services, and to evaluate the suitability of educational programs, employment and other consumer placement resources.
* Employees perform related duties such as scheduling, attending meetings & conferences, maintaining records, preparing reports/case notes in a professional manner to be read by consumer, family member, supervisory staff or an advocate.
* Employees adhere to MRC rules and regulations regarding requests to attend training, vacation leave, personal leave and sick leave request. Expectation is that employees will have the ability and tools to perform their role in a manner that supports mobility to meet the consumer, provider, employer and other partners.
* Familiarity with and ability to create/develop resumes and cover letters.
* Employees operate personal computers, and other relevant technological devices including peripherals such as printers, and scanners; standard office equipment such as copiers, telephones, and fax machines; and other keyboard equipment such as calculators.
* Employees may lead and organize office quality improvement projects as assigned by the Area Director.
* Employees may provide supervision for QVRC I staff during the short term absence of the Unit Supervisor.
* Employees may provide at least one in-office training per year and serve as the office resource person in an area of exceptional mastery. (examples: Case management system, mobility impairment, substance abuse, mental health, ex-offender)
* Employees may mentor new counselors and/or those engaged in specialized and advanced degree requirements.
* Employees may supervise and mentor college/graduate level interns
* Employees may be the office coordinator for medical, psychiatric, or labor market consultation. (Coordinate office meetings, assist with case presentations, coordinate trainings, and make recommendations for services or next action.)
* Employees will be assigned complex cases or transfer cases requiring exceptional mastery.
* Employees may take responsibility for development and/or planning of at least one statewide or regional training program in an area that builds knowledge and/or skill level and addresses relevant vocational rehabilitation issues.
* Employees will have sign off authority for individual caseload once there is a record of satisfactory compliance.

:Knowledge, Education, and Experience:

Applicants must have at least (A) Master’s degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) two (2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver’s license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Master’s degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

Incumbents are required to have the following at the time of hire:

1. Rehabilitation Counseling Knowledge: Knowledge of the principles & practices of assisting people in coping with physical and/or mental disabilities to meet their vocational, social, and independent living needs, including evaluation, monitoring, testing & training. Knowledge of the methods & techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills and occupational preferences
2. End User Applications: The use of computer applications such as Microsoft office suite,, e-mail, the internet, and MRCIS.
3. Active Listening Skills: Listening to what other people are saying and asking questions as appropriate.
4. Verbal and Written Comprehension: Understanding information and ideas, reading and understanding information and ideas presented in writing.
5. Verbal & Written Expression: Communicating information and ideas in writing so that others will understand.
6. Complex Skills and Processes: Evaluating information against a set of standards and verifying that it is correct.
7. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: Using logic and analysis to identify strengths & weaknesses of different approaches.
8. Interacting with Others, maintaining relationships, working with others: Developing constructive and cooperative working relationships with others; ability to deal tactfully with others; actively looking for ways to help people; being aware of others’ reactions and understanding why they react the way they do; dealing directly with the public, including receiving clients or other doing business with the agency.
9. Work Style: Being open to change (positive or negative) and to considerable variety in the workplace; being careful about detail and thorough in completing work tasks; being sensitive to others' needs and feelings, and being understanding and helpful on the job; being pleasant with others on the job and displaying a good-natured, cooperative attitude;
10. Work Style: Being reliable, responsible, and dependable, and fulfilling obligations; being honest, avoiding unethical behavior, and maintaining confidentiality; persistence in the face of obstacles on the job; maintaining composure, in very difficult situations; and dealing calmly and effectively with high stress situations. Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information
11. Ability to work well with diverse populations in diverse settings in a manner that builds trust and supports increased collaboration.
12. Knowledge of the methods & techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills and occupational preference.
13. Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information.
14. Deductive & inductive Reasoning Ability: To apply general rules to specific problems to come up with logical answers. It involves deciding if an answer makes sense. To combine separate pieces of information, or specific answers to problems to form general rules or conclusions. It includes coming up with logical explanation for why a series of seemingly unrelated events occurs together.
15. Complex Skills & Processes: Apply knowledge of agency policies, procedures, and practices; observe, receive & obtain information from all relevant sources; evaluate the likely success of an idea in relation to the demands of the situation; developing plans to accomplish work, and prioritize, and organize one’s own work.
16. Idea Evaluation. Evaluating the likely success of an idea in relation to the demands of the situation.
17. Resolving Conflict & Negotiating with Others. Handling complaints, arbitrating disputes, resolving grievances, or otherwise negotiating with others.
18. Ability to use technology required for the job, including technology critical for remote work (e.g., Zoom, Outlook calendar, Teams, etc.).

3. QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR II (MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALITY)

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) are seeking to improve competitive employment outcomes for individuals who are shared consumers of DMH and MRC through the development of a robust vocational rehabilitation network of services, supports, counseling and guidance. The purpose of this program is for MRC to provide appropriate, individualized, vocational rehabilitation services and supports for DMH consumers enrolled in DMH’s Adult Clinical Community Service (ACCS), with the ultimate goal of competitive, integrated employment.

MRC Mental Health Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) will work with job seekers to explore their interests, assess their needs, and determine the best pathway to ensure successful integrated competitive employment.

MRC will provide an array of comprehensive and coordinated employment supports, including procuring services from the provider community to assist job seekers with achieving their employment goals as part of an overall career pathway.

Employees in this position will lead and facilitate an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to meet the needs of an individual job seeker. The IRT model utilizes a combined team approach, maximizing wrap around services to support the job seeker with ongoing partnerships and communication. The work of VRCs is community-based. VRCs will meet with job seekers in a variety of settings that could include, but are not limited to, community programs, DMH offices, MRC offices, and other community settings.

Duties and Responsibilities (these duties are a general summary and not all inclusive):

- Fosters an “informed choice” model of professional vocational counseling for individuals with persistent mental health/behavioral health conditions and/or co-occurring disorders who are receiving services from DMH.

- Incorporates ongoing engagement strategies within the VR system while providing on-going supports to facilitate completion of activities outlined in the Individualized Plan for Employment.

- Determines eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.

- Administers functional capacity assessments, interest tests, aptitude tests, transferable skills analysis and other vocational assessments and shares information with job seeker and others as authorized by the job seeker.

- Reviews and analyzes diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews, and observations.

- Leads and facilities the collaborated team to develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment in a manner that allows eligible job seekers the opportunity to exercise informed choice in employment outcomes.

- Recommends the purchase of services, equipment, and materials including Assistive Technology.

- Facilitates services and skills training in individual and group settings.

- Provides opportunities for job seekers to select service providers or MRC placement team to deliver job development, placement, and retention assistance.

- Partners with public and private organizations including, but not limited to, other agency staff, employers, community rehabilitation providers, state agencies, workforce partners, and schools to promote and market agency programs, collaborate, and coordinate in the delivery of consumer supports and services.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Knowledge of counseling and job placement of persons with vocational/occupational barriers, including physical, emotional, psychological and intellectual disabilities;

- Familiarity with utilizing psychological tests and other evaluative techniques;

- Commitment to lifelong learning in relationship to their own professional development;

- Outstanding organizational, written and oral communications skills; attention to detail;

- Capacity to gather, analyze, and evaluate significant case information pertinent to rehabilitation of an individual;

- Ability to serve as a mentor and provide guidance to others;

- Proficient usage of Microsoft Office products including Word, Excel and Outlook; prior use of client database systems.

MINIMUM ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS:

Applicants must have at least (A) Master’s degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation

Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the

Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) two

(2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff. Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver’s license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Master’s degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies,

Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education,

Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse

Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

4. JOB PLACEMENT SPECIALIST:

The Job Placement Specialist (JPS) will consult with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to assess and evaluate the job readiness of consumers, analyze skills and abilities for correct employment matches. Make recommendations to proceed with job referral process. Identify accommodations and training needed that may be required within the workplace.

Interpret residual functional capacities assessments, interest tests and aptitude tests. Assess transferable skills, review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews and observations. Develop, implement and monitor placement services included in Individualized Plans for Employment through onsite visits and conferences in a manner that allows the eligible consumer the opportunity to exercise Informed Choice in employment outcomes. Educate employers regarding skills, abilities and limitations of consumers. Consult with employers to determine job expectations and market these employment expectations to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. Make specific recommendations to employers for hiring consumers. Confers with agency staff, clients’ families, employers, professional specialist and others to exchange client information and determine appropriateness of employment opportunities and resources for education, training, job placement assistance and employment for clients. Conduct group workshops for clients in interviewing skills, resume writing, introduction and assistance with using the area office’s resource room, etc., to prepare them for job opportunities. Professionally explain and answer inquiries relating to rules, regulations, policies and procedures to inform clients, their families and other interested parties about agency programs, objectives and services.

Monitors and evaluates client progress through individual meetings with client, on-site visits, review of reports, etc., provide vocational counseling to assist client adjustment to new situations and determine whether services, programs or placement are meeting client needs. JPS may assist in maintaining a liaison with the local Career Centers for the purpose of providing consumers with information about employment opportunities, job seeking, and methods of applying for jobs.

Schedule: travel 25% of the time.

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

Applicants must have at least (A) Master’s degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation

Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the

Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) two (2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff. Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver’s license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions

I. A Master’s degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies,

Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education,

Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse

Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer. Females, minorities, veterans, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

5. QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR III:

Distinguishing Characteristics: This is the supervisory classification in this series. Incumbents provide supervision and guidance on complex or specialized casework to Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and II’s within their work unit. At this level, incumbents may perform the duties for Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Levels I and II, but the primary focus is to provide formal and informal supervision and act as the liaison between Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and agency management. Supervise and monitor unit activities such as evaluation and case maintenance to ensure effective service delivery and compliance with agency policy and standards; coordinate administrative and clinical support for agency units and programs.

Supervise Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I & II by assigning and directing the activities of reporting staff and appraising their performance in evaluating individuals with physical, emotional, or other impairments or multi-impairments to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); participate in the hiring and promotional process; notify management when corrective action may be appropriate; and provide support to enhance employee performance. Determine service delivery hours and caseloads to staff consistent with agency policies and consumer needs. Recommends contract and budget control actions by analyzing spending patterns and monthly and quarterly reports in order to maximize funds available for consumer services and to anticipate financial needs and assure appropriate transfer of funds. Review and sign off on case load for Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I’s and QVRC II’s as appropriate; administer residual functional capacities assessments, interest tests, aptitude tests, transferable skills analysis and other vocational assessment tests; review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews, and observations; develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment through onsite visits and conferences in a manner that allows the eligible consumer the opportunity to exercise Informed Choice in employment outcomes; recommend the purchase of equipment and materials including Assistive Technology for program and/or service use; provide service and skills training in individual and group settings; provide job placement assistance and job development; and confer with public and private organizations including other professionals, specialists, agency staff, employers, and others to promote and market agency programs and to review the suitability of client services.

MRC is a learning and participatory performance culture with an emphasis on high performance teams, individual performance/contribution/impact, and engaging in activities to promote and support a program/division/agency (e.g., committee membership, Roadmap workgroup membership, presenting at Town Halls, achieving learning and performance goals). In addition, MRC is an agency committed to diversity, equity, inclusion and racial equity, as well as innovation, transformation and change, and creating a culture of agility, excellence, and belonging.

Supervision Received: Incumbents of positions at this level receive general supervision from an Administrator VI, who provides broad policy guidance, assigns work and reviews performance through conferences and reports for effectiveness and conformance with agency policy.

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Supervision Exercised: Incumbents may exercise direct supervision over, assign work to and review the performance of Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and II or other employees of a lower grade.

Incumbents may provide functional direction to Qualified Vocational Counselor Level I and Level II or other employees of a lower grade through advice, guidance and delegation of tasks and participate in the training and mentoring of new employees.

Incumbents may participate in the interviewing process or may make recommendations for new hires.

Essential functions Performed:

1. Supervise and monitor unit activities such as client evaluation and case maintenance to ensure effective service delivery and compliance with agency policy and standards; coordinate administrative and clinical support for agency units and programs.
2. Plan, develop and implement unit and agency programs; assist in developing and implementing client needs assessment programs; develop and implement policies and procedures for assigned units and programs in accordance with agency regulations and applicable laws; and determine service delivery hours and caseloads to staff consistent with agency policy and client needs.
3. Plan, develop and conduct orientation and training of agency and other staff in vocational and pre-vocational programs and services.
4. Establish and maintain program and unit information systems; prepare and monitor program/unit budget and allocation of funds.
5. Evaluate job performance of subordinates, participate in the hiring and promotional process; notify management when corrective action may be appropriate; and provide support to enhance employee performance. Monitoring and approving time and attendance.
6. Provide vocational rehabilitation counseling services to clients deemed to present particular difficult challenges, such as, persons with multiple disabilities; persons who have been unsuccessful with other rehabilitation counselors; persons who have an extended history with the agency, to insure provision of appropriate services.
7. Coordinate the marketing of Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission services office wide: by developing a marketing plan; coordinating the plan among office staff; monitoring the progress of the plan to insure the community is aware of and understands how to appropriately utilize the agency.
8. Coordinate office wide job development in coordination with the marketing of the agency, by developing an office wide job development program; coordinating counselors' employer contacts for job leads; coordinating the office wide list of job ready clients to match up with job leads; monitor the progress of the plan to ensure that clients are assisted with their job search.
9. May act as liaison regarding specific disabilities or special populations within the district, by attending meetings with counselors from other offices to strategize to reach the specific populations or discussing current information on the target groups and may provide input to the development of policies and procedures with reference to the targeted groups so that the agency is reaching all individuals with disabilities that are in need of the agency’s' services.
10. Coordinate SSI/SSDI referrals by acting as office consultant on all matters related to SSI/SSDI clients receiving benefits from SSA Administration including liaison and consultant to the administration and utilization of the PASS Plan (Plan for Achievement of Self Support).
11. Coordinate the State and Federal Compliance Review Audits by gathering the sample studies; conducting in-house reviews of cases for compliance; providing the Administrative Office Program Evaluation staff with requested materials, information, and evaluations as requested to ensure the agency is complying with Federal, State and Agency's policies, procedures and regulations regarding vocational rehabilitation.

Knowledge, Education, and Experience:

Applicants must have at least (A) Master’s degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) three (3) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, of which one (1) year must have been in a supervisory or leadership capacity or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver’s license at a class level specific to assignment.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff.

Substitutions:

I. A Master’s degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

Qualifications Required at time of hire:

1. Ability to analyze information, and using logic to address work or job issues and problems.
2. Ability to identify things that must be changed to achieve goals.
3. Ability to determine the long–term outcomes of a change in operations.
4. Ability to develop approaches for implementing ideas.
5. Ability to make decisions and solve problems by combining, evaluating, and reasoning with information an data to make decisions and solve problems. Theses processes involve making decisions about the relative importance of information and choosing best solutions.
6. Ability to teach others how to do something.
7. Ability to bring others together and trying to reconcile differences.
8. Ability to coach and develop others by identifying the developmental needs of others and coaching or otherwise helping others to improve their knowledge and skills.
9. Ability to coordinate the members of a work group to accomplish a task.
10. Ability to develop a team by encouraging and building mutual trust, respect, and cooperation among team members.
11. Ability to guide, direct and motivate subordinates.

6. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE SPECIALIST I

The Employment Service Specialist Markets and promotes the services of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) to employers and other interested parties in the office's district; develops and implements promotional programs; gathers and disseminates labor market information; provides technical assistance concerning recruitment of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s Consumers; establishes and maintains working relationships with employers; plans and organizes job fairs and recruitments; establishes and maintains a data bank of information on local employers; assists Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s staff by soliciting employment opportunities for specific consumers with disabilities and performs related duties as required

SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Receives general supervision from a Supervisor that plans, assigns, and oversees work. Supervisor provides guidance and instruction regarding laws and regulations as well as MRC policies, procedures, guidelines, and standards. Supervisor regularly reviews work to ensure compliance. Supervisor conducts qualitative and quantitative analysis of the incumbent’s work performance. These managers may provide input to the MRC ESS supervisor regarding functional job performance.

Essential Functions:

1. Markets and promotes MRC services and programs to area employers and other interested parties by visiting businesses and other locations to explain and describe MRC programs and services. Solicit employer participation and obtain employment opportunity listings (Job Orders) that meet established guidelines and standards with regard to content in order to adequately serve the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s job seeking customers.
2. Devise and implement strategies for the development of sector and employer based training opportunities for persons with disabilities; identifies specific industries and employers to target and market employer based training initiative.
3. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with area employers by making personal visits to determine employer needs, communicate MRC services, and incentives available to employers who train and employ individuals with disabilities.
4. Develop and maintain employer relationships, as well as, act as a problem solving liaison for employers with unfilled employment opportunities by suggesting solutions such as restructuring job requirements, and training programs that result in replicable and sustainable employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.
5. Insures that the MRC staff is aware of the employers needs' and job order specifications to facilitate the prompt and effective servicing of job orders that match the needs of MRC consumers/job seekers.
6. Assists with planning, organizing, and conducting job fairs, special events, and recruitments to provide large scale labor exchange
7. opportunities for both employers and MRC job seekers.
8. Establishes and maintains a data bank of information on local area employers through on-site visits to facilitate the placement of MRC Consumers and the filling of employer needs; records and updates information on appropriate MRC forms and inputs data as necessary via computer to maintain various MRC computerized information systems.
9. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with peers, supervisors, and MRC partners. Actively interfaces with the MRC Job Placement Specialists (JPS) and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) to convey information regarding employer training and employment requirements to ensure appropriate referral, screening, and selection of MRC Consumers for training and employment opportunities.
10. Work closely with employers and identifying position(s) that could readily adapt to an On-The-Job /employer or sector based training model; assist employers with curriculum development and required staffing /community resources, as needed, for skills training and soft skills training.
11. Work closely with MRC Job Placement Specialist and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to identify, assess, screen, and recommend consumers for training; assist MRC Job Placement Specialist and or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in preparing consumers to interview for training and employment opportunities.
12. Work closely with JPS and VRC to identify tutors and job coaches via vendor organizations to assist with training and employment skill and task development.
13. Ensure placement of MRC Consumers into sector based and On-The-Job training opportunities.
14. Assist employers in assessing need for and obtaining adaptive equipment and other resources
15. Proactively deliver follow-up support services to employers and consumers in collaboration with JPS, VRC, and community organizations, as needed, to ensure successful employment outcomes and employer satisfaction.
16. May conduct group presentations in conjunctions with JPS (in and out of the office) to explain programs and services to employers, training vendors, community organizations, job seekers, and the general public and to assist them in using such programs and services.
17. Participates in staff development and cross training opportunities that expand and support functional skills and promote professional growth.

Qualifications:

(A) at least three (3) years of full-time or equivalent part-time professional experience in: business management, business administration, public relations, marketing, personnel interviewing, recruitment or job placement; employment, vocational, educational, psychological, sociological or rehabilitation counseling or guidance; job analysis or position classification work or any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Extensive travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must possess a current and valid motor vehicle driver’s license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Bachelor’s degree or higher in marketing, business management, business administration, public relations or public administration may be substituted for two (2) years of the required experience.

LICENSE AND/OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. A valid motor vehicle operators’ license.
2. Qualifications Required at Hire:
3. Knowledge of a wide variety of occupations common to the area labor market.
4. Knowledge of the principles, practices, & techniques of marketing & sales Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
5. Ability to market and promote MRC services and job seekers/consumers.
6. Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written expression.
7. Ability to give written and oral instructions in a precise and understandable manner.
8. Ability to establish rapport and working relationships with individuals from a wide variety of different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
9. Ability to stimulate interest in MRC programs, services, and consumers.
10. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and techniques of human service interviewing.
11. Ability to understand, explain and implement policies and procedures, standards, guidelines, laws and regulations that govern Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission activities.
12. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and practices of conducting workshops.
13. Proven ability to interact in a team environment and to establish and maintain harmonious working relationships with peers, supervisors, other agency representatives, employers and customers.
14. Working knowledge of MS Windows and Word. Proven ability to accurately and concisely record information and maintain the integrity of the computerized data base.

Employment Service Specialist II:

This is the mid-level job placement position of this job classification level. This position markets and promotes the services of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) to employers and other interested parties in the office's district; develops and implements promotional programs; gathers and disseminates labor market information; provides technical assistance concerning recruitment of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s Consumers; establishes and maintains working relationships with employers; plans and organizes job fairs/hiring events and recruitments; establishes and maintains a data bank of information on local employers; assists Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s staff by soliciting employment opportunities for specific consumers with disabilities and performs related duties as required. Provides information and coordinates job-driven training programs in which Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Consumer’s would be readily available to be trained and employed with open positions within various market sectors. Confers with job placement specialists and area directors for development of employment plans specific to demographics of the local area offices. Provides specific job placement services training to counselors and other staff. Provides guidance for less experienced employment services specialists.

