

## Massachusetts State Rehabilitation Council FY23 Recommendations

6.22.22 approved by the State Rehabilitation Council

MRC Response 7.31.22

State Plan Committee input on 8/17/22

Chairperson's input 9-19-22 - [SRC responses in blue](#)

**Recommendation FY23-1:** Develop SRC orientation materials focused on understanding the role of the SRC and the basics of vocational rehabilitation.

Responsible SRC Committee: Policy

### **MRC Response to FY23-1**

MRC continues to be committed to the SRC's efforts to enhance the infrastructure of the SRC. This recommendation appears to be an extension of Recommendation FY22-3, albeit with a different responsible SRC committee. MRC is happy to support this recommendation with parameters defining lines of responsibility. MRC proposes:

- To edit recommendation to read, "Develop SRC orientation materials focused on understanding the role of the SRC and the basics of vocational rehabilitation." **[This is accepted by the Policy committee.](#)**
- MRC would need the SRC to be responsible for the content of materials, and the MRC Communications Department can work with the SRC once content is developed to ensure final materials align with the overall MRC vision/branding strategy for the agency, and specifically for the SRC.
- MRC would like clarification on what specific materials are proposed to develop in FY23.

**Recommendation FY23-2:** Create informational materials for VR consumers that explain the basics of the VR process in clear and understandable language.

Responsible SRC Committee: Policy

### **MRC Response to FY23-2**

The MRC agrees on the value of clear communications and materials specific to vocational rehabilitation and the MRC. MRC proposes:

- MRC would need the SRC to be responsible for the content of materials, and the MRC Communications Department can work with the SRC once content is developed to ensure final materials align with the overall MRC vision/branding strategy for the agency.
- MRC would like clarification on what specific materials are proposed to develop in FY23.

**[MRC has not suggested revisions for the text of Recommendation FY23-2 but clarifies that SRC will be responsible for creating the content. The Policy Committee will be creating the content. Currently the committee is in the process of determining what specific content will be created and will share that information with MRC as soon as it has reached a decision. At a future date when the content is created and approved by the SRC, it will be forwarded to MRC with a recommendation that MRC consider using the materials.](#)**

**Recommendation FY23-3: The Office of Individual and Family Engagement will partner with the SRC to host a forum that promotes the work of the SRC to focus on recruitment of a diverse members.**

Responsible SRC Committee: Executive

**MRC Response to FY23-3**

As the SRC is aware, MRC has launched a robust effort over the last 18 months to collect and respond to VR consumer feedback across the Commonwealth. This includes most specifically, quarterly forums hosted by the Office of Individual and Family Engagement, and a new Services Experience Survey launched in July 2022. The SRC Consumer Needs and Consumer Satisfaction Committee has been involved, from conceptualization to execution, in the Survey. These mechanisms have yielded/are proposed to yield information that is timely and will inform service delivery within VR. We invite the SRC to attend the quarterly forums to hear real time the voice of our VR consumers and their family members. As such, MRC feels we have multiple data streams re: consumer feedback and do not see the need at this time for additional mechanisms. MRC does not support this recommendation.

**Recommendation FY23-3 has been modified.**

**Recommendation FY23-4 (formerly FY22-2 & FY21-1): 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.**

Responsible SRC Committee: Business & Employment

**MRC Response to FY23-4**

MRC continues to support and align with supporting individuals with disabilities with employment via the Commonwealth. MRC's efforts have included a strong collaboration with Juanita Allen, Diversity and Recruitment Manager, Office of Enterprise Staffing and Support and the MRC Placement Team. The resultant *Disability Employment Project* has the goal of increasing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities within the Commonwealth. This is achieved by bringing together representatives from various Commonwealth agencies, including hiring managers, recruiters and secretariat diversity directors, as well as utilizing our Disability Agencies and Community Organizations. Project committee members provide career coaching, resume reviews, and setting up informational interviews with agencies, with the emphasis on referring individuals to jobs that meet their skillsets. In addition, MRC's internal efforts have included marketing Commonwealth positions within our VR division, as well as launching new job series – Peer Coordinator – specifically targeting individuals with lived disability experience.