MRC is a learning and participatory performance culture with an emphasis on high performance teams, individual performance/contribution/impact, and engaging in activities to promote and support a program/division/agency (e.g., committee membership, Roadmap workgroup membership, presenting at Town Halls, achieving learning and performance goals). In addition, MRC is an agency committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial equity, as well as innovation, transformation, change, and creating a culture of agility, excellence, and belonging

SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Receives general supervision from a Supervisor that plans, assigns, and oversees work. Supervisor provides guidance and instruction regarding laws and regulations as well as MRC policies, procedures, guidelines, and standards. Supervisor regularly reviews work to ensure compliance. Supervisor conducts qualitative and quantitative analysis of the incumbent’s work performance. These managers may provide input to the MRC ESS supervisor regarding functional job performance.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

1. Markets and promotes MRC services and programs to area employers and other interested parties by visiting businesses and other locations to explain and describe MRC programs and services. Solicit employer participation and obtain employment opportunity listings (Job Orders) that meet established guidelines and standards with regard to content in order to adequately serve the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s job seeking customers.
2. Devise and implement strategies for the development of sector and employer-based training opportunities for persons with disabilities; identifies specific industries and employers to target and market employer-based training initiative.
3. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with area employers by making personal visits to determine employer needs, communicate MRC services, and incentives available to employers who train and employ individuals with disabilities.
4. Develop and maintain employer relationships, as well as, act as a problem-solving liaison for employers with unfilled employment opportunities by suggesting solutions such as restructuring job requirements, and training programs that result in replicable and sustainable employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.
5. Insures that the MRC staff is aware of the employers needs' and job order specifications to facilitate the prompt and effective servicing of job orders that match the needs of MRC consumers/job seekers.
6. Assists with planning, organizing, and conducting job fairs, special events, and recruitments to provide large scale labor exchange
7. opportunities for both employers and MRC job seekers.
8. Establishes and maintains a data bank of information on local area employers through on-site visits to facilitate the placement of MRC Consumers and the filling of employer needs; records and updates information on appropriate MRC forms and inputs data as necessary via computer to maintain various MRC computerized information systems.
9. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with peers, supervisors, and MRC partners. Actively interfaces with the MRC Job Placement Specialists (JPS) and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) to convey information regarding employer training and employment requirements to ensure appropriate referral, screening, and selection of MRC Consumers for training and employment opportunities.
10. Identifies employers that are readily available and interested in providing Job-Driven Training Programs for MRC Consumers.
11. Assists with coordinating and ensuring that Job-Driven Training programs provide competitive employment outcomes for MRC Consumers.
12. Work closely with employers and identifying position(s) that could readily adapt to an On-The-Job /employer or sector based training model; assist employers with curriculum development and required staffing /community resources, as needed, for skills training and soft skills training.
13. Work closely with MRC Job Placement Specialist and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to identify, assess, screen, and recommend consumers for training; assist MRC Job Placement Specialist and or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in preparing consumers to interview for training and employment opportunities.
14. Work closely with JPS and VRC to identify tutors and job coaches via vendor organizations to assist with training and employment skill and task development.
15. Ensure placement of MRC Consumers into sector based and On-The-Job training opportunities.
16. Assist employers in assessing need for and obtaining adaptive equipment and other resources
17. Proactively deliver follow-up support services to employers and consumers in collaboration with JPS, VRC, and community organizations, as needed, to ensure successful employment outcomes and employer satisfaction.
18. May conduct group presentations in conjunctions with JPS (in and out of the office) to explain programs and services to employers, training vendors, community organizations, job seekers, and the general public and to assist them in using such programs and services.
19. Participates in staff development and cross training opportunities that expand and support functional skills and promote professional growth.

Required Qualifications:

Applicants must have (A) a Bachelor’s degree in marketing, business management, business administration, public relations, vocational rehabilitation, counseling, psychology, public administration, human resources or related field (B) at least two (2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time professional experience in: business management, business administration, public relations, marketing, personnel interviewing, recruitment or job placement; employment, vocational counseling , psychology, sociology, education or rehabilitation counseling or guidance; job analysis or position classification work, of which (C) at least one (1) year must have been working with individuals with disabilities, or (D) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below. Page 6 of 9 Extensive travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must possess a current and valid motor vehicle driver’s license at a class level specific to assignment. Substitutions: I. A Master’s degree or higher in marketing, business management, business administration, vocational rehabilitation, public relations or public administration, counseling, psychology, human resources or related field may be substituted for one (1) year of the required (B) experience.

Qualifications Required at Hire:

1. Knowledge of a wide variety of occupations common to the area labor market.
2. Knowledge of the principles, practices, & techniques of marketing & sales Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
3. Ability to market and promote MRC services and job seekers/consumers.
4. Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written expression.
5. Ability to give written and oral instructions in a precise and understandable manner.
6. Ability to establish rapport and working relationships with individuals from a wide variety of different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
7. Ability to stimulate interest in MRC programs, services, and consumers.
8. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and techniques of human service interviewing.
9. Ability to understand, explain and implement policies and procedures, standards, guidelines, laws and regulations that govern Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission activities.
10. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and practices of conducting workshops.
11. Proven ability to interact in a team environment and to establish and maintain harmonious working relationships with peers, supervisors, other agency representatives, employers and customers.
12. Working knowledge of MS Windows and Word. Proven ability to accurately and concisely record information and maintain the integrity of the computerized data base.
13. Two years of job placement services experience for individuals with disabilities.

Employment Service Specialist III:

This is the supervisory level position of this classification series. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Job Placement Services Supervisor will function as the MRC District Supervisor for delivery of job placement services for the MRC Area Office within the district, and is responsible for planning, development, and monitoring of the employer outreach and employment plans for multiple area offices. Supervise a staff of 8-10 comprised of job placement services specialist and employment services specialist. The job placement services district director will implement employment plans in collaboration with the district and area directors. Analyze job placement services workflow and assigns employer engagement activities ensuring quality control for the MRC Employer Account System. Facilitate, coordinate, and monitor Job Driven Employer Training Programs for the district. Assists the Statewide Job Placement Services Director with the day to day functions of job placement services. Supervises the job placement services specialist and employment services specialists while· ensuring compliance with agency guidelines and policies. The job placement unit supervisor works closely with both the job placement specialist, employment services specialist, vocational rehabilitation counselor, area office supervisor(s) and area director. Responsible for proper utilization of the MRC Job Placement Services Manual; while ensuring that each of the area office employment plans incorporate job driven training programs to meet the needs of the local and regional labor markets. Ability to work remotely while providing effective supervision of staff; ability to resolve conflicts and provide identifiable solutions to complex work related issues.

Supervision Received:

Receives general supervision from a Supervisor/manager that plans, assigns, and oversees work. Supervisor provides guidance and instruction regarding laws and regulations as well as MRC policies, procedures, guidelines, and standards. Supervisor regularly reviews work to ensure compliance. Supervisor conducts qualitative and quantitative analysis of the incumbent's work performance. These managers may provide input to the MRC ESS supervisor regarding functional job performance.

Essential Functions:

1. Supervises subordinate employees by monitoring of assigned responsibilities and tasks, and to ensure compliance with agency rules, policies, procedures and guidelines.
2. Review, monitor and ensure that the production standard are met for the job placement services specialists and employment services specialists.
3. Responsible for accurate documentation of all job placement activities and production is reflected on MRCIS.
4. Ensure that MRC Consumers are being identified appropriately for job-driven training programs.
5. Ensure that that Job-Driven Training programs provide competitive employment outcomes for MRC Consumers.
6. Work closely with the job placement specialists and employment specialists in identifying employers that are interested in long term partnerships with MRC.
7. Work closely with MRC Job Placement Specialist, Employment Services Specialists and Vocational
8. Rehabilitation Counselor to identify, assess, screen, and recommend consumers for training; assist MRC Job Placement Specialist and or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in preparing consumers to interview for training and employment opportunities.
9. Ensure the MRC Job Placement Services Manual is being utilized and is consistent with best practices in the district
10. Work closely with the MRC Business Improvement Partners to understand the role and scope of services being provided via vendor organizations to assist with training and employment skill and task development.
11. Ensure that district and area office job placement are occurring to the satisfaction of the area directors as provided by the employer outreach employment plan.
12. Ensure placement of MRC Consumers into sector based and On-The-Job training opportunities.
13. Assist employers in assessing need for and obtaining adaptive equipment and other resources
14. Proactively deliver follow-up support services to employers and consumers in collaboration with JPS, VRC, and community organizations, as needed, to ensure successful employment outcomes and employer satisfaction.
15. May conduct group presentations in conjunctions with JPS (in and out of the office) to explain programs and services to employers, training vendors, community organizations, job seekers, and the general public and to assist them in using such programs and services.
16. Participates in staff development and cross training opportunities that expand and support functional skills and promote professional growth.

Qualifications:

5 years of experience (of which 3 must be supervisory) of full-time or equivalent part-time professional or technical experience in any of the following : (1) personnel interviewing, recruitment or job placement; (2) employment, vocational, educational, psychological, sociological or rehabilitation counseling or guidance (3) credit or claims adjustment interviewing; (4) job analysis or position classification work.

Education required: A Bachelor's Degree in marketing, business management, and or public administration

Or a Master's Degree in marketing, business management, and or public administration (of which 2 must be in a supervisory capacity).

Equivalent combination of such experience and allowable substitutions permitted. A Master's or higher degree in marketing, business management, public administration or a related field from a recognized college or university may be substituted for two years experience. Education toward such a degree will be prorated on the basis of the proportion of the requirement actually completed.

Qualifications required at hire:

1. Knowledge of a wide variety of occupations common to the area labor market.
2. Knowledge of the principles, practices, & techniques of marketing & sales Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
3. Ability to market and promote MRC services and job seekers/consumers.
4. Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written expression.
5. Ability to give written and oral instructions in a precise and understandable manner.
6. Ability to establish rapport and working relationships with individuals from a wide variety of different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
7. Ability to stimulate interest in MRC programs, services, and consumers.
8. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and techniques of human service interviewing.
9. Ability to understand, explain and implement policies and procedures, standards, guidelines, laws and regulations that govern Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission activities.
10. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and practices of conducting workshops.
11. Proven ability to interact in a team environment and to establish and maintain harmonious working relationships with peers, supervisors, other agency representatives, employers and customers.
12. Working knowledge of MS Windows and Word. Proven ability to accurately and concisely record information and maintain the integrity of the computerized data base.

##### B. The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

All MRC vocational rehabilitation counselors are expected to meet at least the education and experience requirements of a Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Promotional opportunities in the series would require more experience and/or a higher educational level.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION:

MRC supports a wide variety of training and development programs for all staff through a comprehensive training program.  MRC’s trainings continue to focus on compliance with WIOA regulations and guidelines, and on working with our workforce partners and other disability agencies to provide coordinated services. MRC will continue to provide training to its staff to enhance their skills, professional development, and enhanced practices to best serve consumer needs.

A series of workshops and seminars have been and will continue to be planned in the following priority areas:

Vocational Rehabilitation best practices, trainings related to the agency’s initiatives with the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Transitional Assistance, substance abuse training in partnership with the Department of Public Health, diversity and DEIA trainings through the Human Resources Division, trainings on Measurable Skills Gains and other WIOA performance measures, Pre-Employment Transition Services, quality employment outcomes, leadership development and succession training, transportation options, transitional planning, serving consumers on the autism spectrum, and programs under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (operated by MRC), training on fiscal agility, and training on the agency’s integrated eligibility project known as MRC Connect.

MRC also continues to offer ongoing professional development for VR counselors, managers, supervisors. These trainings address 21st century labor trends, high growth occupations and skills that are in demand, trainings on job accommodations and employment tax credits, amongst other topics.  MRC also makes trainings available in cooperation with staff labor unions on professional development, including computer software training and online training via LinkedIn’s Learning Online training site and the state’s MassAcheive training site.

MRC has also worked with the state HR Division’s Center for Staff Development to develop a certificate program for aspiring managers and supervisors where staff works to gain leadership and management skills guided by a supervisor or manager serving as a mentor. Also, project management and leadership certificates are available through this program. Finally, MRC operates a regular new staff orientation to assist with educating and retaining staff.

MRC acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials and research to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and Training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA grants, and products from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials, as well as information and knowledge from RSA VR Technical Assistance centers such as the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center (AIVRTTAC), National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C), Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE), Vocational Rehabilitation Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM).MRC also disseminates materials and information from the National Rehabilitation Association, the Association of People Supporting Employment First, Explore VR, and other sources.  These information and materials are also discussed and utilized in training and staff development meetings and webinars

#### 4. Staff Development

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

##### A. A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

MRC has a system of staff development for its Vocational Rehabilitation Division. supports a wide variety of training and development programs for all staff through a comprehensive training program.  MRC’s trainings continue to focus on compliance with WIOA regulations and guidelines, and on working with our workforce partners and other disability agencies to provide coordinated services. MRC will continue to provide training to its staff to enhance their skills, professional development, and enhanced practices to best serve consumer needs.

A series of workshops and seminars have been and will continue to be planned in the following priority areas:

Vocational Rehabilitation best practices, trainings related to the agency’s initiatives with the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Transitional Assistance, substance abuse training in partnership with the Department of Public Health, diversity trainings through the Human Resources Division, trainings on Measurable Skills Gains and other WIOA performance measures, Pre-Employment Transition Services, quality employment outcomes, leadership development and succession training, transportation options, transitional planning, serving consumers on the autism spectrum, and programs under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (operated by MRC), training on fiscal agility, and training on the agency’s integrated eligibility project known as MRC Connect.

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##### B. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

MRC has the following procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

The Commission acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials and research to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and Training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA grants, and products from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials, as well as information and knowledge from RSA VR Technical Assistance centers such as the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center (AIVRTTAC), National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C), Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE), Vocational Rehabilitation Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM). MRC also disseminates materials and information from the National Rehabilitation Association, the Association of People Supporting Employment First, Explore VR, and other sources.  These information and materials are also discussed and utilized in training and staff development meetings and webinars.  MRC has also coordinated and consulted with WINTAC and NTACT on training efforts.

#### 5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

MRC has dedicated VR counselors skilled in American Sign Language (ASL) and are qualified to work with consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing. In addition, MRC has counselors fluent in the following languages throughout the state: Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Khmer, French/Haitian Creole, Hindi and Tamil. Some area directors, head clerks and other clerical staff are fluent in American Sign Language, Spanish, Khmer, Cantonese, Mandarin, Haitian Creole, or Portuguese. Eleven full and part-time sign language interpreters are also on staff.  MRC also works with its contracted service providers for CIES and Pre-ETS to provide communication coordination for consumers referred by MRC to these contracts.  MRC has a bilingual committee of staff which provide support in this area.  MRC also works with Cross Cultural Community Services (CCCS) [(https://embracingculture.com/](https://embracingculture.com/)) and other vendors on the statewide contract to facilitate communication needs for individuals served by MRC who speak languages other than English.

MRC also has a contract for foreign language translation and MRC has translated key agency documents and VR communication letters working closely with the Bilingual Committee. The Commission also maintains a statewide contract with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to secure additional ASL interpreters, CART reporters, and video relay translation as needed. Staff with specific language skills and interpreters are geographically placed to coincide with population and other demographics relating to target consumer groups. MRC also utilizes technology platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams to facilitate communication with consumers.

This strategy will continue to be applied and staff with specialized skills added, as appropriate, for the upcoming year and beyond.  MRC continues to work on ways to work with staff to further improve coordination of communication needs for individuals served by MRC.

#### 6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The information in the State plan pertaining to the RSA requirements for a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development is coordinated and shared with the appropriate State Department of Education unit consistent with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act to assure compliance and coordination of efforts across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

### j. Statewide Assessment

#### 1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:

##### A. With the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

The most recent MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) report can be found on MRC’s website:

https://www.mass.gov/doc/2021-comprehensive-statewide-needs-assessment/download

1. The FY2021 CSNA confirms that the majority of consumers served by the MRC are people with the most significant disabilities. The 2021 CSNA report again confirmed that the MRC consumer population is diverse, and that a majority of individuals being served possess the most significant disabilities. Many of these individuals require multiple Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and supports in order to prepare for, search for, obtain, and maintain competitive employment in the community. There are still a significant number of consumers who report transportation as a barrier to employment. The need for multiple VR services was found to be slightly greater amongst individuals of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds (particularly African-Americans and Hispanics) and for individuals with cognitive or psychological disabilities.  The findings suggest that many consumers also require supported employment and ongoing and extended employment supports. The need for multiple CL services was greatest among individuals with physical or sensory disabilities.
2. Overall, the majority of MRC consumers believe MRC services are addressing all or most of their needs and are satisfied with MRC services A total of 82.9% of consumers report being either Always or Sometimes Satisfied with the effectiveness of VR services provided by MRC in meeting their needs (48.8% Always, 34.0% Sometimes). This increased by 9.9% from FY2020, which reversed a declining trend for this question’s response pattern. The majority of VR consumers also remain satisfied with services delivered by MRC VR in the MRC Consumer Satisfaction Survey. Satisfaction with the VR service effectiveness is seen being higher in consumers who are further in the process, with those participating in job search and placement as reporting the highest levels of satisfaction. These individuals are in the action stages of their quest to obtain and maintain competitive employment, and are actively seeing results, report higher satisfaction.
3. Many consumers provided open comment on the positive impact MRC VR services have, including the effectiveness of VR staff. Responses outlined helpful and caring staff who are knowledgeable about the area in which they work, who have strong community and employer connections, who work with consumers individually to accommodate each individual’s unique needs. Comments also indicated that services related to education are incredibly helpful in allowing for individuals to obtain the education they need to progress in their career. A number of consumers report difficulties with communication with their counselor/caseworker. This has been observed in previous needs assessments and continued throughout the pandemic. Others feel they have not been provided consistent or adequate information on services or are struggling with the impact of COVID-19, health issues, financial issues, and other difficulties.
4. A majority of consumers (89.0%) report being either Very or Somewhat Satisfied with the development of their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Younger individuals displayed higher levels of satisfaction with this process. Satisfaction with the development of an individual’s IPE was found to be strongly associated with a consumer’s view on the effectiveness of VR service effectiveness.
5. Consumers expressed high praise for MRC staff and their effectiveness in the development of each IPE. Consumers reported that staff were knowledgeable and helpful, guiding consumers through the process. These comments described an individualized process that established unique goals according to each person’s needs. More consumers expressed their satisfaction and positive experiences with staff than any other subject. However, several consumers also commented on their lack of personal knowledge about the IPE process. This year there were many comments expressing difficulty utilizing services due to issues related to COVID-19.
6. Some consumers reported needing services that are already provided by MRC as services that they think MRC should provide and would assist them in their vocational goals. This follows trends and patterns observed in previous years and suggests that consumers could require more information on the range of services available to them.
7. All VR service areas were found to be important to a significant portion of MRC consumers. Job Placement Services (JPS) continues to be recognized as the most important VR service category (88%), followed by Career Counseling (84.9%), Supported Employment (83.2%), Benefits Planning (82.0%), Soft Skills Training (78.6%), Ongoing Supports (74.3%), On the Job Trainings/Job Driven Trainings (73.0%), and Vocational Skills Training (71.0%), and college disability office services or supports (66.6%).
8. The most common occupational areas of interest listed by MRC consumers included Community/Social/Human Services (26%), Health Care (22%), Self-Employment (20%) Administrative (19%), Arts and Entertainment (18%), , Computers/Information Technology (18%%), Customer Service (16%) , and Education/Childcare (12). All but Self-Employment are amongst the top 10 occupational goals by Standard Occupational Code (SOC) in consumer employment plans in the MRCIS Case Management System.
9. Awareness of Independent Living Centers (ILC) increased among consumers for the second straight year. This continues to reverse a negative trend observed over three years of Needs Assessment analysis. 34.1% of consumers report being aware of their local ILC, with individuals residing in the West district reporting the highest likelihood of working with these ILCs.
10. Transportation continues to be an area of need for some MRC consumers.  Reported transportation use by consumers continues to shift under patterns observed in the past five years of Needs Assessments. The effect of the pandemic was found to have a profound effect on consumer’s reported transportation use and needs. Levels of public transportation and Uber/Lyft/Ride Share use decrease significantly from previous years increase. Respondents view as transportation as a barrier to finding work also decreased, with pandemic-related restrictions being suspected for reducing the overall need for individuals to use transportation on a daily basis. Overall, 33% of respondents to the FY2021 survey reported that they view transportation as a barrier to employment. This represents a 3% decrease from 2020. As with 2020, cost is observed to be a differentiating factor in whether transportation poses a barrier to an individual obtaining employment. Open-ended responses show that many respondents need to obtain their driver’s license as well as a vehicle. Many individuals point to the high cost of transportation/cost of maintaining a vehicle, using a car or ride share service, or regular public transportation, as their main deterrence from primarily relying on those forms of transportation.
11. The most important and needed Community Living services indicated by responding consumers were Affordable Housing (62.1%), Assistive Technology (62.1%), Accessible Recreation (61.0%), and Devices (52.2%). Age was found to play a significant role in consumer’s view of the importance of CL services. Younger respondents were found reporting Recreation Opportunities, Waiver Programs, and Supported Living Services as more important than older individuals. The perceived level of importance of these services decreased as age increased.
12. 72.9% of consumers reported MRC services as being either Extremely or Somewhat Useful in supporting their ability to maintain independence in the community. Minority consumers reported these services as effective more frequently than Non-Minority individuals, with Asian and Hispanic individuals having the highest levels of satisfaction. Those with a High School education and some College were observed as having higher levels of satisfaction with CL services than others as well. Many consumers reflected on how the MRC’s assistance has been tremendously valuable. Many consumers, however, were not aware of some or all the CL services provided by the MRC.  Others indicated they do not require CL services.
13. Finding affordable and accessible housing continues to remain a challenge for many consumers due to the high cost of living in Massachusetts.   The Independent Living Centers may be able to assist consumers in this area, and counselors may be able to refer consumers to other resources to assist with housing needs.
14. A total of 10% of consumers feel they require additional services and supports. This number decreased about 5% from 2020. These services include job search assistance, job placement and job training, financial assistance, transportation, affordable and accessible housing, counseling and guidance, information on available services, assistive technology, education and training, services from IL centers, and services and supports from other agencies, and computer/technology skills training and/or equipment.
15. The most important single service consumers are receiving includes job placement and job search services, assistance with college education and job training, tuition waivers, vocational counseling and guidance, assistive technology, job readiness training, assistance with obtaining supplies for school and work, ongoing employment supports, job trainings, and transportation,
16. A majority of MRC counselors and supervisors (73% Satisfied/Very Satisfied) are satisfied with their ability to assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining, maintaining, and advancing in competitive employment based on their skills, interests, needs, and choices. This satisfaction rate is down slightly from the last report. The majority of MRC counselors are generally satisfied with most services provided to consumers, including internal job placement services, services from Community Rehabilitation Providers, and education and training provided to consumers by schools and colleges. One area of improvement identified by counselors was the need to improve communication with both consumers and providers. Counselors identified areas that would assist them in doing their job better, such as improved support and resources for job placement, more full time job placement specialists, increased information on job leads for consumers, additional on-the-job training and other training resources, continued enhancements to the MRCIS system, more resources for vocational assessment and vocational training for consumers, and training on policies, procedures, and pre-employment transition services, amongst others Most consumers appear to be satisfied with services received from Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs). The majority of MRC staff also are somewhat or very satisfied with CRP services.
17. There are areas where additional MRC staff training may assist in improving the quality and effectiveness of VR services delivered to consumers. Specific areas include trainings on the MRCIS system, as well as on VR best practices, policies, and procedures, strategies for maintaining communication with consumers and time management, internal controls, WIOA common measures and requirements, trainings on autism, and on pre-employment transition services and transition services under WIOA, and remote learning and service transition strategies. The newly initiated Learning and Development Department within MRC will lead ongoing staff training efforts, utilizing best practices and data driven decision making to make training related decisions.
18. Asian/Pacific Islanders were identified as being slightly underserved by MRC VR in comparison to their proportion in the overall state population. Additionally, while MRC is serving other minorities in proportion or greater to the proportion of the statewide population, MRC should focus on outreach to all minority communities to make sure their needs are met and to assist in addressing barriers to employment.

##### B. Who are minorities;

The CSNA report indicates the need for multiple VR services was found to be slightly greater amongst individuals of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. For example, minority consumers were more likely to find on-the-job training, job-driven training, work-readiness/soft skills training, and vocational training as important service needs. The need for college education supports and transportation services were also higher amongst consumers of minority background compared to white consumers.

As the Commonwealth’s population continues to become more ethnically and racially diverse, MRC’s consumer population is also following this pattern, however MRC’s consumer population remains about 80% white while the 2020 Census indicates Massachusetts as a whole is 77.3%

Over the past ten years, MRC has seen an increase in consumers from minority backgrounds. Hispanic consumers. The proportion of Native American consumers dropped to 1.2% in FY 2020, but that is only a tenth of a percent less than the 10-year high it reached in FY 2019. Numerically and proportionally, the largest growth is in Hispanic consumers, who reached a 10-year high in FY 2020, which is consistent with Census Bureau American Community Survey estimates for Massachusetts.

Consumers with Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity have been growing the fastest over the past 5 years (+2.1%), while African Americans served has remained steady over the same period. African Americans are served by the MRC at a higher rate (17.7%) than their rate in the overall population (7.4% in 2020 census).

Since FY 2013, MRC has seen a flat pattern in Asian consumers served (remaining between 3.4% and 3.8%) after seeing a major increase in Asians served between FY 2006 and FY 2012. It continues to appear that Asians are underserved in comparison with their rate in the overall state population (3.8% of MRC consumers compared to 8.2% for all MA population). For Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity, MRC is serving these consumers at a rate slightly above their rate in the general population (13.7% for MRC vs 12.6% in the 2020 census for the state as a whole)

As growth in the Asian community continues to be seen in the state’s general population, it is recommended that MRC continues its outreach efforts to Asian communities. Additionally, while MRC is serving other minorities in proportion or greater to the proportion of the statewide population, MRC should focus on outreach to all minority communities to make sure their needs are met and to assist in addressing barriers to employment. It is also recommended that MRC continue to develop and implement its consumer engagement program which will include coordination of outreach services to community organizations in areas with underserved populations. MRC should also work with its Employee Resource Groups, Bilingual Committee, the SRC, its DEIA council and other groups to focus on outreach to diverse and underserved communities for all people of color to ensure all their needs are met.

#####  C. Who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

The MRC has again identified Asian and Pacific Islanders as being underserved by the MRC’s Vocational Rehabilitation program compared to their proportion in the overall state population. Growth in the Asian population continues to be seen in the state’s general population while it has remained steady amongst the MRC population.  It is recommended that MRC develop outreach efforts to reach all minority communities, including the Asian community to ensure the needs of these communities are being met.

The MRC has made a commitment to reach out to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are also ethnic and cultural minorities through its DEIA initiatives, Diversity Committee and through its Language Access Plan. The MRC should continue these outreach efforts to ethnic and cultural minorities to increase participation in the VR program from these diverse communities, especially for people of color. As growth in the Asian community continues to be seen in the state’s general population, it is recommended that MRC continues its outreach efforts to Asian communities. MRC conducted a focus group in its Lowell Office, which has a higher concentration of Asian consumers. A planned focus group in the Braintree Area was postponed due to COVID-19, however MRC conducted additional focus groups virtually as part of its collaboration with Commonwealth Medicine to gather further information on how MRC can better address the needs of this and other underserved populations (as well as many other stakeholder groups).

Based on the results of the Lowell Focus group and from SRC input, MRC has also developed a workgroup and work plan to focus on outreach efforts to Asian and other minority communities. Strategies and resources for outreach efforts will be developed as part of this workgroup. It is recommended MRC complete of focus groups or community meetings in Braintree and/or Boston, and/or other areas with high population concentration of Asian communities, with consultation of the DEIA council, the Office of Consumer and Family Engagement, diversity and bilingual committees, and the SRC to review results and to develop best practices in collaboration with community organizations for increasing outreach efforts and services to the Asian community and all other communities of color based on the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment in order to ensure the needs of these communities are addressed in terms of Vocational Rehabilitation services.

##### D. Who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

In order to meet the needs of individuals served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System, MRC continues its efforts to collaborate with the other core partners in the workforce investment system to reduce unemployment of individuals with disabilities and to provide effective services to employers throughout the state, to seek out collaborative opportunities including possible projects and grants that may assist individuals with disabilities across Massachusetts in obtaining competitive employment.  MRC continues its efforts to work closely together with its partners on WIOA implementation including WIOA common performance measures, use of labor market information, co-location of staff, and other efforts. MRC participates in numerous workgroups such as the State Plan Steering Committee, WIOA Steering Committee, WIOA Systems Integration Workgroup, and other committees who are working on the alignment of services under the workforce system.

MRC continues its collaboration with other core partners under WIOA to survey and further identify the needs of individuals working with other components of the Workforce system. Some of the identified needs include: interviewing skills, resume development, job specific skills (CVS Pharmacy Technician training, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Program, \ retail job training, customer service jobs skills training, food service training, substance abuse counselor training, cybersecurity training, and human service training). MRC will continue to consult with core partners on the identified needs of their consumers as it relates to accessibility and access to employment opportunities, employment training, and provide employer trainings on disability awareness and job accommodations. MRC is reaching out to its core partners as part of its next needs assessment to gather additional data on the needs of individuals in the overall workforce system to complement and further enhance the CSNA process going forward. MRC will be reaching out to its core partners to gather additional data on the needs of individuals in the overall workforce system to complement and enhance the CSNA going forward.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission VR Program has a growing presence at the MassHire Career Centers; the MRC Commissioner serves on the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), and each MRC Area Director has a formal relationship with at least one MassHire Career Center. In addition, Area Directors or other MRC staff are on local workforce investment boards. MRC VR counseling staff make frequent visits and often conduct interviews at the local career centers and has leased space at all Career Centers to further increase MRC’s presence. MRC has MOUs and infrastructure funding agreements with local areas and the Career Centers.  Finally, the MRC’s job placement team and other assigned MRC staff work closely with local MassHire Career Centers to provide high quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities seeking expanded employment opportunities and MRC is providing assistance to MassHire Career Centers so they can best meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

##### E. Who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

In the FY2021 CSNA, Obtaining a high school diploma, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and college education were rated as important service needs by over 90% of youths with disabilities. With the continued increase in the proportion of youth consumers responding to the CSNA, the importance of services related to obtaining a GED or high school diploma has remained elevated from prior to FY2021. As MRC continues to focus on providing services to youth and high school students, working directly with schools throughout the Commonwealth, and improving transition services through programs like Pre-ETS, this is expected to remain higher than historically observed due to the high need for transition and Pre-ETS services.

The most important and needed Pre-Employment Transition Services listed by MRC consumers of transition age (14 through 21- up to their 22nd birthday) included internships/work-based learning experiences (85%), followed by learning about education/jobs/careers (job exploration counseling) (81%), work-readiness training (81%), transitioning from high school to college/work (80%), mentorship/peer counseling/self-advocacy (77%). 74assistance with college education (76%), and college/career counseling (66%). Some consumers report they receive Pre-Employment Transition Services from schools outside of MRC, the frequency of the responses range from 17% for advocacy/peer counseling to 49% for work-based learning experiences. A total of 62% of consumers of transition age surveyed in FY2021 indicated they had received 1 or more Pre-ETS service.

The majority of transition age consumers indicate they are satisfied with Pre-Employment Transition Services provided by MRC and their partners in meeting their needs towards future education and employment (62% Satisfied/Very Satisfied. and 19% Somewhat Satisfied), and the majority who are receiving these services (72%) indicate these services are effective in preparing them for their future career.

Overall, results throughout the CSNA demonstrate a significant need for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) among students with disabilities and youth consumers of transition age and MRC is working to address this need through its various transition and Pre-ETS initiatives. MRC continues to work closely with local school districts and contracted service providers on transition and Pre-ETS services, including coordinating services with those provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).  MRC has a counselor assigned to every public high school in the Commonwealth, has developed strong working relationships with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE),

MRC also recently completed a 5-year demonstration grant called Transition Pathway Services, funded by RSA, which focused on the provision of work-based learning experiences.  The results from the grant are being evaluated and lessons learned will be used to develop additional best practices in this area and continue to improve transition and Pre-Employment transition services in partnership with schools and providers.

#### 2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

In terms of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State. Most consumers appear to be satisfied with services received from Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs). The majority of MRC staff also indicate that they are generally satisfied with CRP services.  The operation of CRP programs through the Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) procurements appear to address many but not all consumer needs. There also appears to be some areas where additional CRP capacity may potentially be needed to cover certain geographic areas or specific populations, and this should be examined closer by MRC. MRC also is working closely with CRPs as part of its ACCS employment initiative with the Department of Mental Health. MRC should continue to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on CRPs and use its working relationships to continue work collaboratively with CRPs to address consumer needs and improve service delivery, including the continued use of remote technologies and hybrid service delivery models. . Finally, improved communication and information flow between CRPs and MRC staff, more information on consumer referrals, and continued efforts to streamline paperwork processing may assist in improving service delivery to consumers and lead to more successful employment outcomes.

#### 3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The FY2021 CSNA confirms that transition career services and Pre-Employment Transition Services for youth and high school students with disabilities are important and needed services across the Commonwealth. Results throughout the CSNA demonstrate a high need for these services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services among students with disabilities and youth consumers of transition age and MRC continues to work address this need in coordination with schools and Pre-ETS contracted service providers across the state.

In the FY2021 CSNA, Obtaining a high school diploma, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and college education were rated as important service needs by over 90% of youths with disabilities responding to the survey. The most important and needed Pre-Employment Transition Services listed by MRC consumers of transition age (14 through 21- up to their 22nd birthday) included internships/work-based learning experiences (85%), followed by learning about education/jobs/careers (job exploration counseling) (81%), work-readiness training (81%), transitioning from high school to college/work (80%), mentorship/peer counseling/self-advocacy (77%). 74assistance with college education (76%), and college/career counseling (66%). Some consumers report they receive Pre-Employment Transition Services from schools outside of MRC, the frequency of the responses range from 17% for advocacy/peer counseling to 49% for work-based learning experiences. A total of 62% of consumers of transition age surveyed in FY2021 indicated they had received 1 or more Pre-ETS service.

MRC continues to work with local school districts and on transition and Pre-ETS services, including coordinating services with those provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).  MRC has a counselor assigned to every public high school in the Commonwealth, has developed strong working relationships with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)MRC is also recently completed a 5-year demonstration grant, Transition Pathway Services, funded by RSA which focused on the provision of work-based learning experiences.  The results from the grant and lessons learned will be used to develop additional best practices in this area and improve transition and Pre-Employment transition services.  MRC offers Pre-ETS to students who are potentially eligible for VR services in addition to those who are VR eligible in collaboration with vendors and school districts and has worked with providers and schools to implement remote and hybrid service delivery strategies and to deal with challenges in Pre-ETS and Transition service delivery related to the COVID-19 pandemic. MRC has developed an agreement and worked with DESE to issue guidance to schools on the provision and coordination of individualized transition services for students with disabilities that lead to successful post-school outcomes in competitive integrated employment, post-secondary education and training, and community living.

To assist in determining the statewide need for pre-employment transition services, MRC analyzed statewide data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE (http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/selectedpopulations.aspx). According to DESE data, there are 174,505 students with disabilities (consisting of 18.9% of all high school students statewide) enrolled in public high schools in Massachusetts as of October 1, 2021, all who may be potentially eligible for VR services and/or who may benefit from Pre-ETS services. Based on this data and the continued high need for Pre-ETS services demonstrated throughout the CSNA as described above, MRC forecasts that once again, during FY2022 that it will need to expend its entire 15% expenditure requirement of VR funds to provide Pre-ETS services as required under WIOA (approximately $6.3 million) in order to provide the five required Pre-ETS services to students with disabilities (work-based learning experiences, job exploration counseling, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in post-secondary education and other comprehensive training programs, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy). MRC forecasts that due to the fact that the entire 15% is required on required Pre-ETS activities, that no funding will remain to provide authorized pre-employment transition services beyond the five required services due to the high need for Pre-ETS services as demonstrated in this year’s CSNA findings and the DESE data.

### k. Annual Estimates

Describe:

#### 1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services

The 2020 U.S. Census determined that the population of Massachusetts was 7,029,917, an increased of 482,288 (+7.4%) from 2010.

The 2020 U.S. Census reported the following demographic profile for the residents of the state:

69.6% were White alone; 7.0% were Black or African American alone; 8.7% were multi-racial; 7.2% were Asian alone; 7.1% were Some Other Race alone; 0.3% were American Indian and Alaska Native alone; 0.1% were Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone. 12.6% were of Hispanic ethnicity (any race);

Based on an analysis of data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) (<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/selectedpopulations.aspx>), there are 174,505 students with disabilities (consisting of 18.9% of all high school students statewide) enrolled in public high schools in Massachusetts as of October 1, 2021.

In 2019, there were 6,821,140 individuals living in the community in Massachusetts, of which 787,330 were persons with disabilities: a prevalence rate of 11.5%. Of these, 374,563 individuals with disabilities are aged 18 to 64 and living in the community. This is a projection based on available data from the 2020 Disability Statistics Compendium. Thus, our projection is that approximately 500,000 individuals may be eligible for MRC VR services

<https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/Events/2021_release_year/Final%20Accessibility%20Compendium%202020%20PDF_2.1.2020reduced.pdf>

<https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/Events/2021_release_year/2020%20Supplement%20reduced.pdf>

Please note that this is the most up to date information available as of when the State Plan update was developed.

#### 2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

##### A. The VR Program;

**FFY2023 Annual Estimates: It is estimated that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will provide services with funds provided under Part B of Title I of the Act as follows during FFY2023:**

1. New individuals to be provided services to determine eligibility (new applicants): Projection: 7,000
2. New individuals to be provided services to determine order of selection priority assignment and vocational rehabilitation needs (new individuals determined eligible): Projection: 6,200
3. New Individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs): Projection: 5,500
4. New Individuals with most significant disabilities to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs, Most Significantly Disabled): Projection: 2,750
5. Total Eligible Individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services (new and existing): Projection: 23,000

**FFY2024 Annual Estimates: It is estimated that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will provide services with funds provided under Part B of Title I of the Act as follows during FFY2024:**

1. New individuals to be provided services to determine eligibility (new applicants): Projection: 7,600
2. New individuals to be provided services to determine order of selection priority assignment and vocational rehabilitation needs (new individuals determined eligible): Projection: 6,800
3. New Individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs): Projection: 6,200
4. New Individuals with most significant disabilities to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs, Most Significantly Disabled): Projection: 3,100
5. Total Eligible Individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services (new and existing): Projection: 24,000

##### B. The Supported Employment Program; and

MRC will be utilizing Title I and Title VI B funds to provide Supported Employment services. It is estimated that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will provide Supported Employment services with Title I and Title VI funds to 450 individuals annually in both FFY2023 and FFY2024.

##### C. Each priority category, if under an order of selection.

During FFY2022/PY2021, MRC estimates we will serve 23,000 consumers, excluding potentially eligible students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services.  MRC is not operating under an order of selection and all categories are open for services as of this time.

#### 3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure but is not operating under an Order of Selection at the current time.  All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

#### 4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

**FFY2022 Estimates:**

Based upon current forecasting, it is estimated that the costs of services with VR funds will be approximately $70.2 million dollars in FFY2022.

MRC estimates it will serve 23,000 eligible individuals in the VR program in FFY2023.  MRC has an order of selection policy and procedure, but is not operating under an OOS and all categories are open at this time.  Estimates of cost per category (all consumers are being served) are broken down as follows:

Disability Priority Category 1 (Most Significantly Disabled): 9,890 consumers, total cost of service, $31,050,000, average cost per individual in category: $3,139

Disability Priority Category 2 (Significantly Disabled): 11,040 consumers, total cost of service, $28,400,000, average cost per individual in category: $3,025

Disability Priority Category 3 (Disabled): 2,070 consumers, total cost of service, $5,762,360,000, average cost per individual in category: $2,784.

Potentially Eligible Consumers receiving Pre-ETS: 3,000 students, cost of service $6,300,000, average cost per student: $2,100.

**FFY2023 Estimates:**

Based upon current forecasting, it is estimated that the costs of services with VR funds will be approximately $70.7 million dollars in FFY2023. MRC has an order of selection policy and procedure, but is not operating under an OOS and all categories are open at this time.  Estimates of cost per category (all consumers are being served) are broken down as follows:

MRC estimates it will serve 24,000 eligible individuals in the VR program in FFY2023, broken down as follows:

Disability Priority Category 1 (Most Significantly Disabled): 10,320consumers, total cost of service $31,300,000, average cost per individual in category: $3,033.

Disability Priority Category 2 (Significantly Disabled): 11,520 consumers, total cost of service, $33,600,000, average cost per individual in category: $2,917

Disability Priority Category 3 (Disabled): 2,160 consumers, total cost of service, $5,814,000, average cost per individual in category: $2,692

Potentially Eligible Consumers receiving Pre-ETS: 3,000 students, cost of service $6,300,000, average cost per student: $2,100.

### l. State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

#### 1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has developed the following goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs in collaboration with the SRC. These have been identified based on the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2021 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. They are also based on recommendations and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. Additionally, these goals include the new WIOA Common Performance Measures. MRC will review progress towards these goals on at least a quarterly basis with senior management and the SRC. The SRC was involved with the development of the goals and has agreed to these goals.

#### 2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs

MRC has based its goals and priorities on the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2021 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. They are based on recommendations and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. Additionally, these goals include the new WIOA Common Performance Measures.  The SRC was involved in the development of these goals as well.

The MRC has formulated agency specific goals following recommendations in conjunction with recommendations from the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.  These goals were formulated with the five WIOA Combined State Plan goals in mind; each of the 22 MRC goals below have been identified and categorized as falling within at least one of the four statewide goals.  Targets will be reviewed on an annual basis during the 4-year state plan and will be included in the two-year plan update.

Overall Massachusetts WIOA Combined State Plan Goals:

1. Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.
2. Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.
3. Improve career mobility and unsubsidized employment outcomes for youth.
4. Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class service delivery system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques.

**MRC Goal 1:**

Create career pathways for job seekers through increasing Employment Outcomes through placement, training, and Job Driven Trainings provided through MRC’s Job Placement Unit, Employer Account Management System, and Annual Statewide Hiring Event.  Continue to coordinate these business engagement efforts with WIOA partners as part of the overall MassHire Massachusetts workforce system.

This aligns with Goal II of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Continue measuring Key Performance Indicators related to Successful Employment Outcomes (SEO’s) including:

* Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes for Vocational Rehabilitation Division and percentage change over the prior year’s results
* Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes achieved through the involvement of the MRC in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year’s results
* Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 closures) with Employers participating in MRC’s Account Management System in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year’s results
* Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 Closures) from consumers participating in MRC’s annual Statewide Hiring Event in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year’s results

Target:

MRC’s target goals:

* 3,200 Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC’s Vocational Rehabilitation Division and 3% a positive percentage change over prior year results, with 15% of all VR eligible consumers served achieving a successful employment outcome.
* Exceed 400 Successful Employment Outcomes, or 11% of all SEOs, for MRC’s Job Placement Unit annually and a positive percentage change over prior year results
* Exceed 200 Employment Outcomes, or 5.5% of all SEOs, from Employer Account Management System annually
* 40% Successful Employment Outcomes for consumers participating in Statewide Hiring Event achieve a annually, a 3% increase over prior year’s outcomes

Data Sources:

MRCIS, OneMRC (future)

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.

**MRC Goal 2:**

Continue to operate a joint venture using the MRC Competitive Integrated Employment Service (CIES) program and the Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to increase employment outcomes and create career pathways to better meet the needs of individuals with Behavioral Health needs utilizing the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model and the CIES Pay for Performance competitive employment model.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan.

Key Performance Indicators:

MRC will evaluate the ACCS program based on Key Performance Indicators.

* MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with ACCS Counselors
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with CIES-ACCS providers
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with internal Job Placement Services
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers having a completed IPE within 45 days from eligibility
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers or MRC Job Placement Unit Staff as part of their ACCS services
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers are successfully maintaining employment for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed who are working an average and median of 20+ hours/week
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receiving an average hourly wage of $15/hour and a median hourly wage of $14.25/hour
* 80% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received

Target:

* MRC ACCS Counselors will serve 1,500 job seekers annually based on the caseload capacity goal of 50 per caseload, 60% or more of cases will have eligibility completed within 20 days of application
* 150 ACCS Job Seekers engaging with internal Job Placement Services annually
* 60% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers will have a completed IPE within 40 days from eligibility.
* 65% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers within the program year.
* 70% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers with Social Security Insurance or Social Security Disability Insurance are receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services
* 40% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers will be successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services.
* 75% of Job Seekers will successfully maintaining employment after placement for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services.
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed work an average and median of 25 hours/week.
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receive an average hourly wage of $15/hour and a median hourly wage of $14.25/hour.
* MRC ACCS 80% of Job Seekers are satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, CIES-ACCS Vendor Reports, MRC Satisfaction Survey

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated on an ongoing basis, including quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 3:**

Operate the Empower to Employ program in collaboration with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) in order to work to improve services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF support utilizing the Integrated Resource Team Model and the Pay for Performance competitive employment model.  This project is part of MRC’s efforts with its WIOA partners to align and coordinate services amongst state partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan.