Given that this is a recurring recommendation over the last two years, MRC recommends that the SRC identify 1-2 specific items, that are within the purview of MRC and the SRC, to work on with this recommendation. As such, MRC needs more information to assess our ability to support this recommendation. MRC assumes that this portion of the recommendation, "Include the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion lens in this work, and work with MRC to ensure the robustness of this effort," is a given with all recommendations, and suggests the SRC assess the best way to incorporate the DEIA element across recommendations.

The Business and Employment Opportunity recognizes the efforts that MRC has made within the *Disability Employment Project* (DEP) framework, and the limitations the MRC has as but one member of a multi-Departmental working group. MRC created a 1-page tool to be used by anyone interested in exploring careers within the Commonwealth, called “How to create a MassCareers Profile”. It offers a link and several steps to create an identity within the MassCareers site. The committee believes that while this is an essential element for people with disabilities to learn about job opportunities, that people with disabilities remain unlikely to know about the opportunities posted on MassCareers and what parameters apply for pursuing a job interest discovered there. The committee recommends that MRC offer specific recommendations to the DEP designed to promote awareness of the MassCareers opportunities, such as notification of the CILs, Rehabilitation Vendors, and sharing information with organizations like Work Without Limits and the Association for People in Supported Employment.

**Recommendation FY23-5 (formerly FY22-3 & 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.

Responsible SRC Committee: Business & Employment

#### **MRC Response to FY23-5**

MRC continues with our efforts of developing a robust communications, marketing, and branding strategy for agency, which includes the SRC. This recommendation appears to be similar to Recommendation FY23-1. MRC proposes:

- This recommendation should be combined with FY23-1, and follow the same processes as outlined in FY23-1.
- MRC assumes that this portion of the recommendation, “Make materials available to SRC for review related to accessibility to all including from a DEI lens,” is a given with all recommendations, and suggests the SRC assess the best way to incorporate the DEIA element across recommendations.

The Business and Employment Opportunity Committee has finalized and provided the MRC Communications (COMS) team with content relevant for recruitment of SRC members and is in agreement with the recommendation that the SRC assess the best way to incorporate the DEIA element across recommendations. The BEO recommends COMs provide a mock-up of a number of print and social media recruitment strategies to the committee, in addition to eliciting suggestions to the committee for any additional recommendations for the most effective print and electronic media materials to reach potential committee members

**Recommendation FY23-6 (formerly FY22-5 & 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

Responsible SRC Committee: Business & Employment

#### **MRC Response to FY23-6**

MRC continues to recognize that interest in self employment has increased during Covid-19. As this is a recurring goal for the last 2 years, MRC would like the SRC to further define what specifically the SRC would like to achieve with this goal. We propose, for example, to develop a shared understanding of what is meant by “self employment.” As such, MRC needs more information to assess our ability to support this recommendation.

**The Business and Employment Committee proposes to work with MRC toward the following three tasks:**

- **Adapt the VR S-E Guide from University of Montana Rural Institute on Inclusive Communities, RTC:Rural, for use with MRC consumers and VR counselors**
- **Develop a S-E resource club**
- **Establish regional partnerships with universities that house a Small business development center.**

**NEW BEO Proposed recommendation:**

**Members of the DMH’s Mental Health Planning Council (MHPC) Employment Subcommittee have had several conversations involving members of the BEO committee about the two committees working together to host a forum with MRC vendors delivering CIES in partnership with DMH’s ACCS Services recipients. MRC has proposed that individuals from the MHPC Employment Subcommittee and the BEO committee instead work with the MRC to survey staff/vendors/providers as part of their larger overall effort to better understand experience of, and opportunities for improvement with MRC among it’s partner stakeholders, with:**

- **Discussions begin in September 2022**
- **Design October/November/December 2022**
- **Data Collection- early 2023**