Key Performance Indicators:

MRC will evaluate the Empower to Employ program using Key Performance Indicators with DTA and will update as required.  Use data from Key Performance Indicators to develop targets during PY2022 and PY2023 based on PY2021 data.

Target:

Increase services to allow 100 or more placements annually for the project.

Expand project sites from 5 to 8 by the end of PY2023.

Employed project participants will earn an average hourly wage of $16.50 or more and work an average of 30 hours or more per week.

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 4:**

Maximize Employment Retention for MRC Consumers Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Measure the following metric in order to gauge progress toward Goal 4:

* Employment Rate at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings.

Target:

Initial target is 52% pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data.

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 5:**

Maximize Employment Retention of competitive employment for MRC Consumers Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Fourth Quarter after Exit and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 5:

* Employment Rate at the 4th Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings

Target:

Initial target is 49% pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 6:**

Increase Median Quarterly Earnings for MRC Consumers Employed in competitive employment at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit.

This aligns with Goal III of the Combined Overall WIOA State Plan based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 6:

* Median Quarterly Earnings at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings.

Target:

Initial target is $4,500 quarterly earning pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment.

**MRC Goal 7:**

Maximize the Number and Proportion of MRC Consumers with Recognized Secondary and/or Post-Secondary Credential Attainment during Participation in the MRC VR Program.

This aligns with Goal III of the Combined Overall WIOA State Plan and based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 7:

* Percent of MRC Consumers obtaining post-secondary education credentials and/or obtaining a secondary school diploma or equivalent during participation in the MRC VR Program (or up to 1 year after exit from program.
	+ For proportion, previous number divided by the total number of consumers served during the program year.

Target:

Initial target is 22% based on currently available data and monitoring of progress. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Level of Education Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 quarterly reporting

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 8:**

Maximize the Percentage of MRC Consumers Enrolled in Education and Training Programs leading to a recognized credential or employment achieving measurable skills gains during the Program Year.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 7:

* Percent of MRC Consumers enrolled in education and training programs leading to employment or a recognized post-secondary credential achieving measurable skills gains during the program year with documented progress divided by total number of consumers enrolled in education or training in MRCIS.

Target:

40% is the proposed target to be submitted in the state plan. Pending establishment of negotiated targets from RSA for PY22 and PY23.

Data Sources:

Level of Education Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 quarterly reporting, WIOA Annual Report

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 9:**

Provide Effective Services to Employers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to ensure retention rates of individuals placed in competitive employment.

This aligns with Goal I of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 9:

* Employment retention rate with the same employer at 2nd and 4th quarter after exit for MRC consumers closed during the current program year (Status 26 Closures) based on Employer Tax ID (EIN) in Unemployment Insurance Wage Data.
* # of repeat business customers (defined as a business where MRC places more than one job seeker during the program year)

Target:

400 or more repeat business customers annually where multiple job seekers are placed into employment. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2024.

Initial Target is 70% of job seekers retained at the same employer between the 2nd and 4th quarter after exit. Establish and refine target based on baseline of data and track progress on performance. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2024.

Data Sources:

Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data, WIOA Annual Report.

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 10:**

Maximize Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Job Seekers for 90 Days or more and establish a new annual program outcome goal.  Reset goal and target annually based on performance.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 10:

* Total Sum and Percentage of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Consumers for the Current Program Year (Status 26 Closures).

Target:

Achieve 3,200 or more successful employment outcomes in the program year.

Achieve an Employment Rate at closure of 55.8% statewide as a result of consumer attaining successful employment outcomes.

Data Sources:

Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS, Monthly Key Performance Indicators Tracking Report

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 11:**

Maximize the number of Consumers Exiting the MRC VR Program whose Primary Source of Economic Support is from their own Employment Earnings.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Next Steps:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 11:

* Proportion of Individuals Successfully Closed in Status 26 in the current fiscal year with a RSA-911 Employment Status Code of Competitive Employment in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage (the higher of either State or Federal Minimum Wage; currently Massachusetts is higher at $12.75) whose Primary Source of Support at Closure is Personal Income (Code 1) minus the proportion of those consumers whose primary source of support at application was personal income (Code 1).

Target:

Ratio of 65% or more.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, Monthly Key Performance Indicators Tracking Report

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 12:**

Fully implement the re-design of Pre-ETS Services to Eligible and Potentially Eligible students (14 – 22) Maximize the Number and Percentage of high school students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services, including work-based learning experiences (Pre-ETS/Potentially Eligible) from MRC, either eligible or potentially eligible.  Continue to coordinate Pre-ETS service delivery with partners and schools.

This aligns with Goal IV of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 13:

* Number of students (potentially eligible and eligible) receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year.
* Percent of students initiating services for each of the five Pre-ETS services (Work-Based Learning, Job Exploration Counseling, Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness Training, Self-Advocacy) from MRC and its contracted provider.
* Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership.
* Explore ways to work with DESE and other partners to coordinate Pre-ETS services.

Target:

Serve 3,000 or more students receiving one or more of the five Pre-ETS services during the program year.

An average of 60% of students will initiate services for each of the five Pre-ETS services (Work-Based Learning, Job Exploration Counseling, Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness Training, Self-Advocacy) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year.

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership.

Set up meetings with DESE and workforce partners to discuss coordination of Pre-ETS Services.

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 13:**

Maximize the Number and Percentage of youth (defined as ages 14 through 24) consumers served by MRC completing education and training programs, including post-secondary education as part of MRC’s efforts to coordinate services for youths with WIOA partners, including the MassHire workforce system.

This aligns with Goal IV of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 12:

* Number and Percent of Youth Age 14 to 24 Completing Education and Training Programs. Measured by the flow of Youth Consumers moving from Status 18 Training and Education into Status 20 Job Ready or Status 22 Job Placement during the month/fiscal year divided by the total number of youth consumers served in Status 18 Training and Education during the month/fiscal year.

Target:

At or above 150 or 3% of youth consumers per month completing training or education, annual total of 2200 or 15%

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for individuals, including youth with barriers to employment.

**MRC Goal 14:**

Create career pathways for job seekers through maximizing the Number of Successful Competitive Employment outcomes and the percent of Placements leading to Successful Employment Outcomes through MRC’s Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) programs in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Providers.

This aligns with Goal II of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 14:

* Total Number of 90 Day Successful Employment Outcomes from CIES Program; Total Number of CIES Successful Employment Outcomes divided by the total number of 30-Day Placements for the CIES Program, % of CIES consumers served achieving a placement.

Target:

Exceed 600 Successful Employment Outcomes for CIES for the fiscal year and greater than 75% of CIES placements result in successful employment outcomes, and 50% or more of CIES consumers served during the year are placed into employment.

Complete the redesign and deployment of MRC CIES contracts successfully through the RFP and annual monitoring and program evaluation process to provide CIES Pay for Performance services (Annual Program Evaluation Report).

Data Source:

MRC CIES Quarterly Cumulative Utilization Report and Annual Program Evaluation Report

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.

**MRC Goal 15:**

Continue to provide consumers with an avenue to access employment and training opportunities through participation in the Donated Vehicle Program in partnership with Good News Garage and exploring other transportation partnerships.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 15:

* Number of Consumers Participating in the Donated Vehicle Program who obtain a successful employment outcome or who enter training and education (Status 18) divided by the number of consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year.
* Research additional transportation partnerships to assist with transportation including programs related to bicycling.

Target:

Greater than 90% of Consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year result in successful employment outcomes or enrollment in training or education (Status 18).

Issue 100 vehicles per program year utilizing the RFR process, for a total of 400 over the 4-year period.

Number of individuals who may be employed as a result of this program

90% or greater satisfaction with the program

Completion of research on additional transportation partnerships and presentation of a report to leadership and the SRC

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 16:**

Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with Autism.  Coordinate services for individuals with Autism with partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 16:

* Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Cause Code of 08 and employment rate for these consumers.
* Number of consumers served on the Autism Spectrum

Target:

Equal or greater to 200 consumers employed per program year

75% employment rate or greater for consumers on the autism spectrum receiving Life Mapping services

55.8% or greater employment rate for consumers with autism spectrum receiving VR services

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 17:**

Continued Outreach to the Asian community to identify strategies for serving this underserved population.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Implementation of additional Focus Groups to MRC regions with high concentrations of Asian community, such as Braintree and Boston

Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC

Target:

Complete focus groups or community meetings in Braintree and/or Boston, and/or other areas with high population concentration of Asian communities by the end of the program year, with consultation of the diversity and bilingual committees to review results and to develop best practices in collaboration with community organizations for increasing outreach efforts and services to the Asian community based on the comprehensive needs assessment survey conducted by the SRC, to present to agency leadership.

Develop and implement a new consumer engagement program which will include coordination of outreach services to community organizations in areas with underserved populations.

Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC from prior year.

Data Sources:

Program evaluation program data, MRCIS, SRC engagement work plan.

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 18:**

Research Best Practices Models to create career pathways and increase employment of Individuals with Disabilities based on recommendations provided by the SRC Executive Committee.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Completion of research of best practices, models, or capstone projects for the development of new programs intended to provide enhanced training and job placement for individuals with disabilities for presentation to the leadership team and the SRC.

Target:

Completion of research and completion of a report by the end of the program year for presentation to MRC Leadership and the SRC.

Data Sources:

CSAVR, Google/Electronic Reference Libraries.

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 19:**

Expand the use of occupational goal information from MRC job seekers to inform job placement efforts.  Share occupational data and coordinate sharing of labor market information with WIOA Workforce Partners including MassHire.

This aligns with Goal V of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

Develop a report of MRC job seekers based on vocational goals in the MRCIS system by Standard Occupational Code (SOC Code) compared to job placements and outcomes for job seekers by SOC Code.

Track placements and occupational goals by SOC code and SOC category.

Research strategies for linking occupational code data with industry classification data.

Revamp labor market information reports for MRC staff.

Target:

Complete reports and presentation of findings to agency leadership and the Job Placement Unit by the end of the program year.

Research strategies and develop recommendations for linking occupational code and industry classification data to guide job placement efforts, sector employment, and to assist with coordination of business services with WIOA partners.

Complete new labor market report templates for MRC staff.

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class service delivery system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques.

**MRC Goal 20:**

Research and develop ways to conduct outreach to college students and other groups to increase awareness of MRC services and research additional resources to assist MRC consumers who are in post-secondary education programs.

This aligns with Goal V of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Completion of research into ways MRC can outreach to college students to increase awareness of MRC services.  Develop additional resources and programs that may assist MRC consumers in post-secondary education program. Present findings to the leadership team and the SRC.

Target:

Completion of research into ways MRC can outreach to college students to increase awareness of MRC services.  Develop additional resources and programs that may assist MRC consumers in post-secondary education program. Develop a report and present findings to the leadership team and the SRC.

Data Sources:

Google/Electronic Reference Libraries

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 21:**

Implementation of a new MRC MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.

This aligns with Goals I and III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

MRC will develop Key Performance Indicators for this project with MassHire.  Use data from Key Performance Indicators to establish a baseline and develop targets during PY2022 and PY2023 based on PY2021 data.

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and present findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners.

Target:

Completion of Key Performance Indicators, Establishment of baseline data and develop targets by PY2022 based on project data.

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and complete presentation of findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, Reports from MassHire

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 22**:

Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with behavioral health needs.  Coordinate services for individuals with Behavioral Health Needs[[1]](#_ftn1) with partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 16:

* Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Code of 18 and employment rate for these consumers  (excluding those participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)
* Number of consumers served with a Disability Code of 18 during the program year

Target:

Equal or greater to 700 consumers employed per program year (excluding those consumers participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program

Employment rate of 55.8% or greater for consumers with Disability Code 18 receiving MRC VR services (excluding consumers participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

[[1]](#_ftnref1) Behavioral Health Needs are defined by RSA within Policy Directive *RSA-PD-16-04* as Disability Code 18: Psychosocial Impairments (e.g., interpersonal and behavioral impairments, difficulty coping)

#### 3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

##### A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

MRC has based its goals and priorities on the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2021. The purpose of the survey is to capture the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. The goals and priorities are also based on recommendations and input from the SRC and input from MRC Senior Management. Additionally, these goals include the new WIOA Common Performance Measures.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) in conjunction with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) conducted its most recent annual Comprehensive Statewide VR Consumer Needs Assessment (CSNA) in the Fall of 2021. The information and findings are incorporated into the MRC’s section of the Massachusetts WIOA Combined State Plan, as well as in MRC’s Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance activities. The findings on consumer needs listed in the CSNA are presented and shared with MRC Senior Management and VR staff, the full SRC, and other key stakeholders as part of the MRC’s State Plan and continuous quality improvement processes. It is also available to the public via the MRC website. The 2021 CSNA process constituted a number of approaches, including: a consumer survey (with additional content for students with disabilities on Pre-Employment Transition Services); focus groups; analysis of key statistical and demographic information and facts taken from the MRCIS system, US Census Bureau Data, Bureau of Labor Statistics Data and the Annual Disability Statistical Compendium, findings from other reports and surveys including the Consumer, Provider, and Counselor Satisfaction surveys; youth and employer surveys; and collaboration and discussion with the SRC and other key stakeholders.

The MRC CSNA report and appendix can be found on MRC’s website at the following links:

https://www.mass.gov/doc/2021-comprehensive-statewide-needs-assessment/download

##### B. The State’s performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

WIOA in its goals and priorities. MRC will continue to report data to RSA on these measures for PY2022 and further program years as specified in the final requirements for the WIOA Combined/Unified State Plan. MRC’s Analytics and Quality Assurance department will continue to analyze the data as it becomes available and create a report for management on the common measures.  Information on the Common Measures is reported to VR and agency leadership and is presented regularly by MRC Analytics and Quality Assurance staff to MRC counselors and Area Offices. A data dashboard of this information will be developed as part of MRC’s initiative to create a new case management system to push data down on these performance measures to staff at area offices and to counselors as applicable.

MRC has developed a series of trainings on WIOA Common Performance Measures, focusing on Measurable Skills Gains and Credential Attainment. A detailed Job Aid, training video, FAQ document, and ongoing technical assistance sessions have been developed and are provided to MRC counselors, supervisors, and managers. Monthly reports have been developed and are sent to VR staff to assist with performance in these areas.

**MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION**

**MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION THREE YEAR PERFORMANCE**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **WIOA Common Performance Measures​** | **FY19​/PY18** | **FY20​/PY19** | **FY21​/PY20** |
| **Employment Rate at 2nd Quarter After Exit​** | 48.2%​ | 52.2%​ | 50.9%​ |
| **Employment Rate at 4th Quarter After Exit​** | N/A​ | 22.9%​ | 48.4%​ |
| **Median Quarterly Earnings at 2nd Quarter After Exit​** | $4,332.83​ | $4,353.52​ | $4,444.22​ |
| **Credential Obtainment Rate​** | N/A​ | 4.7%​ | 16.9%​ |
| **Measurable Skills Gains​** | 8.4%​ | 7.3%​ | 21.0%​ |
| **Effectiveness of Serving Employers –Retention from 2nd to 4thQuarter After Exit (MRC)​** | 75.0%​ | 65.0%​ | 70.0%​ |
| **Effectiveness of Serving Employers –Repeat Business Customers (MRC)​** | 11.6%​ | 11.1%​ | 10.8%​ |

##### C. Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has an active and productive State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).  The SRC works closely with the MRC on ways to improve Vocational Rehabilitation Services for individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on an ongoing basis.

Information and input from SRC members, SRC committees, quarterly SRC meetings, information from the [SRC annual report,](https://www.mass.gov/doc/2021-src-annual-report/download) and input from other consumer meetings and training were used by MRC to develop its goals best designed to address the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities. The agency and the SRC used the results of their review of consumer satisfaction, the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Report, other evaluation data and reports of the effectiveness of the VR program in their development of the goals and priorities. MRC is working with the SRC to modernize and revamp MRC’s Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment processes. The SRC is participating in the working group to assist with setting priorities for the new survey tool, offering guidance on cultural sensitivity in the development and implementation of the tool, and providing consumer feedback at different phases of the work. The work is currently in the bid submission and review stage of the Request for Response.

Additionally, findings and recommendations from RSA monitoring activities conducted under section 107 is also incorporated in MRC’s goals.  MRC used information from [RSA’s 2017 Monitoring Report](https://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/rehab/107-reports/fy2017-ma-g.pdf) of MRC in the development of its goals for the State Plan. MRC also incorporated information from focus groups of consumers and stakeholders conducted with Commonwealth Medicine in 2020 and data analysis on diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.

### m. Order of Selection

Describe:

#### 1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:

##### A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection.  All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

MRC utilizes a fiscal forecasting process to determine whether to implement its OOS policy and to determine if funding is available to serve all eligible individuals and to determine if categories need to be opened or closed. MRC obtains input, guidance, and an official recommendation from the Statewide Rehabilitation Council as part of the process to determine whether an OOS needs to be established or modified.

A functional assessment is provided to all individuals determined eligible to determine their priority category assignment in accordance with 34 CFR 361.42. The definition of the priority categories and the order to be followed if MRC were to implement an OOS is outlined in MRC’s OOS policy VR 19-01.

##### B. The justification for the order

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection.  All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

##### C. The service and outcome goals

 MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection.  All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

##### D. Time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order; and

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection.  All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

##### E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection.  All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

#### 2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment

MRC has elected to take the option of provision of services to VR eligible individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment who are at risk of losing their job. These individuals, upon provision of appropriate documentation, will be placed into services. MRC projects that it will serve 400 individuals annually in PY2022 and PY2023 in need of job retention services at an average cost of $1,000 per individual, resulting in 250 projected employment outcomes annually in both PY2022 and PY203.

### n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds

#### 1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services

MRC will be utilizing Title I funds and Title VI B funds to provide Supported Employment Services. MRC has developed a contingency plan to use Title I funds to provide Supported Employment Services if Title VI B are not appropriated in the federal budget. MRC’s Supported Employment Services are provided under the notation that rates, fees, and expenditures are subject to applicable Commonwealth of Massachusetts statutory, regulatory, and related requirements governing purchases of services and goods. Such parameters of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts govern, amongst other things, methods of procurement. Further, all providers of supported employment services need to qualify through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ interagency contractual process. To the maximum extent possible, the Commission and the Commonwealth utilizes procurement methods which facilitate the provision of services in a manner that affords individuals meaningful choices among the entities (providers) that deliver services.

MRC establishes consumer need for this service on a fiscal year basis and then funds Supported Employment services for those consumers in that specific geographic location to help inform staffing and service delivery needs. In PY22, MRC has a goal to provide Supported Employment Services to 475 consumers across the state through its area offices and its Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) procurement. MRC will prioritize Supported Employment services to consumers with Mental Health needs, Developmental Disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injuries, Autism, and severe learning disabilities, amongst other needs.

#### 2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:

##### A. The provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

MRC will use 50% of Title VI B funds as represented by the Supported Employment-B award to provide supported employment services to youth based on their needs and services outlined in their individualized plan for employment. Services will be provided to assist youth with the most significant disabilities in choosing, obtaining, and maintaining competitive employment based on their interest, abilities, and skills.  Title VI funds will only be used to provide supported employment services to youth once they are placed in a job.  Title I funds will be used to provide supported employment services to youth prior to job placement.

These funds will also be used to provide extended services to up to 4 years for youths with the most significant disabilities until the youth reaches age 25 to assist them in maintaining and advancing in competitive employment. As a contingency plan if Title VI B Supported Employment funds are not appropriated, MRC will also use Title I funds and State funding to provide supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities based on their needs.

##### B. How the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission works with other human service agencies to identify and secure funding and comparable benefits for extended supports for individuals in Supported Employment, including youth with the most significant disabilities. Funding for extended services is available from several sources contingent upon the consumer’s disability, eligibility and the resources available to each state agency. This service delivery system is currently in place enabling state agencies to cost share the appropriate services needed for consumers to choose, find and maintain meaningful competitive supported employment. With the implementation of this initiative to partner with other human service agencies, we have seen an increase in the availability of resources for extended services. However, the available funding is administered at local levels and each situation handled individually. Sources of funding include:

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (State Revenue), Department of Developmental Services, Department of Mental Health, Medicaid Waiver Supported Employment Services, MRC Statewide Head Injury Program, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Social Security Administration Work Incentives, as well as Natural Supports from employers and other comparable benefits.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission continues to promote collaboration with stakeholders regarding supported employment services and extended services. This is also evidenced in the number of jointly funded programs that have developed. Some examples of these collaborative programs are services jointly funded for individuals with intellectual disabilities between the MRC and the Developmental Disability Services (DDS); for expansion of partnership between MRC and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) for individuals with mental health needs; for individuals who have traumatic brain injuries in conjunction with the Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission; and for the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

### o. State's Strategies

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

#### 1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducted a needs assessment (CSNA) during Federal Fiscal Year 2021 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state. Strategies of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs are established consistent with the needs and trends identified in the survey results as necessary for vocational rehabilitation to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expand activities. These strategies are designed to overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs and promote the abilities of people with disabilities to reduce stigmas. Strategies are developed with consultation of the SRC and other stakeholders.

Some strategies developed through this process, as described in the sections below, include development and refinement of MRC’s pre-employment transition service (Pre-ETS) contracting; the development of a new employment model with the Department of Mental Health to assist consumers with mental health needs to obtain employment (This new model is designed to rapidly engage individuals in the Vocational Rehabilitation process.); and expansion of a project with the Department of Transitional Assistance to use the concepts of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) model to engage and employ individuals with disabilities receiving TANF benefits, among other strategies.

MRC was recently awarded a 5-year Innovation Demonstration Grant project from the Rehabilitation Services administration. This program is focused on developing new strategies and practices to serve young adults as an alternative to standard VR, focused on enhancing factors shown to have a positive impact on employment and career advancement, leading to increased employment and wages. MRC also recently completed a 5-year demonstration grant called Transition Pathway Services, funded by RSA, which focused on the provision of work-based learning experiences.  The results from the grant are being evaluated and lessons learned will be used to develop additional best practices in this area and continue to improve transition and Pre-Employment transition services in partnership with schools and providers.

Recognizing the critical need for access to technology during the pandemic, MRC was able to identify and deploy resources to assist with technology needs of consumers who are eager to return to work, including the deployment of laptops, printers, monitors, keyboards and mice, and headsets. In addition to equipment, MRC has provided funding for a “software essentials” training class.

MRC is also implementing strategies to increase the use of data driven decision making. MRC is developing a new case management system known as OneMRC for its Vocational Rehabilitation and Community Living divisions. The goal for this system is to provide additional automated reporting for managers, supervisors, and counselors to be able to easily access information at the statewide, district, office, and counselor level to inform decisions to help improve service delivery to MRC consumers, including the use of Tableau to provide interactive dashboards to staff to assist with measuring agency performance on WIOA Common Measures and other Key Performance Indicators. This will also include consumer and provider portals into the system to help improve services.

MRC is also working with Synergy Consulting with creating processes for greater fiscal agility, fiscal stability, and fiscal accountability within the agency. The goal is to connect and create partnerships between the financial side and program side of MRC, helping to improve service delivery. Synergy is also helping MRC to revamp its Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment surveys to develop and implement an innovative data collection platform to assess consumer experience and engagement with MRC services. A RFR has been released for this project.

#### 2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis

MRC provides an array of assistive technology services and devices to individuals with disabilities through all parts of the VR program and with partners.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low-interest loans to consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology.

In 2021, MRC’s Vocational Rehabilitation Division collaborated with MRC’s MassMATCH AT Act program to carry out a number of projects related to Assistive Technology and employment. Through these projects, MassMATCH’s three AT Regional Centers in Boston, Worcester and Pittsfield increased access to AT devices related to employment, as well as provided training opportunities for staff of MRC, providers, employers, educators, or others who work with individuals with disabilities in achieving their employment goals. The overall purpose of the initiatives was to expand access to and awareness of AT and how it can help individuals with disabilities achieve employment-related goals.

The audience reached was made up of MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and others who work to assist MRC consumers achieve their employment goals. A total of 500 plus people were able to learn about assistive technology in ways they had not before.

MRC also participates in the REquipment program in collaboration with the Department of Developmental Services. REquipment is a durable medical equipment (DME) re-use program offering free refurbished wheelchairs, scooters, shower chairs and more to adults, children and elders living across Massachusetts. This assistive technology service helps people with disabilities in addressing equipment needs to assist them in meeting their employment goals and living independently in the community.

Another program is the MRC Adaptive Assistance program, operated by MRC and two contracted providers, Easter Seals and United Cerebral Palsy. For the purposes of this program, adaptive assistance is defined as devices, aids, and enhancements for the elimination of barriers encountered by individuals with disabilities, primarily individuals with the most significant disabilities. Adaptive assistance is defined as services that either:

1. supplements or enhances functions of the individual or
2. that impacts their environment through changes, e.g., workshop modifications. Rehabilitation technology specialists may prescribe both types of rehabilitation technology services in order to create and/or maximize employment opportunities for an individual with a disability. The rehabilitation technology services are provided to open and/or expand vocational rehabilitation and employment opportunities.

MRC also provides vehicle modification and home modification services to Vocational Rehabilitation consumers with disabilities. The Vehicle Modification Program provides driving evaluations, vehicle modifications and equipment installation to privately owned vehicles of individuals with disabilities to enable them to achieve an employment outcome by removing barriers to transportation.

Vehicle modification services include structural (major) vehicle modifications, non-structural (minor) vehicle modifications and driver evaluation services. Structural modifications may include a lowered floor on mini and full-size vans, raised roof, raised entry, automatic wheelchair lift, automatic door opener, servo primary controls, reduced-effort steering and braking and similar modifications. Non-structural modifications may include mechanical hand controls, car-top wheelchair carriers, scooter lifts, steering knobs and similar modifications.

In 2020 RSA authorized MRC to purchase two evaluation vehicles equipped with a variety of conventional and high-tech vehicle modifications to be used by MRC Vehicle Modification Program in evaluating consumers for driving and for general transportation needs. Last year the Commission awarded a contract to one of our long term vendors to purchase, modify and equip two minivans, Honda Odyssey and Chrysler Pacifica. Each vehicle will be equipped with a lowered floor, automatic ramp and with conventional as well as a high-tech driving equipment.

The vehicles and equipment would be from different competing manufacturers allowing for evaluating of consumers with a wide range of disabilities and for competitively procuring vehicle modifications.  The Honda minivan will be modified by VMI of Phoenix, AZ and will receive a set of high-tech evaluation equipment by EMC Corporation of Augusta, ME.

The Chrysler minivan will be modified by Braunability, of Winamac, IN and equipped with a high-tech evaluation package from Paravan, a German company.

MRC is in a process of awarding a “hosting” contract for both vehicles to a local driving school that provides driver evaluations and driver training services to our consumers.

The Adaptive Housing Program provides housing evaluations, architectural services, housing modifications, and equipment installation to individuals with disabilities to enable them to achieve an employment outcome by removing barriers to living in their current home.

Adaptive Housing services include major and minor home modifications. Major home modifications may include wheelchair ramps and lifts, stairlifts, bathroom modifications (such as roll-in showers, roll under sinks, higher toilets and wider doors), and kitchen modifications (such as lowered counters, and roll under cooktops). Minor Home Modifications may include door openers, grab bars, handrails, and widening of doors.

Vehicle Modification and Home Modification services are available to MRC consumers who need these services in their Individualized Plans for Employment.

MRC also works with employers to help facilitate accommodations and to facilitate the provision of on-the-job assistive technology devices to individuals with disabilities employed through the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Persons served under MRC’s Assistive Technology programs described above are applicants or consumers of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The target population is individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom rehabilitation technology services are considered to potentially eliminate barriers to vocational rehabilitation and/or enhance vocational rehabilitation and employment opportunities. These services are available statewide.

Population includes:

1. Potential applicants undergoing evaluation of vocational rehabilitation, especially when the disabling condition of the individual is of such a nature and severity that the inability of rehabilitation technology services to eliminate barriers to and/or enhance capacities could result in a determination of ineligibility;
2. Eligible vocational rehabilitation consumers for whom rehabilitation technology is being considered to assist the consumer to attain intermediate objectives and long-range rehabilitation goals; and
3. Eligible employed individuals to eliminate barriers to and/or enhance capacities for successful job performance.

Adaptive assistance evaluations, training, and consultations for individuals with disabilities served by the vocational rehabilitation program were:

1. Assessments of functional capacities of individuals with disabilities to include determinations of if and how the provision of rehabilitation technology services is likely to affect the capacity of the individual to perform successfully in competitive employment and/or enhance opportunities for the development of capacities for competitive employment;
2. Recommendations of specific rehabilitation technology for individuals with disabilities to include descriptions of related barriers to be eliminated and descriptions of functional capacities to be attained;
3. Rehabilitation technology training to affect the capacity of the individual with a disability to utilize specific assistive technology devices (equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities) and thus perform successfully in competitive employment and/or enhance opportunities for the development of capacities for competitive employment; and
4. Consultations to be provided to Commission staff to address the elimination of disability-related barriers, improvement of opportunities for competitive employment, and the development of functional capacities of individuals.

#### 3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program

MRC is focused on strategies ensuring equity in service delivery to consumers from all community and has made a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, including outreaching to and serving individuals from minority and underserved communities. MRC is hiring a DEIA manager to oversee the agency’s DEIA efforts. This role will report directly to the Commissioner and will be on the Executive Team. MRC is also working on the creation of a DEI Strategy and Implementation Plan and has created a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Council consisting of a cross-section of stakeholders. Goals, plans, and strategies are being developed to increase outreach to minority community with the goal of increasing their participation in the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

MRC has made a commitment to outreach to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities, especially to Asian communities who have been identified as undeserved. MRC is committed to having bilingual staff to more effectively reach those communities and to the expectation that directors from local area offices be involved in outreach to local community agencies and organizations, especially those that serve ethnic and cultural minorities. MRC is working on efforts to improve outreach to all communities to ensure equity in access to MRC VR services.

MRC also has an ongoing statewide Bilingual/Bicultural vocational rehabilitation counselor group who meet on a regular basis to: discuss and share resources on how to outreach to and serve cultural and ethnic minorities, develop new or translate existing agency forms and brochures, and develop and conduct training programs in collaboration with MRC’s Learning and Development Department for local and district offices. These 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 continue increasing its data collection in areas related to DEIA to track progress.

MRC is also working to redesign and modernize its platforms for obtaining consumer input. MRC has launched an Office of Consumer and Family Engagement and is working in partnership with the SRC to develop and implement an innovative data collection platform to assess consumer experience and engagement with MRC services, with focus on DEIA principles and practices to ensure MRC is hearing the voices of all its consumers from all communities to ensure their needs are being met.

MRC has translated key forms and informational materials into Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, French Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese as outlined in MRC’s Language Access Plan. MRC has also translated all correspondence letters in its electronic case management system into Asian languages spoken by MRC staff including: Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese, Khmer and Vietnamese.  MRC also has contracts for foreign language translation services.   As part of its working group established to work on outreach to the Asian and other diverse communities, MRC will be seeking to develop and translate new outreach and referral information.

MRC will continue to work with its Employee Resource Groups, Bilingual Committee, the SRC, its DEIA council, the Office of Consumer and Family Engagement, and other groups to focus on goals and strategies for outreach to diverse and underserved communities.

#### 4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services)

Based on the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, MRC continues to implement strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities, including Pre-Employment Transition Services, through many efforts, including a multi-million dollar procurement to provide Pre-ETS services to eligible and potentially eligible consumers. For eligible consumers, specific services are addressed in the consumers’ individualized plan for employment based on their interests, choice, and needs. MRC continues its efforts to closely coordinate transition services and Pre-Employment Transition Services with local educational agencies. MRC has also worked with schools and its service providers on remote service delivery strategies to ensure youths and students with disabilities continued to receive transition and pre-employment transition services during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Through its MOU with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), MRC operates a working group to identify needs and best practices to improve and expand services for students with disabilities, including Pre-Employment Transition Services. MRC will continue to work closely with DESE to further coordinate service efforts and DESE has produced guidance for local school districts on working with MRC to coordinate transition services, including amending and refining the MOU as needed. This is incorporated as part of MRC’s strategic planning process

MRC has a Transition team approach to oversee transition, coordination with educational authorities, and implementation of strategies to improve and expand services to students with disabilities. MRC recently completed a 5 year federal demonstration grant entitled Transition Pathway Services to promote best practices for Pre-ETS and Work-Based learning. MRC will use lessons from this grant to incorporate best practices for coordinating Pre-Employment Transition Services and transition services to students and youths with disabilities going forward.

#### 5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State

MRC and community rehabilitation providers continue to work closely to operate a variety of programs and services to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve suitable employment outcomes. These programs include: Vocational Services; Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES), MRC’s revised Pre-Employment Transition Services procurement (including provision of Pre-ETS to potentially eligible students), the MRC-DMH Employment project, and many other support services that are essential in vocational rehabilitation.

MRC has adjusted the CIES model based on lessons learned and input from its staff, Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) partners, and other stakeholders.  These adjustments were designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CIES services for MRC consumers. MRC also incorporated peer support and flexible supports into the CIES procurement. MRC has worked with CRPs to ensure services can be delivered in remote and hybrid structures to consumers as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

MRC is also working closely with CRPs on a project with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to provide contracted employment services under the CIES program for consumers participating in the Department of Mental Health’s Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) model. As part of MRC ACCS services through CIES, MRC has entered into Business Associate Agreements (BAAs) with CIES ACCS providers to assist with facilitating and coordinating services between MRC, DMH, and providers for participating consumers.

MRC and community providers collaborate in developing programs and services in such forums as: Statewide Rehabilitation Council that meets quarterly, meetings with representatives of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers, meetings with the Massachusetts Providers Council, periodic district wide meetings with community rehabilitation programs, interagency and cross disability agency councils, task specific work teams, the Massachusetts Association of People Supporting Employment First (MAAPSE), the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Association (MRA), and other provider trade groups across the Commonwealth. In addition, MRC Business Improvement Partners and MRC local area office staff also conduct quarterly review meetings to assess performance and provide feedback to assist CRPs providing services for MRC.

#### 6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA

MRC has established an electronic reporting and performance measurement system to monitor, analyze, and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs. This system will allow the agency to make improvements to ensure optimal performance in accordance with the WIOA common performance measures. MRC continues to collect data on these measures and began reporting data to RSA in the fall of 2017. MRC has also developed and provided several trainings in coordination with WINTAC on the Common Performance Measures which has been delivered to MRC managers, staff, and the SRC. MRC also participates in a cross-agency workgroup with workforce partners on performance measurement under the Common Measures.

MRC continues to develop strategies designed to improve MRC’s performance under the WIOA Common Performance Measures. MRC is focusing on the development of strategies to promote the placement of consumers into high quality careers with higher wages and benefits. MRC will also be developing training strategies for staff and its provider network to focus on high quality employment outcomes and seek ways to increase the median wage by focusing on more full-time jobs rather than part-time jobs. MRC will also strive to provide benefits planning on the front end of the placement process to ensure consumers understand how working may affect public benefits they may be receiving and to know about work benefits that are available for them to obtain high paying and self-sustainable employment. MRC was also awarded a 5-year Innovation Demonstration Grant project from the Rehabilitation Services administration. This program is focused on developing new strategies and practices to serve young adults as an alternative to standard VR, focused on enhancing factors shown to have a positive impact on employment and career advancement, leading to increased employment and wages.

MRC has developed a series of ongoing trainings on WIOA Common Performance Measures, focusing on Measurable Skills Gains and Credential Attainment. A detailed Job Aid, training video, FAQ document, and ongoing technical assistance sessions have been developed and are provided to MRC counselors, supervisors, and managers. Monthly reports have been developed and are sent to VR staff to assist with performance in these areas. As part of its initiative to develop a new case management system, MRC will also develop dashboard reports to track performance on the caseload, office, district, and statewide level to assist with the WIOA Common Measures and other Key Performance Indicators.

#### 7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities

As a key partner in the statewide Workforce Investment system, MRC continues to work towards to strengthen the alignment of the VR program with the other core programs of the workforce development system. MRC subscribes to the overall vision for the Massachusetts Workforce Investment system as described below.

All Massachusetts residents, including individuals with disabilities, will benefit from a seamless system of education and workforce services that supports career pathways for individuals and leads to a more informed, educated, and skilled workforce, which meets the Commonwealth’s businesses’ demands and sustains a thriving economy. To achieve this vision, Massachusetts will engage businesses to understand their needs and develop an integrated education and workforce system that supports career pathways to prepare residents with foundational, technical, professional skills and information and connections to postsecondary education and training. MRC will work with its core workforce partners to:

1. Design career pathways across partners aligned with business demand;
2. Improve foundational skills and transition to postsecondary education and training for individuals with barriers to employment;
3. Assist individuals to achieve economic self-sufficiency through support services, labor market driven credentialing, and employment; and
4. Meet the needs of job seekers and businesses who engage in the public workforce system (including partner programs).

As part of implementing strategies to meet this common vision, MRC is collaborating with other core partners in the workforce investment system to reduce unemployment of individuals with disabilities, to provide effective services to employers throughout the state, and to seek out collaborative opportunities including possible projects and grants that may assist individuals with disabilities across Massachusetts in obtaining competitive employment.  MRC has entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with its workforce partners.  This MOU outlines the principles for the continued development of the Massachusetts Workforce System.  The MOU articulates a coordinated vision for organizing the public workforce system.

MRC continues its efforts to work closely with other partners in the workforce development system to assess performance and develop methods to track shared consumers across the workforce system, among other collaborations. MRC participates in numerous workgroups such as the WIOA Steering Committee, WIOA Systems Integration Workgroup, and other committees who are working on the alignment and improvement of services under the workforce system, including services to individuals with disabilities. MRC is working with its workforce partners on the development of Workforce Connect as a consumer-facing and staff-facing dashboard and case management overlay to track shared consumers across the workforce system, among others.

Also, MRC continues to work with its workforce partners on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.

MRC continues to work on aligning its services and increasing its presence at the career centers as MRC is a required partner in the Career Center network. The MRC Commissioner serves on the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), and each area director has a formal relationship with at least one career center. In addition, area directors or other MRC staff are on local workforce investment boards. MRC has counselors assigned to each career center who are scheduling hours at the local career centers to provide an array of vocational rehabilitation services. MRC has leasing space at all career centers to further increase MRC’s presence and operates a satellite office in the Southbridge Career Center. MRC updates its MOUs and infrastructure and cost-sharing agreements with local areas and the Career Centers on an annual basis which were negotiated on the local level. MRC’s assigned counselors and job placement staff continue to work closely with local career centers to provide high quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities seeking expanded employment opportunities and to make the career centers more responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities including providing disability sensitivity training for career center staff, and ensuring the career centers are accessible to all job seekers.

MRC will also work with its partners such as Community College and employer partners to coordinate training opportunities for individuals with disabilities on nights and weekends to accommodate those who are not able to attend trainings during traditional work hours.

#### 8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:

##### A. Achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducted a needs assessment during Federal Fiscal Year 2021 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state. The strategies of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs are established by the Senior Leadership Team, consistent with the needs and trends identified in the needs assessment, in order to achieve its goals and priorities, and support innovation and expansion activities. These strategies are designed to overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs. MRC will utilize the following strategies to achieve each of its stated goals and priorities, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment.

1. MRC engages in outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities which includes staff outreach to community and state agencies, schools, other public institutions, and the general public by contact and presentation by MRC local office, district and administrative staff, printed brochures, and consumer meetings and trainings. MRC is working on efforts to improve outreach to all communities to ensure equity in access to MRC VR services. MRC will continue to work with its Employee Resource Groups, Bilingual Committee, the SRC, its DEIA council, the Office of Consumer and Family Engagement, and other groups to focus on outreach to diverse and underserved communities.
2. MRC provides Supported Employment Services to consumers statewide through its network of Area Offices, working with community rehabilitation providers, links with the local school system for transitioning youth and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health, especially through its clubhouse programs.
3. MRC continues to work closely with the SRC.  A workplan has been created for the MRC and SRC to track progress on the SRC recommendations that informed the development of MRC’s goals and strategies.  The workplan is blended and braided with the SRC’s objectives as listed in their annual report. The SRC with the support of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) engaged a consultant to help the Council to apply Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles and to increase the competency of the Councils leaders and members around the federal mandates of the SRC. In May 2021, the consultants began to assess the Council’s strengths and weaknesses, revise our mission and vision to reflect a commitment to DEI, and compile and train us on DEI centric tools to assist the SRC with leadership and operational capacity building. As the SRC infuses DEI principles into its leadership and operational structure, we will be better equipped to support MRC as it performs vocation rehabilitation outreach and service delivery to unserved/underserved individuals with disabilities eligible for and receiving vocational rehabilitation, especially in communities of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC). The consultancy wrapped up in December 2021 with the presentation of The SRC Five-Year Roadmap to Practice and Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI): 2021-2025. The final version of the roadmap is on target for completion in February 2022 and will be discussed with the MRC Commissioner in March 2022.
4. MRC continues to maintain and develop partnerships to help enhance and coordinate services for individuals with disabilities. This includes training programs with MassHire Career Centers, the Department of Mental Health, and the Empower to Employ Initiative with the Department of Transitional Assistance, among others
5. MRC provides an array of assistive technology services and devices to individuals with disabilities through the VR program and with partners. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low-interest loans to consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology. MRC has identified how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the Vocational Rehabilitation process; and has worked to ensure that assistive technology services and devices are available and provided to individuals with disabilities across the state.
6. MRC, in consortium with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (MCDHH), was awarded an Innovation Demonstration Grant project from the Rehabilitation Services administration. This program will serve vocational rehabilitation (VR)-eligible young adults with a disability, ages 18–30. This program is focused on developing new strategies and practices as an alternative to standard VR, focused on enhancing factors shown to have a positive impact on employment and career advancement, namely, self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-sufficiency, and self-advocacy. This program has three phases: Career Readiness; Career Pathways; and, Career Extended Support, and will be delivered via Integrated Resource Teams separate from standard VR. The goal of the project will be for young adults to have improved levels of career readiness and career sustainability, and decreased reliance on public assistance.
7. MRC is rolling out an integrated eligibility process for the agency known as MRC Connect. MRC Connect provides a dedicated and virtual team that guides an applicant through a cross-program application process for MRC’s VR program as well as MRC’s CL programs. A standardized application/referral form on MRC’s website initiates the process by collecting information from applicants based on their needs, and then the team engages applicants to streamline their eligibility determination across multiple programs as applicable, including determination of eligibility for VR. The integrated eligibility process is being rolled out in stages, and currently three VR offices and several MRC Community Living programs are part of this process, with the remaining VR offices and CL programs scheduled to be rolled out in stages through 2022.
8. MRC’s Analytics and Quality Assurance Department staff conducts ongoing training with agency managers, supervisors, and local staff at meetings and at district and local area offices on the Common Performance Measures and other key performance indicators, and overall agency performance including what they mean, how they are derived from agency statistics and how they impact agency performance. The Analytics and Quality Assurance Department also presents and disseminates information on Common Performance Measures, Data trends, and Needs Assessment results on a regular basis. MRC is developing a new case management system known as OneMRC for its Vocational Rehabilitation and Community Living divisions. The goal for this system is to provide additional automated reporting for managers, supervisors, and counselors to be able to easily access information at the statewide, district, office, and counselor level to inform decisions to help improve service delivery to MRC consumers, including the use of Tableau to provide interactive dashboards to staff to assist with measuring agency performance on WIOA Common Measures and other Key Performance Indicators.

##### B. Support innovation and expansion activities; and

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the Commission under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act as Amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. Consistent with the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and goals and priorities identified in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council, the Commission uses funds to support innovation and expansion activities to address the needs of individuals with disabilities, primarily individuals with the most significant disabilities. Activities include:

1. On-The-Job Trainings and Job-Driven Trainings with Employer Partners: MRC continues to expand Job-Driven Trainings (JDT) and On-the-Job (OJT) training and evaluations. MRC has found that many consumers who participate in an OJT or Job-Driven training obtain employment with the OJT or JDT.  Other participants can obtain employment elsewhere as a result of their participation in the OJT or JDT because they gained recent work experience and/or developed job-specific skills. MRC has created job driven training programs to date with the Home Depot, CVS Health, Lowes, CISCO, Red River Technologies, G4S Security Solutions, the Kraft Group, MAPFRE Insurance, Advance Auto Parts, and Enterprise Holdings, and Allied Universal Security Services, amongst other employers. In addition, MRC holds job-driven trainings for human service jobs and addiction recovery jobs MRC also offers paid internships related to job-driven trainings. MRC will also work with its employer partners to coordinate training opportunities for individuals with disabilities on nights and weekends to accommodate those who are not able to attend these trainings during traditional work hours.
2. MRC-Department of Mental Health Employment Initiative: MRC coordinates employment services for individuals with mental health needs served by the Department of Mental Health’s Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program in collaboration with DMH and its vendors.  The new MRC/DMH Employment Initiative is designed to build an integrated employment framework that inspires and engages innovation to ensure full employment for people with mental health needs at the same rate of employment as the general population.  The focus of this initiative is on individuals served by DMH through Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS).  These individuals are being referred to MRC for Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services. To serve these individuals, MRC is using an Integrated Resource Team approach, where partner agencies and supports come together to craft and jointly own a Job Seeker’s employment goal, to coordinate wrap-around services and ongoing collaboration and communication. MRC has hired dedicated staff with funding through the ISA to work with ACCS referrals.  These counselors will have smaller caseloads and will work with MRC CIES providers, DMH providers, DMH, and other MRC staff to rapidly engage with consumers, develop a plan for employment, and coordinate services designed to assist these consumers in achieving successful employment outcomes.
3. Consumer Technology Initiative to obtain hardware and software for consumers to assist with accessing services remotely and to assist with applying for and obtaining employment, including technical support from a vendor to assist with issues related to the technology, and training on how to use the technology.
4. IT enhancements to modernize the agency’s technology and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services.  MRC is developing a new case management system for both Vocational Rehabilitation and its Community Living divisions known as OneMRC This new modern platform will modernize the agency’s case management and reporting and will include a provider portal to assist in reporting and tracking the provision of Pre-ETS services to potentially eligible consumers, to enhance tracking and reporting on internal job placement services, to develop a consumer portal for information and referral, and to move the agency to a fully paperless system. This system will also enhance reporting and data available to staff and will be used to develop reports and data dashboards to bring data down to the office and caseload level to assist with data driven decision making to help improve services to MRC consumers.
5. MRC’s Job Placement Unit operates an annual Federal Hiring Event in partnership with MCB, other workforce partners, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in their Boston and Hartford offices. The Hiring Event assists consumers with securing competitive employment comparable with their interests and abilities. MRC prepares consumers to interview for available jobs with employers participating in the event. It focuses on direct job placement with participating employers and is not simply a career fair. MRC will be completing its 10th hiring event in 2022. Since 2013, Over 575 individuals have been successfully employed across the Commonwealth through participating in this annual one-day event. The aggregate annual wages of all successfully employed consumers through the hiring event since 2013 is approximately $12.7 million.  Consumers have been employed in a variety of occupations ranging from office and administrative support, health care, protective service, human services, and management occupations, amongst others.
6. Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in State Jobs: MRC places numerous individuals with disabilities into state government jobs each year, including at MRC. MRC has a diverse workforce with a high percentage of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. We have a key contact with the state’s Human Resources Division to facilitate employment for consumers in state jobs, including the provision of On-The-Job training and internship opportunities with state and federal agencies. The Commonwealth also participates in MRC’s annual hiring event to provide information to consumers on available state job opportunities, including how to apply.
7. MRC has developed a pilot model to
8. Learn to Earn:  MRC is engaged with the Learn to Earn initiative. Learn to Earn is a comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs with the supports, skills, and credentials they need to gain and retain employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand. Learn to Earn Programs will help participants set and achieve goals necessary for employment and sustained economic stability, such as maintaining and growing family net resources and minimizing the real or perceived potential impact of increased earned income on benefit receipt, including improving coordination across benefit programs and reducing benefit cliff effects.  As part of this program, MRC is providing information on benefits counseling.
9. Apprenticeships: MRC will utilize available apprenticeship resources, including the ODEP guide to expand apprenticeship, to provide apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth. As an example, MRC participates in the Merit Apprenticeship Program. Additionally, MRC has obtained a copy of the ODEP guide on apprenticeships. MRC will also work with the Career Centers on providing apprenticeship opportunities for consumers. MRC has leased space at the career centers and has staff dedicated to the career centers to make available the range of career services from Career Centers for MRC consumers. MRC has made a new connection with the Department of Labor and is working on strategies as part of its cybersecurity Job Driven Training program.
10. MRC has developed an Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to develop training programs to assist individuals with disabilities to complete training programs and obtain credentials to be substance abuse counselors.  This has been identified as a growth area and a higher compensated profession in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
11. MRC has developed a partnership with the Career Centers known as the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.
12. MRC partners and contracts with the Asperger/Autism Network's (AANE) Life Management Assistance Program (LifeMAP). This program provides practical assistance to individuals on the Autism Spectrum and other related conditions. LifeMAP provides intensive, highly individualized coaching by professionals with expertise in both Autism Spectrum Disorder and specific content areas. Coaches focus on identifying and overcoming the specific barriers each client faces so that the clients can increase their levels of independence towards reaching their full potential.

##### C. Overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

MRC strategies to overcome barriers relating to access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the MRC VR Services Program and the MRC Supported Employment Services Program include the following. MRC is committed to equitable access to VR services and is focused on numerous diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives to help promote equity in MRC service delivery and outreach to diverse communities to ensure their needs are being met :

1. MRC Connect Integrated Eligibility Project: MRC is rolling out an integrated eligibility process for the agency known as MRC Connect. MRC Connect provides a dedicated and virtual team that guides an applicant through a cross-program application process for MRC’s VR program as well as MRC’s CL programs. A standardized application/referral form on MRC’s website initiates the process by collecting information from applicants based on their needs, and then the team engages applicants to streamline their eligibility determination across multiple programs as applicable, including determination of eligibility for VR. This process is intended to improve the ease and access for individuals with disabilities to access MRC services and obtain information on services, including Vocational Rehabilitation services.
2. Outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities. MRC conducts outreach to community and state agencies, schools, other public institutions, and the general public.  This is accomplished through direct contact and presentations by MRC local office, district and administrative staff, use of printed brochures, and agency consumer and employer trainings.
3. The MRC Supported Employment Program provides Supported Employment Services to consumers statewide through its local Area Offices. Services are coordinated by MRC counselors using a network of community rehabilitation providers, links with the local school system for transitioning youth and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health, especially through its clubhouse programs.
4. MRC has an ongoing statewide Bilingual/Bicultural vocational rehabilitation counselor group who meet on a regular basis to: discuss and share resources on how to outreach to and serve cultural and ethnic minorities, develop new or translate existing agency forms and brochures, and develop and conduct training programs for local and district offices in collaboration with the Commission’s staff development unit. MRC has twelve VR counselors skilled in American Sign Language (ASL) and are qualified to work with consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing; thirty are fluent in Spanish and work with Hispanic consumers; four are able to communicate in Cantonese; two in Vietnamese, three are fluent in Portuguese; three are fluent in Khmer, three are fluent in French/Haitian Creole, and one counselor is fluent in Hindi and Tamil. A smaller number of area directors, head clerks and other clerical staff are fluent in American Sign Language, Spanish, Khmer, Cantonese, Mandarin, Haitian Creole, or Portuguese. Eleven full- and part-time sign language interpreters are also on staff. The Commission also maintains a statewide contract with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to secure additional ASL interpreters and CART reporters, as needed. Staff with specific language skills and interpreters are geographically placed to coincide with population and other demographics relating to target consumer groups.
5. DEIA Projects – MRC is focused on numerous DEIA efforts. MRC is hiring a DEIA manager to oversee the agency’s DEIA efforts. This role will report directly to the Commissioner and will be on the Executive Team. MRC is also working on the creation of a DEI Strategy and Implementation Plan and has created a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Council consisting of a cross-section of stakeholders.
6. Social Media & Communication Department – MRC has a new communications department staff who are developing new strategies to communicate with MRC consumers and stakeholders, including increased use of social media and digital communication tools.
7. Department of Family and Consumer Engagement – As part of MRC’s commitment to elevating the voices and leadership of the disability community within all decision-making spaces at MRC, the Office of Individual and Family Engagement was brought to life in 2020. The office is charged with developing a plan for the agency to work with MRC consumers and their families to solicit input on new initiatives and operational issues and provide opportunities for ongoing dialogue. In recent months, The Office of Individual and Family Engagement has developed multiple platforms to listen and learn from MRC Consumers. In October 2021, MRC hosted it’s second Listening and Learning Forum, a two-hour virtual space to bring together disability community members, families, and professional stakeholders to learn about MRC Services directly from other consumers, provide feedback on upcoming MRC initiatives, and engage in community peer support. Additionally, MRC disseminated its first consumer and family newsletter in November 2021, focused on providing success stories, event highlights, and ongoing resources for consumers and their supporters.
8. MRC has translated key forms and informational materials into Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, French Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese as outlined in MRC’s Language Access Plan. MRC has translated all correspondence letters in its electronic case management system into these languages as well. MRC coordination of outreach services to community organizations in areas with underserved populations. MRC will continue to work with its Employee Resource Groups, Bilingual Committee, the SRC, its DEIA council and other groups to focus on outreach to diverse and underserved communities and develop appropriate training programs for staff.
9. MRC is working to ensure equitable access to services for consumers with Autism. MRC has worked with several organizations such as The Asperger/Autism Network (AANE) to provide training to staff and providers on the needs of individuals with autism, including competency to address behavioral, communication (including Alternative Augmentative Communication or AAC), sensory, social, and generalization needs. This will assist MRC staff in developing the capacity to address behavioral, communication (including AAC), sensory, social, and generalization needs for consumers. MRC also works with AANE to provide life-mapping services to individuals on the Autism spectrum to ensure equitable access.
10. MRC partners and contracts with the Federation for Children with Special Needs to assist families in accessing MRC services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).
11. MRC’s new innovation grant will focus on serving youth and other underserved populations to assist in the employment of individuals with disabilities and assist with developing strategies for innovative Vocational Rehabilitation services.

### p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

Describe:

#### 1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

##### A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission developed the following goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs for the previous Program Year as submitted in the approved VR services portion of the Massachusetts PY2020-PY2024 Combined State Plan. These goals were identified based on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, these goals are based upon agency performance on the former RSA Standards and Indicators, recommendations, and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. MRC will review progress on these goals on a regular basis with senior management. This is a report on progress on these goals based on PY2019 (FY2020), and PY2020 (FY2021) outcomes.

MRC’s strategies are to work with the senior management team to evaluate and assess progress towards the achievement of these goals, to identify lessons learned, and any corrective actions. Progress towards goals is distributed to local managers, supervisors, and counseling staff and will be reviewed with the SRC and other stakeholders.

**MRC Goal 1**
Create career pathways for job seekers through increasing Employment Outcomes through placement, training, and Job Driven Trainings provided through MRC’s Job Placement Unit, Employer Account Management System, and Annual Statewide Hiring Event.  Continue to coordinate these business engagement efforts with WIOA partners as part of the overall MassHire Massachusetts workforce system.

This aligns with Goal II of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Continue measuring Key Performance Indicators related to Successful Employment Outcomes (SEO’s) including:

* Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes for Vocational Rehabilitation Division and percentage change over the prior year’s results
* Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes achieved through the involvement of the MRC in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year’s results
* Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 closures) with Employers participating in MRC’s Account Management System in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year’s results
* Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 Closures) from consumers participating in MRC’s annual Statewide Hiring Event in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year’s results
* Continue to coordinate business engagement efforts as part of the MassHire workforce system through quarterly meetings of the Business Services and Engagement Workgroup

Target:

MRC’s target goals:

* 3,700 Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC’s Vocational Rehabilitation Division and 3% a positive percentage change over prior year results, with 15% of all VR eligible consumers served achieving a successful employment outcome.
* Exceed 400 Successful Employment Outcomes, or 11% of all SEOs, for MRC’s Job Placement Unit annually and a positive percentage change over prior year results
* Exceed 200 Employment Outcomes, or 5.5% of all SEOs, from Employer Account Management System annually
* Greater than 50% of JPS Successful Employment Outcomes are the result of employer referrals
* 40% Successful Employment Outcomes for consumers participating in Statewide Hiring Event achieve a annually, a 3% increase over prior year’s outcomes
* Completion of quarterly meetings of the MassHire Business Services and Engagement Workgroup

Data Sources:

MRCIS, Workgroup materials

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.

**Evaluation of Progress: Goal 1:**

**Number and Percent of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC’s VR Division:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #1** | **FY20 #** | **FY20 %** | **FY21 #** | **FY21 %** |
| **Goal** | 3,700 | 15.0% | 3,700 | 15.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 3,042 | 13.5% | 2,727 | 12.7% |

**Number and Percent of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC’s Job Placement Unit**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #1** | **FY20 #** | **FY20 %** | **FY21 #** | **FY21 %** |
| **Goal** | 400 | 11% | 400 | 11% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 680 | 22.3% | 597 | 21.8% |

**Number and Percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 closures) with Employers participating in MRC’s Account Management System in the current fiscal year:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #1** | **FY20 #** | **FY20 %** | **FY21 #** | **FY21 %** |
| **Goal** | 200 | 5.5% | 200 | 5.5% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 644 | 21.2% | 561 | 20.6% |

**Number and Percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 Closures) from consumers participating in MRC’s annual Statewide Hiring Event in the current fiscal year:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #1** | **FY20 %** | **FY21 %** |
| **Goal** | 40.0% | 40.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 28.0% | 46.0% |

**Completion of quarterly meetings of the MassHire Business Services and Engagement Workgroup:**

Completed – MRC continued to participate in ongoing meetings of the MassHire Business Services and Engagement Workgroup throughout FY2020 and FY2021.

**Comment on Progress:**

MRC saw a decrease in referrals, consumers served, and employment outcomes in FY2020 and FY2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic which impacted MRC consumers, providers, employers, and MRC staff, leading MRC to have a decrease in employment outcomes. MRC did meet its goals related to the number and percent of employment outcomes for MRC’s hiring event, top employers in its account management system, and its Job Placement Unit despite the pandemic.

**MRC Goal 2:**

Successfully implement a joint venture using the MRC Competitive Integrated Employment Service (CIES) program and the Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to increase employment outcomes and create career pathways to better meet the needs of individuals with Behavioral Health needs utilizing the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model and the CIES Pay for Performance competitive employment model.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan.

Key Performance Indicators:

MRC will evaluate the ACCS program based on Key Performance Indicators.

* MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with ACCS Counselors
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with CIES-ACCS providers
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with internal Job Placement Services
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers having a completed IPE within 45 days from eligibility
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers or MRC Job Placement Unit Staff as part of their ACCS services
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers are successfully maintaining employment for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed who are working an average and median of 20+ hours/week
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receiving an average hourly wage of $12.50/hour and a median hourly wage of $12.25/hour
* 80% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received

Target:

To complete deployment of MRC-DMH employment initiative by the end of the Program Year 2020 (PY20). MRC is currently in the process of developing multi-year annual targets and will update as required.

* MRC ACCS Counselors will serve 900 job seekers based on the caseload capacity goal of 50 per caseload, 60% or more of cases will have eligibility completed within 30 days of application
* This is a newly established program, and baseline information will need to be established before creating a decisive goal.  A goal of MRC ACCS Referrals will be established based on the program’s first year results.
* This is a newly established program, and baseline information will need to be established before creating a decisive goal.  A goal of MRC ACCS Job Seekers engaging with internal Job Placement Services will be established based on the program’s first year results.
* 60% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers will have a completed IPE within 45 days from eligibility.
* 65% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers within the program year.
* 95% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers with Social Security Insurance or Social Security Disability Insurance are receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services
* 75% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers will be successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services.
* 75% of Job Seekers will successfully maintaining employment after placement for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services.
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed work an average and median of 22.5 hours/week.
* MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receive an average hourly wage of $12.50/hour and a median hourly wage of $12.25/hour.
* MRC ACCS 80% of Job Seekers are satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, CIES-ACCS Vendor Reports, MRC Satisfaction Survey

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Evaluation of Progress: MRC Goal 2:**

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with ACCS Counselors:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #2** | **FY20 #** | **FY21 #** |
| **Goal** | 900 | 900 |
| **Actual Outcome** | 1028 | 1494 |

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with CIES-ACCS providers:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #2** | **FY20 #** | **FY21 #** |
| **Goal** | Baseline | Baseline |
| **Actual Outcome** | 62.4% | 64.1% |

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with internal Job Placement Services:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #2** | **FY20 #** | **FY21 #** |
| **Goal** | Baseline | Baseline |
| **Actual Outcome** | 52 | 115 |

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers having a completed IPE within 45 days from eligibility:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #2** | **FY20 %** | **FY21 %** |
| **Goal** | 60.0% | 60.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 55.0% | 64.0% |

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers or MRC Job Placement Unit Staff as part of their ACCS services:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #2** | **FY20 %** | **FY21 %** |
| **Goal** | 65.0% | 65.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 48.3% | 59.0% |

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #2** | **FY20 %** | **FY21 %** |
| **Goal** | 95.0% | 95.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 64.9% | 69.5% |

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #2** | **FY20 %** | **FY21 %** |
| **Goal** | 75.0% | 75.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 7.5% | 19.4% |

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers are successfully maintaining employment for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #2** | **FY20 %** | **FY21 %** |
| **Goal** | 75.0% | 75.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 70.0% | 63.0% |

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed who are working an average and median of 20+ hours/week:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #2** | **Average FY20 #** | **Median FY20 #** | **Average**  | **Median FY21 #** |
| **Goal** | 20+ Hours | 20+ Hours | 20+ Hours | 20+ Hours |
| **Actual Outcome** | 20.7 Hours | 20 Hours | 21.4 Hours | 20 hours |

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receiving an average hourly wage of $12.50/hour and a median hourly wage of $12.25/hour:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #2** | **Average FY20 #** | **Median FY20 #** | **Average FY21 #** | **Median FY21 #** |
| **Goal** | $12.50 | $12.25 | $12.50 | $12.25 |
| **Actual Outcome** | $13.95 | $12.75 | $14.75 | $13.75 |

**80% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received: (will be done in next 2 years**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #2** | **FY20 %** | **FY21 %** |
| **Goal** | 80.0% | 80.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | N/A | N/A |

Comment on Progress:

MRC has successfully deployed its ACCS employment initiative in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health. MRC is now in the 3rd year of this program. MRC continues to track performance on ACCS Key Performance Indicators monthly. In FY19 and FY20, MRC achieved its targets for most of its Key Performance Indicators for ACCS. These metrics are reviewed monthly and are used by agency leadership and local leadership to guide program changes. MRC has seen success in this program with placements, use of benefits planning, and moving individuals into eligibility and IPEs in a timely fashion, with a reduced front-end drop out rate compared to the regular VR program.

**MRC Goal 3:**

Fully implement the redesign of the Empower to Employ program in collaboration with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to work to improve services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF support utilizing the Integrated Resource Team Model and the Pay for Performance competitive employment model.  This project is part of MRC’s efforts with its WIOA partners to align and coordinate services amongst state partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan.

Key Performance Indicators:

* MRC will evaluate the Empower to Employ program using Key Performance Indicators with DTA and will update as required.  Complete an ISA between MRC and DTA and hire staff for MRC-DTA Individual Planning and Support Pilot Project.   Use data from Key Performance Indicators to develop targets during PY2020 and PY2021 based on PY2019 data.

Target:

* Completion of the Interagency Service Agreement, hiring of 100% of staff, and commencement of 100% of services for MRC-DTA Individual Planning by the end of the Program Year 2020 (PY2020), complete staff training for the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach.
* Increase services to allow 100 or more placements annually for the project.
* Expand project sites from 3 to 5 by the end of PY2020.
* Employed project participants will earn an average hourly wage of $14.50 or more and work an average of 28 hours or more per week.

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Evaluation of Progress:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #3** | **FY20 #** | **FY21 #** |
| **Goal** | 100 | 100 |
| **Actual Outcome** | 37 | 51 |

**Hours:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #3** | **FY20 #** | **FY21 #** |
| **Goal** | 28 | 28 |
| **Actual Outcome** | 29.3 | 29.6 |

**Wage:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #3** | **FY20 #** | **FY21 #** |
| **Goal** | $14.50 | $14.50 |
| **Actual Outcome** | $15.51 | $16.03 |

**Completion of the Interagency Service Agreement, hiring of 100% of staff, and commencement of 100% of services for MRC-DTA Individual Planning by the end of the Program Year 2020 (PY2020), complete staff training for the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach:** Completed

**Expand project sites from 3 to 5 by the end of PY2020**: Completed

Comment on Progress:

MRC completed the expansion of the DTA Empower to Employ program from 3 to 5 offices in 2020 including a revised Interagency Service Agreement with DTA. The project was impacted by COVID-19 leading to reduced referrals between Spring 2020 and mid-2021, but referrals have increased significantly since Summer 2021. Placements were down because of less referrals than anticipated but placements have begun to increase and are expected to increase going forward. MRC and DTA also plan further expansion of the project to additional sites. Finally, wages and hours of those consumers employed have been higher than targeted.

**MRC Goal 4:**

Maximize Employment Retention for MRC Consumers Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Measure the following metric in order to gauge progress toward Goal 4:

* Employment Rate at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings.

Target:

Initial target is 60% pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Performance Update: (RSA Capturing baseline data)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #4** | **FY20** | **FY21** |
| **Goal** | 60.0% | 60.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 52.2% | 50.9% |

Comment on Progress:

MRC achieved a 2nd quarter after exit employment rate of 52.2% for PY19/FY20, and 50.9% for PY20/FY21. RSA continues to collect baseline data on this measure and targets will be established beginning for PY2022/FY2023. MRC conducted a comparison between states from RSA data and MRC is above the national average for 2nd quarter employment rates. MRC continues to focus on staff training to improve performance on the Common Measures.

**MRC Goal 5:**

Maximize Employment Retention of competitive employment for MRC Consumers Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Fourth Quarter after Exit and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 5:

* Employment Rate at the 4th Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings

Target:

Initial target is 55% pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Performance Update: (RSA Capturing baseline data)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #5** | **FY20** | **FY21** |
| **Goal** | 55.0% | 55.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 22.9% | 48.4% |

Comment on Progress:

MRC achieved a 4th quarter after exit employment rate of 22.9% for PY19/FY20, and 48.4% for PY20/FY21. It appears our FY20 results may have been impacted by COVID-19, as the 4th quarter rate recovered significantly in FY2021. RSA continues to collect baseline data on this measure and targets will be established beginning for PY2022/FY2023. MRC conducted a comparison between states from RSA data and MRC is above the national average for 4th quarter employment rates. MRC continues to focus on staff training to improve performance on the Common Measures.

**MRC Goal 6:**

Increase Median Quarterly Earnings for MRC Consumers Employed in competitive employment at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit.

This aligns with Goal III of the Combined Overall WIOA State Plan based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria to track progress of Goal 6:

* Median Quarterly Earnings at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings.

Target:

Initial target is $3,900 quarterly earning pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment.

**Performance Update (RSA Capturing Baseline Data)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #6** | **FY20** | **FY21** |
| **Goal** | $3,900.00 | $3,900.00 |
| **Actual Outcome** | $4,353.52 | $4,444.22 |

Comment on Progress:

MRC achieved median quarterly earnings at the 2nd quarter after exit of $4,353 for PY19/FY20, and $4,444 for PY20/FY21. MRC continues to collect baseline data on this measure and targets will be established beginning for PY2022/FY2023. MRC conducted a comparison between states from RSA data and MRC is above the national average for median quarterly earnings. MRC continues to focus on staff training to improve performance on the Common Measures.

**MRC Goal 7:**

Maximize the Number and Proportion of MRC Consumers with Recognized Secondary and/or Post-Secondary Credential Attainment during Participation in the MRC VR Program.

This aligns with Goal III of the Combined Overall WIOA State Plan and based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 7:

* Percent of MRC Consumers obtaining post-secondary education credentials and/or obtaining a secondary school diploma or equivalent during participation in the MRC VR Program (or up to 1 year after exit from program.
	+ For proportion, previous number divided by the total number of consumers served during the program year.

Target:

Establish baseline target based on currently available data and monitor progress. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Level of Education Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 quarterly reporting

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Performance Update (RSA Capturing Baseline Data)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #7** | **FY20** | **FY21** |
| **Goal** | Baseline | Baseline |
| **Actual Outcome** | 4.7% | 16.9% |

Comment on Progress:

MRC continues to report baseline Credential Attainment data to RSA annually. MRC’s performance increased significantly from 4.7% in PY19/FY20 to 16.9% in PY20/FY21. RSA will be establishing a negotiated performance target starting for PY22/FY23. MRC has developed a series of trainings and technical assistance sessions for MRC staff on Credential Attainment and Measurable Skills Gains to assist in this area.

**MRC Goal 8:**

Maximize the Percentage of MRC Consumers Enrolled in Education and Training Programs leading to a recognized credential or employment achieving measurable skills gains during the Program Year.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 8:

* Percent of MRC Consumers enrolled in education and training programs leading to employment or a recognized post-secondary credential achieving measurable skills gains during the program year with documented progress divided by total number of consumers receiving services through an IPE in the program year (Status 12-22).

Target:

20% is the negotiated target from RSA for PY2020 (FY2021), and 30% is the negotiated target for PY2021 (FY2022)

Data Sources:

Level of Education Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 quarterly reporting, WIOA Annual Report

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Performance Update:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #8** | **FY20** | **FY21** |
| **Goal** | N/A | 20.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 7.3% | 21.0% |

Comment on Progress:

RSA established a performance target for MRC for Measurable Skills Gains of 20% for FY21/PY20 while baseline data was reported in PY19/FY20. MRC’s performance for Measurable Skills Gains increased significantly from 7l3% in PY19/FY20 to 21% in PY20/FY21. The PY21/FY22 target is 30%. MRC has developed a series of trainings, actionable reports, and technical assistance sessions for MRC staff Measurable Skills Gains to assist in this area.

**MRC Goal 9:**

Provide Effective Services to Employers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to ensure retention rates of individuals placed in competitive employment.

This aligns with Goal I of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 9:

* Employment retention rate with the same employer at 2nd and 4th quarter after exit for MRC consumers closed during the current program year (Status 26 Closures) based on Employer Tax ID (EIN) in Unemployment Insurance Wage Data.
* # of repeat business customers (defined as a business where MRC places more than one job seeker during the program year)

Target:

400 or more repeat business customers annually where multiple job seekers are placed into employment. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2022.

Initial Target is 70% of job seekers retained at the same employer between the 2nd and 4th quarter after exit. Establish and refine target based on baseline of data and track progress on performance. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data, WIOA Annual Report.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Employer Retention (RSA Capturing Baseline Data)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #9** | **FY20** | **FY21** |
| **Goal** | 70.0% | 70.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 65.0% | 70.0% |

**Repeat Business Customers (RSA Capturing Baseline Data)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #9** | **FY20#** | **FY20%** | **FY21#** | **FY21%** |
| **Goal** | 400 | N/A | 400 | N/A |
| **Actual Outcome** | 245 | 11.1% | 215 | 10.8% |

Comment on Progress:

MRC and RSA continue to collect baseline data on Effectiveness of Serving Employers. The two pilot measures, employer retention and repeat business customers are measured on an annual basis. MRC has seen an employer retention rate between 65% and 70% and a repeat business customer rate of about 11%. The number of repeat business customers is lower than expected likely because of lower employment outcomes during COVID. MRC will continue to report baseline data through PY2023 to RSA.

**MRC Goal 10:**

Maximize Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Job Seekers for 90 Days or more and establish a new annual program outcome goal.  Reset goal and target annually based on performance.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 10:

* Total Sum and Percentage of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Consumers for the Current Program Year (Status 26 Closures).

Target:

Achieve 3,700 or more successful employment outcomes in the program year.

Achieve a Rehabilitation Rate of 55.8% statewide as a result of consumer attaining successful employment outcomes.

Data Sources:

Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS, Monthly Key Performance Indicators Tracking Report.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Number and Percent of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC’s VR Division:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #10** | **FY20**  | **Employment Rate. FY20** | **FY21 #** | **Employment Rate FY21** |
| **Goal** | 3,700 | 55.8% | 3,700 | 55.8% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 3,042 | 51.0% | 2,727 | 39.8% |

Comment on Progress:

MRC saw a decrease in referrals, consumers served, and employment outcomes in FY2020 and FY2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic which impacted MRC consumers, providers, employers, and MRC staff, leading MRC to have a decrease in employment outcomes. MRC’s employment rate also was lower than the target, particularly for FY2021. MRC is focusing on developing strategies to improve its employment rate going forward, such as looking at programs or projects which have higher employment rate and determining best practices which may be applicable to the entire VR program, and improvement has been seen during the first half of FY2022 in terms of both employment outcomes and the employment rate.

**MRC Goal 11:**

Maximize the number of Consumers Exiting the MRC VR Program whose Primary Source of Economic Support is from their own Employment Earnings.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Next Steps:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 11:

* Proportion of Individuals Successfully Closed in Status 26 in the current fiscal year with a RSA-911 Employment Status Code of Competitive Employment in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage (the higher of either State or Federal Minimum Wage; currently Massachusetts is higher at $12.75) whose Primary Source of Support at Closure is Personal Income (Code 1) minus the proportion of those consumers whose primary source of support at application was personal income (Code 1).

Target:

Ratio of 60% or more.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, Monthly Key Performance Indicators Tracking Report

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Proportion of Individuals Successfully Closed in Status 26 in the current fiscal year with a RSA-911 Employment Status Code of Competitive Employment in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #11** | **FY20** | **FY21** |
| **Goal** | 60.0% | 60.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 69.0% | 70.8% |

Comment on Progress:

This measure evaluates the percentage increase of consumers reporting they rely on income from employment as their primary source of support from time of application to closure. MRC exceeded its 60% target for both FY20 and FY21 by a wide margin.

**MRC Goal 12:**

Fully implement the re-design of Pre-ETS Services to Eligible and Potentially Eligible students (14 – 22) Maximize the Number and Percentage of high school students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services, including work-based learning experiences (Pre-ETS/Potentially Eligible) from MRC, either eligible or potentially eligible.  Continue to coordinate Pre-ETS service delivery with partners and schools.

This aligns with Goal IV of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 12:

* Number of students (potentially eligible and eligible) receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year.
* Percent of students initiating services for each of the five Pre-ETS services (Work-Based Learning, Job Exploration Counseling, Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness Training, Self-Advocacy) from MRC and its contracted provider.
* Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership.
* Explore ways to work with DESE and other partners to coordinate Pre-ETS services.

Target:

Serve 3,000 or more students receiving one or more of the five Pre-ETS services during the program year.

An average of 70% of students will initiate services for each of the five Pre-ETS services (Work-Based Learning, Job Exploration Counseling, Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness Training, Self-Advocacy) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year.

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership.

Set up meetings with DESE and workforce partners to discuss coordination of Pre-ETS Services.

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Number of students (potentially eligible and eligible) receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #12** | **FY20**  | **FY21**  |
| **Goal** | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| **Actual Outcome** | 2435 | 3403 |

**Percent of students initiating services for each of the five Pre-ETS services:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #12** | **FY20**  | **FY21**  |
| **Goal** | 70.0% | 70.0% |
| **Job Exploration Counseling** | 69% | 66% |
| **Work Based Learning Experiences** | 76% | 68% |
| **Counseling on Enrollment Opportunities in Post-Secondary Education** | 50% | 45% |
| **Workplace Readiness Training** | 70% | 69% |
| **Self-Advocacy Instruction/Peer Mentoring** | 54% | 50% |

**Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership:** In progress.

**Set up meetings with DESE and workforce partners to discuss coordination of Pre-ETS Services**: In progress

Comment on Progress:

MRC met its target for consumers served in Pre-ETS services (both eligible and potentially eligible) in FY2021, but fell short in FY2020 as COVID-19 impacted providers, consumers, schools, and staff. There is a range in utilization of each of the 5 Pre-ETS service based on consumer needs, providers and counselors choose from the services based on the consumers interests and needs. Some services (Work Based Learning, Workplace Readiness Services, and Job Exploration Counseling) are used more often than the other 2 Pre-ETS services (instruction in Self Advocacy and Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education). MRC will continue to work with its providers to improve Pre-ETS services. In terms of development of a Pre-ETS evaluation report, MRC will complete the development of this process and report during the final 2 years of the State Plan. MRC also holds meetings with DESE on Pre-ETS service coordination as needed.

**MRC Goal 13:**

Maximize the Number and Percentage of youth (defined as ages 14 through 24) consumers served by MRC completing education and training programs, including post-secondary education as part of MRC’s efforts to coordinate services for youths with WIOA partners, including the MassHire workforce system.

This aligns with Goal IV of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 13:

* Number and Percent of Youth Age 14 to 24 Completing Education and Training Programs. Measured by the flow of Youth Consumers moving from Status 18 Training and Education into Status 20 Job Ready or Status 22 Job Placement during the month/fiscal year divided by the total number of youth consumers served in Status 18 Training and Education during the month/fiscal year.

Target:

At or above 200 or 3% of youth consumers per month completing training or education, annual total of 2500 or 16%

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for individuals, including youth with barriers to employment.

**Number and Percent of Youth Age 14 to 24 Completing Education and Training Programs:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #13** | **FY20 #** | **FY20 %** | **FY21**  | **FY21 %** |
| **Goal** | 2,500 | 16.0% | 2,500 | 16.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 1,852 | 20.6% | 1,614 | 20.4% |

Comment on Progress:

MRC achieved its target for the proportion of youth consumers completing education and training programs in FY20 and FY21 but served less youth than anticipated due to decreased referrals as a result of COVID-19.

**MRC Goal 14:**

Create career pathways for job seekers through maximizing the Number of Successful Competitive Employment outcomes and the percent of Placements leading to Successful Employment Outcomes through MRC’s Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) programs in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Providers.

This aligns with Goal II of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 14:

* Total Number of 90 Day Successful Employment Outcomes from CIES Program; Total Number of CIES Successful Employment Outcomes divided by the total number of 30-Day Placements for the CIES Program, % of CIES consumers served achieving a placement.

Target:

Exceed 850 Successful Employment Outcomes for CIES for the fiscal year and greater than 75% of CIES placements result in successful employment outcomes, and 60% or more of CIES consumers served during the year are placed into employment.

Complete the redesign and deployment of MRC CIES contracts successfully through the RFP and annual monitoring and program evaluation process to provide CIES Pay for Performance services (Annual Program Evaluation Report).

Data Source:

MRC CIES Quarterly Cumulative Utilization Report and Annual Program Evaluation Report

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.

**30 Day Placements:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #14** | **FY20**  | **FY21**  |
| **Goal** | 850 | 850 |
| **Actual Outcome** | 680 | 613 |

**90 Day Placements:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #14** | **FY20**  | **FY21**  |
| **Goal** | 638 | 638 |
| **Actual Outcome** | 539 | 460 |

**Total Number of CIES Successful Employment Outcomes divided by the total number of 30-Day Placements for the CIES Program:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #14** | **FY20**  | **FY21**  |
| **Goal** | 75.0% | 75.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 79.3% | 75.0% |

**% of CIES consumers served achieving a placement:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #14** | **FY20**  | **FY21**  |
| **Goal** | 60.0% | 60.0% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 50.1% | 52.1% |

Comment on Progress:

In FY2020 and FY2021, MRC fell short of some of its CIES performance targets, mainly since less consumers were served during these fiscal years than anticipated due to COVID-19 which impacted both MRC, its providers, and its consumers. Less consumers served led to less employment outcomes and placements. MRC did achieve its target for the percentage of placements who achieved a successful outcome. MRC continues to closely monitor CIES program results and the Business Improvement Partners (BIPs) work closely with providers and are focusing on improving performance.

MRC has completed development of new Key Performance Indicators for CIES which will be rolled out in FY2023 and used by MRC’s BIPs to focus on improving CIES outcomes.

**MRC Goal 15:**

Continue to provide consumers with an avenue to access employment and training opportunities through participation in the Donated Vehicle Program in partnership with Good News Garage and exploring other transportation partnerships.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 15:

* Number of Consumers Participating in the Donated Vehicle Program who obtain a successful employment outcome or who enter training and education (Status 18) divided by the number of consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year.
* Research additional transportation partnerships to assist with transportation including programs related to bicycling.

Target:

* Greater than 90% of Consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year result in successful employment outcomes or enrollment in training or education (Status 18).
* Issue 100 vehicles per program year utilizing the RFR process, for a total of 400 over the 4-year period.
* Number of individuals who may be employed as a result of this program
* 90% or greater satisfaction with the program
* Completion of research on additional transportation partnerships and presentation of a report to leadership and the SRC

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Number of Consumers Participating in the Donated Vehicle Program who obtain a successful employment outcome or who enter training and education (Status 18):**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #15** | **FY20**  | **FY21**  |
| **Goal** | 100 | 100 |
| **Actual Outcome** | 80 | 99 |

**Percent of consumers receiving Good News Garage Donated Vehicle achieving employment or enrolled in education/training:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #15** | **FY20**  | **FY21**  |
| **Goal** | 90% | 90% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 97.5% | 96.9% |

**Completion of research on additional transportation partnerships and presentation of a report to leadership and the SRC:** In Progress

**90% or greater satisfaction with the program**: In Progress

Comment on Progress:

MRC continues to operate the Donated Vehicle Program in partnership with Good News Garage. There were some impacts in terms of reduced deliveries during FY2020 due to COVID but otherwise the program remains on track. Over 95% of consumers receiving a donated vehicle in FY2020 and FY2021 have achieved employment and/or have enrolled in education or training programs. Finally, MRC met with MassMobility prior to COVID-19 and have worked with MassMobility to update transportation resources linked to MRC’s website. MRC will continue to work on transportation efforts during the last two years of the state plan period.

**MRC Goal 16:**

Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with Autism.  Coordinate services for individuals with Autism with partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 16:

* Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Cause Code of 08 and employment rate for these consumers.
* Number of consumers served on the Autism Spectrum

Target:

* Equal or greater to 175 consumers employed per program year
* Modernize the Life Skill mapping planning process for individuals with Autism through completion of an enhanced procurement/RFR to provide these services.
* 75% employment rate or greater for consumers on the autism spectrum receiving Life Mapping services
* 55.8% or greater employment rate for consumers with autism spectrum receiving VR services

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Cause Code of 08 and employment rate for these consumers:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #16** | **FY20** | **FY21** |
| **Goal** | 175 | 175 |
| **Actual Outcome** | 344 | 353 |

**Employment Rate:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #16** | **FY20** | **FY21** |
| **Goal** | 55.8% | 55.8% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 47.0% | 45.1% |

**Number of consumers served on the Autism Spectrum:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #16** | **FY20** | **FY21** |
| **Goal** | N/A | N/A |
| **Actual Outcome** | 3343 | 3539 |

**Employment rate for consumers on the autism spectrum receiving Life Mapping services:** 75.8% actual, 75% goal.

**Modernize the Life Skill mapping planning process for individuals with Autism through completion of an enhanced procurement/RFR to provide these services:** In progress

Comment on Progress:

MRC continues to focus on services provided to individuals on the Autism spectrum. MRC continues to see an increase in both the number and percentage of consumers served with Autism. The number of consumers served with Autism increased in FY20 and FY21 even while the overall number of consumers served bv MRC decreased. MRC also exceeded its target for the number of consumers with Autism achieving employment outcomes by a wide margin. The employment rate of consumers with Autism was lower than the goal but higher than the employment rate for MRC overall for FY20 and FY21. Finally, consumers receiving Life Mapping services had a 75.8% employment rate in FY21. MRC continues to work closely with the Autism/Asperger Network (AANE) on the provision of Life Mapping and other supports to consumers with Autism. MRC also works closely with the Autism Commission on provision of services.

**MRC Goal 17:**

Continued Outreach to the Asian community to identify strategies for serving this underserved population.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Implementation of additional Focus Groups to MRC regions with high concentrations of Asian community, such as Braintree and Boston

Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC

Target:

Complete focus groups or community meetings in Braintree and/or Boston, and/or other areas with high population concentration of Asian communities by the end of the program year, with consultation of the diversity and bilingual committees to review results and to develop best practices in collaboration with community organizations for increasing outreach efforts and services to the Asian community based on the comprehensive needs assessment survey conducted by the SRC, to present to agency leadership.

Develop and implement a new consumer engagement program which will include coordination of outreach services to community organizations in areas with underserved populations.

Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC from prior year.

Data Sources:

Program evaluation program data, MRCIS, SRC engagement work plan.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

Evaluation of Progress:

**Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC from prior year:** MRC saw a very slight increase in the proportion of Asian consumers served between FY2019 and FY2021, with a 0.2% increase from 3.6% in FY2019 to 3.8% in FY2021. The number of Asian consumers did decrease during the time period, and the overall number of consumers served by MRC also decreased between this time period.

**Develop and implement a new consumer engagement program which will include coordination of outreach services to community organizations in areas with underserved populations**: Completed

Comment on Progress:

MRC has rolled out its office of Consumer and Family Engagement as of 2020. This new office continues to focus on developing multiple platforms to listen and learn from MRC Consumers and will continue to expand during the last 2 years of the state plan period. While MRC saw a slight increase in the proportion of Asian consumers served, the change was not significant. The agency is committed to increase the number of Asian consumers and all consumers of diverse backgrounds. MRC is working on efforts to improve outreach to all communities, including the Asian community, to ensure equity in access to MRC VR services. MRC will continue to work with its Employee Resource Groups, Bilingual Committee, the SRC, its DEIA council, the Office of Consumer and Family Engagement, and other stakeholders in this area.

**MRC Goal 18:**

Research Best Practices Models to create career pathways and increase employment of Individuals with Disabilities based on recommendations provided by the SRC Executive Committee.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Completion of research of best practices, models, or capstone projects for the development of new programs intended to provide enhanced training and job placement for individuals with disabilities for presentation to the leadership team and the SRC. **Applied for innovation grant to come up with best practices to serve individuals with disabilities**

Target:

Completion of research and completion of a report by the end of the program year for presentation to MRC Leadership and the SRC.

Data Sources:

CSAVR, Google/Electronic Reference Libraries.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

Evaluation of Progress:

**Completion of research of best practices, models, or capstone projects for the development of new programs intended to provide enhanced training and job placement for individuals with disabilities for presentation to the leadership team and the SRC:** In progress

Comment on Progress: MRC applied for and successfully received a RSA innovation grant to evaluate a new model to serve individuals with disabilities in Vocational Rehabilitation, focusing on young adults. The goal will be to provide coordinated service approaches to develop career pathway leading to increased employment and wages. Members of MRC’s Analytics and Quality Assurance Department also completed a Capstone Project for a VR program evaluation certificate program which evaluated MRC’s Employment Initiative (ACCS) with the Department of Mental Health.

**MRC Goal 19:**

Expand the use of occupational goal information from MRC job seekers to inform job placement efforts.  Share occupational data and coordinate sharing of labor market information with WIOA Workforce Partners including MassHire.

This aligns with Goal V of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

Develop a report of MRC job seekers based on vocational goals in the MRCIS system by Standard Occupational Code (SOC Code) compared to job placements and outcomes for job seekers by SOC Code.

Track placements and occupational goals by SOC code and SOC category.

Research strategies for linking occupational code data with industry classification data.

Revamp labor market information reports for MRC staff.

Target:

Complete reports and presentation of findings to agency leadership and the Job Placement Unit by the end of the program year.

Research strategies and develop recommendations for linking occupational code and industry classification data to guide job placement efforts, sector employment, and to assist with coordination of business services with WIOA partners.

Complete new labor market report templates for MRC staff.

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class service delivery system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques.

Evaluation of Progress:

**Complete reports and presentation of findings to agency leadership and the Job Placement Unit by the end of the program year:** In Progress

**Research strategies and develop recommendations for linking occupational code and industry classification data to guide job placement efforts, sector employment, and to assist with coordination of business services with WIOA partners**: In Progress

**Complete new labor market report templates for MRC staff:** In Progress

Comment on Progress:

MRC has developed a report of consumers based on vocational goals in the MRCIS system by Standard Occupational Code (SOC Code) compared to job placements and outcomes for job seekers by SOC Code. This is currently done manually and sent to the Job Placement Unit. MRC will be working to automate this report as part of the OneMRC Case Management system development so it can be accessed with real time data by all staff on a regular basis.

MRC will be examining linking its occupational code data with industry classification data with the development of the OneMRC system by considering the addition of NAICS codes to the new system as it is developed. MRC also receives labor market information from MassHire and will continue to focus on development of additional labor market resources as part of its data modernization efforts.

**MRC Goal 20:**

Research and develop ways to conduct outreach to college students and other groups to increase awareness of MRC services and research additional resources to assist MRC consumers who are in post-secondary education programs.

This aligns with Goal V of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Completion of research into ways MRC can outreach to college students to increase awareness of MRC services.  Develop additional resources and programs that may assist MRC consumers in post-secondary education program. Present findings to the leadership team and the SRC.

Target:

Completion of research into ways MRC can outreach to college students to increase awareness of MRC services.  Develop additional resources and programs that may assist MRC consumers in post-secondary education program. Develop a report and present findings to the leadership team and the SRC.

Data Sources:

Google/Electronic Reference Libraries

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

Evaluation of Progress:

**Completion of Research:** In progress

Comment on Progress:

MRC will focus on completing research on best practices in outreach to college students over the last two years of the state plan period. MRC will present findings to leadership and the SRC over the course of the final 2 years of the state plan period**.**

**MRC Goal 21:**

Implementation of a new MRC MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.

This aligns with Goals I and III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

MRC will develop Key Performance Indicators for this project with MassHire.  Use data from Key Performance Indicators to establish a baseline and develop targets during PY2020 and PY2021 based on PY2019 data.

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and present findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners.

Target:

Completion of Key Performance Indicators, Establishment of baseline data and develop targets by PY2021 based on project data.

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and complete presentation of findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, Reports from MassHire

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

Evaluation of Progress:

**Completion of Key Performance Indicators, Establishment of baseline data and develop targets by PY2021 based on project data.** In progress.

**Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and complete presentation of findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners:** In progress

Comment on Progress:

MRC will develop KPI for the MassHire training programs by the end of PY2022 as additional baseline data is currently being collected in collaboration with MassHire. MRC will work with MassHire to collect additional data in a format to be matched against MRC’s case management system and evaluate the progress of the program and will present findings to leadership and the SRC over the course of the final 2 years of the state plan period.

**MRC Goal 22**:

Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with behavioral health needs.  Coordinate services for individuals with Behavioral Health Needs[[1]](#_ftn1) with partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 22:

* Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Code of 18 and employment rate for these consumers  (excluding those participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)
* Number of consumers served with a Disability Code of 18 during the program year

Target:

Equal or greater to 600 consumers employed per program year (excluding those consumers participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program

Employment rate of 55.8% or greater for consumers with Disability Code 18 receiving MRC VR services (excluding consumers participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

[[1]](#_ftnref1) Behavioral Health Needs are defined by RSA within Policy Directive *RSA-PD-16-04* as Disability Code 18: Psychosocial Impairments (e.g., interpersonal and behavioral impairments, difficulty coping)

**Evaluation of Progress:**

**Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Code of 18 and employment rate for these consumers  (excluding those participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program):**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal #22** | **FY20 #** | **Employment Rate** | **FY21 #** | **Employment Rate** |
| **Goal** | 600 | 55.8% | 600 | 55.8% |
| **Actual Outcome** | 1106 | 36.4% | 917 | 33.6% |

**Comment on Progress:**

MRC exceeded its goals in FY2020 and FY2021 for the number of successful employment outcomes for individuals with mental health needs, however fell short of its goal for the employment rate for these consumers. MRC is working on strategies to improve its employment rate for all individuals served, particularly those with mental health needs as this is the largest group of consumers served by MRC.

##### B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities

The following is an evaluation of the extent to which the MRC program goals described in the previously approved VR services portion of the Unified State Plan for the most recently completed program year, were not achieved.

MRC achieved most of its goals and priorities and/or is making progress on its goals as stated in the approved VR services section of the Massachusetts Combined State Plan for PY2020-PY2024 except for portions of goals 1, 3, 9, 10,12, 13, 16, and 22.  The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic during PY19 and PY20 had an impact on MRC, its providers, schools, employer and consumers. MRC saw a drop in referrals and consumers served during this period which impacted the number of employment outcomes in a number of programs which impacted several state plan goals. During PY17 and into PY18, MRC saw a drop in the number of consumers served by its VR. There was also a period of increased unsuccessful employment outcomes which when combined with the impact of COVID-19 combined with lower referrals led to a drop in the number of consumers served.  MRC has seen a stabilization in referrals with referrals starting to go back up, and employment outcomes for FY22 to date are running ahead of FY20 and FY21. MRC is also developing strategies to increase its employment rate through looking at best practices from services and programs with higher employment rates and will be evaluating a new model for VR through its recently awarded innovation grant from RSA.

MRC will continue to closely evaluate the progress towards its goals in PY22 and PY23 and make appropriate corrections as needed and present progress to leadership, the SRC, and stakeholders.

#### 2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

##### A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals

Supported Employment Program FY2021/PY2020 Goal Achievement:

Consumers Served: Goal: 475, Actual: 525

Employment Outcomes: Goal: 88, Actual: 105

MRC’s strategy for provision and delivery of Supported Employment Services utilizes a network of community providers. MRC reviews progress on supported employment cases with staff and providers on a quarterly basis to assess progress and make any necessary corrective actions to ensure consumers are receiving quality services.

MRC achieved its goals for the Supported Employment Program for FY2021/PY2020 as stated in the approved VR section of the Massachusetts Combined State Plan. MRC saw a steady number of consumers successfully employed and served through MRC’s Supported Employment Program. These consumers were served using a combination of Title I and Title VI B funds.

##### B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities

MRC achieved its supported employment goals for PY2020/FY2021, therefore there are no factors impeding the achievement of the goals and priorities. MRC monitors economic and labor market trends to forecast the potential impact on MRC’s ability to achieve our employment goals and priorities. MRC’s leadership team works closely with our fiscal staff to project available resources to provide services and the potential impact on achievement of our goals and priorities.

#### 3. The VR program’s performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIA

Between PY2017 and PY2019, MRC reported baseline data to RSA for the WIOA common performance measures as specified in the state plan requirements. Beginning in PY20 MRC is reporting data under a negotiated performance goal for Measurable Skills Gains. The goal for PY20 was 20% and is 30% for PY21. All the other measures remain baseline for PY20 and PY21 As required by RSA, MRC began collecting data for the Common Performance Measures as of July 1, 2017, replacing the prior Vocational Rehabilitation Standards and Indicators. MRC is proposing performance goals for the Employment Rate at 2nd Quarter After Exit, the Employment Rate at 4th Quarter after Exit, Median Wage at 2nd Quarter After Exit, and Credential Attainment for PY22 and PY23 and negotiated targets will be developed with RSA for PY22 and PY23.

MRC has and will continue working with its workforce partners to complete the Statewide Performance Report for the Common Measures.

MRC’s Analytics and Quality Assurance department will continue to analyze the data as it becomes available and creates reports for management and staff on the Common Measures.

A data dashboard of this information will also be developed as part of MRC’s initiative to create a new case management system to push data down on these performance measures to staff at area offices and to counselors as applicable. This will allow the agency to work on strategies to increase performance on the Common Measures.

 **MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION**

**MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION THREE YEAR PERFORMANCE**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Common Performance Measures​** | **FY19​/PY18** | **FY20​/PY19** | **FY21​/PY20** |
| **Employment Rate at 2nd Quarter After Exit​** | 48.2%​ | 52.2%​ | 50.9%​ |
| **Employment Rate at 4th Quarter After Exit​** | N/A​ | 22.9%​ | 48.4%​ |
| **Median Quarterly Earnings at 2nd Quarter After Exit​** | $4,332.83​ | $4,353.52​ | $4,444.22​ |
| **Credential Obtainment Rate​** | N/A​ | 4.7%​ | 16.9%​ |
| **Measurable Skills Gains​** | 8.4%​ | 7.3%​ | 21.0%​ |
| **Effectiveness of Serving Employers –Retention from 2nd to 4thQuarter After Exit (MRC)​** | 75.0%​ | 65.0%​ | 70.0%​ |
| **Effectiveness of Serving Employers –Repeat Business Customers (MRC)​** | 11.6%​ | 11.1%​ | 10.8%​ |

#### 4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the Commission under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. Consistent with the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and goals and priorities identified in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council, the Commission uses funds to support innovation and expansion activities to address the needs of individuals with disabilities, primarily individuals with the most significant disabilities, and to promote increased employment rates and labor force participation rates for people with disabilities across Massachusetts. Activities over the past two program years include:

1. On-The-Job Trainings and Job-Driven Trainings with Employer Partners: MRC continues to expand Job-Driven Trainings (JDT) and On-the-Job (OJT) training and evaluations. MRC has found that many consumers who participate in an OJT or Job-Driven training obtain employment with the OJT or JDT. Other participants are able to obtain employment elsewhere as a result of their participation in the OJT or JDT because they gained recent work experience and/or developed job-specific skills. MRC has created numerous job driven training programs with a variety of employers supporting employment opportunities in growth industries.
2. MRC - Department of Transitional Assistance Empower to Employ Project: MRC and the Department of Transitional Assistance have developed a project known as Empower to Employ designed to increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF benefits. The partner agencies use a jointly-funded model of client engagement and intensive co-case management to provide individualized and meaningful services. Through this collaborative effort, DTA and MRC are utilizing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to facilitate recruitment (pre-engagement), engagement, service delivery and placement.
3. MRC-Department of Mental Health Employment Initiative: MRC coordinates employment services for individuals with mental health needs served by the Department of Mental Health’s Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program in collaboration with DMH and its vendors. The new MRC/DMH Employment Initiative is designed to build an integrated employment framework that inspires and engages innovation to ensure full employment for people with mental health needs at the same rate of employment as the general population. The focus of this initiative is on individuals served by DMH through Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS). These individuals are being referred to MRC for Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services. To serve these individuals, MRC is using an Integrated Resource Team approach, where partner agencies and supports come together to craft and jointly own a Job Seeker’s employment goal, to coordinate wrap-around services and ongoing collaboration and communication. MRC has hired dedicated staff with funding through the ISA to work with ACCS referrals. These counselors will have smaller caseloads and will work with MRC CIES providers, DMH providers, DMH, and other MRC staff to rapidly engage with consumers, develop a plan for employment, and coordinate services designed to assist these consumers in achieving successful employment outcomes.
4. Transition Pathway Services Demonstration Grant Project: MRC just completed a 5 year demonstration grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) known as the Transition Pathway Services Grant. This grant focused on the provision of work-based learning experiences.  The results from the grant are being evaluated and lessons learned will be used to develop additional best practices in this area and continue to improve transition and Pre-Employment transition services in partnership with schools and providers.
5. IT enhancements to modernize the agency’s technology and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services. These include a provider portal to assist in reporting and tracking the provision of Pre-ETS services to potentially eligible consumers, to enhance tracking and reporting on internal job placement services, to develop a consumer portal for information and referral, and to develop a paperless system using Electronic Data Management.
6. MRC’s Job Placement Unit operates an annual Federal Hiring Event in partnership with MCB, other workforce partners, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in their Boston and Hartford offices. The Hiring Event assists consumers with securing competitive employment comparable with their interests and abilities. MRC prepares consumers to interview for available jobs with employers participating in the event. It focuses on direct job placement with participating employers and is not simply a career fair. Since 2013, Over 575 individuals have been successfully employed across the Commonwealth through participating in this annual one-day event. The aggregate annual wages of all successfully employed consumers through the hiring event since 2013 is approximately $12.7 million. Consumers have been employed in a variety of occupations ranging from office and administrative support, health care, protective service, human services, and management occupations, amongst others.
7. Transportation: MRC is working diligently to address transportation barriers faced by its consumers. MRC has updated transportation resource fact sheets on its website and makes them available to consumers at its Area Office. MRC hired a transportation coordinator through its Transition Pathway Services (TPS) grant and MRC is documenting lessons learned and best practices now that the grant period has ended. One major achievement has been that MRC consumers are now automatically eligible for the Transition Access Pass (TAP) program. This program offers half-fare rides on all Regional Transit Authorities across the Commonwealth. MRC also works with the Executive Office of Health and Human Service Transportation office on transportation for consumers and operates an innovative car donation program to assist individuals in accessing worksites. MRC has a benefits planning grant to assist consumer in their efforts to go to work, which can include the Plan for Achieving Self Supports (PASS) and impairment-related work expenses as incentives for an individual to go to work. MRC also uses IRS Section 44 as a strategy to assist consumers with Transportation needs. MRC will continue to work with transportation agencies to explore other creative transportation options for consumers. MRC also met with MassMobility and worked to update transportation resources and linked them to the MRC website to ensure this information is available to MRC consumers.
8. Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in State Jobs: MRC places numerous individuals with disabilities into state government jobs each year, including at MRC. MRC has a diverse workforce with a high percentage of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. We have a key contact with the state’s Human Resources Division to facilitate employment for consumers in state jobs, including the provision of On-The-Job training and internship opportunities with state and federal agencies. The Commonwealth also participates in MRC’s annual hiring event to provide information to consumers on available state job opportunities, including how to apply.
9. Research Best Practices Models to Increase Employment of Individuals with Disabilities: MRC will continue to research best practice models designed to increase the employment rate of individuals with disabilities in Massachusetts.
10. Learn to Earn: MRC is engaged with the Learn to Earn initiative. Learn to Earn is a comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs with the supports, skills, and credentials they need to gain and retain employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand. Learn to Earn Programs will help participants set and achieve goals necessary for employment and sustained economic stability, such as maintaining and growing family net resources and minimizing the real or perceived potential impact of increased earned income on benefit receipt, including improving coordination across benefit programs and reducing benefit cliff effects. As part of this program, MRC is providing information on benefits counseling.
11. Work Based Learning Experiences for Students with Disabilities to assist them in preparing for future employment and educational experiences.
12. Apprenticeships: MRC will utilize available apprenticeship resources, including the ODEP guide to expand apprenticeship, to provide apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth. As an example, MRC participates in the Merit Apprenticeship Program. Additionally, MRC has obtained a copy of the ODEP guide on apprenticeships. MRC will also work with the Career Centers on providing apprenticeship opportunities for consumers. MRC has leased space at the career centers and has staff dedicated to the career centers to make available the range of career services from Career Centers for MRC consumers.
13. MRC has developed an Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to develop training programs to assist individuals with disabilities to complete training programs and obtain credentials to be substance abuse counselors. This has been identified as a growth area and a higher compensated profession in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
14. MRC has developed a partnership with the Career Centers known as the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.
15. MRC partners and contracts with the The Asperger/Autism Network's (AANE) Life Management Assistance Program (LifeMAP). This program provides practical assistance to individuals on the Autism Spectrum and other related conditions. LifeMAP provides intensive, highly individualized coaching by professionals with expertise in both Autism Spectrum Disorder and specific content areas. Coaches focus on identifying and overcoming the specific barriers each client faces so that the clients can increase their levels of independence towards reaching their full potential.

### q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Include the following:

#### 1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has established a process to provide quality Supported Employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, for adults and youth. MRC will be utilizing Title I funds and Title VI B funds to provide Supported Employment services. MRC has developed a contingency plan to use Title I funds to provide Supported Employment Services if Title VI B are not appropriated in the federal budget MRC provides a range of supported employment services to assist consumers in their efforts to choose, obtain and maintain completive employment opportunities based on their abilities, skills, interests and needs as outlined in their Individualized Plan for Employment. MRC provides Supported Employment services through its area office network. MRC provides supported employment services to youths and adults with disabilities based on their needs and services outlined in their individualized plan for employment.

MRC utilizes a network of Qualified Community Rehabilitation Providers through MRC’s Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program to purchase and provide Supported Employment services to consumers. These programs, located throughout the state, serve persons with an array of significant disabilities including mental health, autism, deaf/severely hearing impaired, severely physically disabled, traumatic brain injured and dual diagnosed persons with intellectual disabilities and mental health, and other individuals with disabilities. MRC adjusted the CIES model based on lessons learned and input from its staff, CRP partners, and other stakeholders.  These adjustments are designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CIES services for MRC consumers, including supported employment services. MRC also incorporated peer support and flexible supports into the CIES procurement which should benefit consumers receiving supported employment services through MRC.

In addition, MRC works with its Workforce Partners and continues to expand partnerships with other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health to provide wrap-around supports and comparable benefits to assist individuals receiving supported employment services in obtaining and maintaining employment.

#### 2. The timing of transition to extended services

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has developed a process to provide extended ongoing employment support services to assist individuals with disabilities in maintaining and advancing in their careers utilizing state funding, comparable benefits, and natural supports for long-term extended support services after federal funds can no longer be used. Paid extended supports are provided through a network of qualified community rehabilitation providers as part of MRC’s Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program as well as partnering with other state agencies such as the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Developmental Services.

Funding for extended long-term support services is available from several sources depending on the nature of the consumer’s disability and the resources available. Sources include:

1. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission State Ongoing Support Funding
2. IRS Section 44
3. Department of Mental Health
4. Department of Developmental Services
5. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Statewide Head Injury Program
6. Social Security Work Incentives/PASS Plan
7. Impairment-Related Work Expenses
8. Natural Supports from Employers
9. Medicaid Waiver Supported Employment Services
10. Other Comparable Benefits

Transition to extended services begins once the individual achieves job stability for 90 days or more.  As part of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), supported employment cases are identified and the need and funding source for extended support services is identified as part of the IPE. For youths, Title VI-B reserve funds will be used for extended supports.  After job stability is achieved for this period of time, the MRC VR case may be closed successfully when the consumer and counselor mutually agree to the closure of the case.  After case closure, post-employment services can be provided as needed, or the case can be moved to state-funded ongoing support resources with contracted service providers, or extended supports provided through other agency funding or employer-based or other natural supports as described above.

### Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General) Certifications

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

#### 1. The (enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate,) is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA[14], and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act[15];

##### Enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate

**Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

#### 2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (enter the name of designated State agency)[16] agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[17] , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations[18] , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

##### Enter the name of designated State agency

**Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

#### 3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[19] , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations[20] , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

#### 4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;

#### 5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.

#### 6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.

#### 7. The (enter the name of authorized representative below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;

##### Enter the name of authorized representative below

**Toni A. Wolf**

#### 8. The (enter the title of authorized representative below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;

##### Enter the title of authorized representative below

**Commissioner, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

#### 9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

#### Footnotes

 [14] Public Law 113-128.
 [15] Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.
 [16] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.
 [17] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.
 [18] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR
part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations.
 [19] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined  State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.
[20] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

#### Certification Signature

| Signatory information | Commissioner, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Signatory | Toni A. Wolf |
| Title of Signatory | Commissioner |
| Date Signed |  |

### Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

| The State Plan must include | Include |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. |  |
| 2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140. |  |
| 3. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: |  |
| 3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 3.b. The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (A or B must be selected): |  |
| 3.b.(A) “is an independent State commission” (Yes/No) | No |
| 3.b.(B) “has established a State Rehabilitation Council” (Yes/No) | Yes |
| 3.c. Consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 3.d. The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3) |  |
| 3.e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds (Yes/No) | No |
| 3.f. The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs (Yes/No) | No |
| 3.g. Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan | No |
| 3.h. The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 3.k. The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 3.l. The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities |  |
| 3.m. The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will: |  |
| 4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 4.b. Impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 4.c. Provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No) | No |
| 4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 4.e. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 4.g. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 4.h. Comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14)of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 4.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the​​​​​​​ Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs |  |
| 4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State, |  |
| 4.j.i. Has developed and will implement, |  |
| 4.j.i.I. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and |  |
| 4.j.i.II. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and |  |
| 4.j.ii. Has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)) |  |
| 5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement: |  |
| 5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 5.c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act |  |
| 6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program: |  |
| 6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 7. Provision of Supported Employment Services: | Yes |
| 7.a. The Designated State Agency Assures That it Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 7.b. The designated State agency assures that: |  |
| 7.b.i. The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |
| 7.b.ii. An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act |  |

### Vocational Rehabilitation Program Performance Indicators

**Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

* Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
* Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
* Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
* Credential Attainment Rate; and
* Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

* Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
* Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
* Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

* Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
* Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
* Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
* Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

| Performance Indicators | PY 2022 Expected Level | PY 2022 Negotiated Level | PY 2023 Expected Level | PY 2023 Negotiated Level |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Employment (Second Quarter After Exit) | 51% | TBD | 53% | TBD |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit) | 48% | TBD | 50% | TBD |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)  | $4,500 | TBD | $4,650 | TBD |
| Credential Attainment Rate  | 22.5% | TBD | 27% | TBD |
| Measurable Skill Gains  | 40.0% | TBD | 47.5% | TBD |
| Effectiveness in Serving Employers  | Not Applicable [1](#footnote-1) | Not Applicable [1](#footnote-1) | Not Applicable [1](#footnote-1) | Not Applicable [1](#footnote-1) |

*1*

 *“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.*