MCB State Plan Goals and Priorities Jointly Developed with the Rehabilitation Council 2019

# Goal I: To have sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council’s annual evaluation of the agency‘s progress toward the goal.

## Priorities include, but are not limited to:

* Monitor the agency budget and regularly advocate full funding of the VR program to ensure that in the years ahead the MCB can carry out its obligations to its many consumers. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state vocational rehabilitation funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature.
* Monitor the allocation of funds for the Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program and the Supported Employment Program. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature for the agency‘s state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program. Some of these funds are used for on-going supported employment services after VR services are completed.

# Goal II: To develop more employment options for VR consumers, including supported employment, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council’s annual evaluation of the agency‘s progress toward the goal.

## Priorities include, but are not limited to:

* Develop and implement plans to increase training opportunities for transition and pre-employment transition) consumers who are not going to college.
* Continue and expand the agency’s internship program for legally blind students and youth who are attending college and high school graduates who are not going to college or who are “out of school” youth with the result that the number of students and youth participating increases each year. Coordinate the agency’s internship program with other pre-employment transition services.
* Expand and develop a wide range of pre-employment transition services to enhance transition and employment opportunities for students who are legally blind and for potentially eligible students with disabilities as mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
* Devote reallotment funds to the continuance of the “Employment Now Initiative” program that has demonstrated a high success rate for employment outcomes for its participants.
* Coordinate with the other components of the statewide workforce development system to better enable them to provide appropriate assistance to individuals who are legally blind by: recommending and helping to fund appropriate assistive technologies for “Mass Hires” Career Centers; offering to provide all “Mass Hires” Career Centers with guidance regarding their accessibility to visually-impaired consumers; providing on-site VR services to legally blind consumers who have scheduled appointments at “Mass Hires” Career Centers; providing training about blindness and visual impairment to the workforce development agencies; providing consultation to workforce development staff; working with workforce development agencies to develop apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities for legally blind consumers; identify job-driven training opportunities for legally blind consumers; and developing an improved referral process among the partner agencies.

# Goal III: Increase Outreach to Enroll Additional Eligible VR Consumers Statewide based upon estimates that a significant number of qualifying consumers are not presently enrolled.

## Priorities, including, but not limited to:

* Establish additional mediums for creating increased MCB exposure by:
  + Back fill the MCB Research Analyst position to help guide MCB to identify and reach out to unenrolled qualifying MA consumers.
  + Fill current opening for MCB Marketing & Communications position.
  + Explore the use of RSA Innovation & Expansion funding to increase outreach.
  + Reevaluate the effectiveness of the present methodologies for conducting MCB consumer satisfaction surveys, and adjust, as appropriate.
* Explore the outcomes derived from the present Peer Mentoring program to determine the potential value for expanding the program.
* Recruit and train successful MCB VR alumni as ambassadors to conduct outreach to unenrolled consumers.

# Goal IV: To help legally blind persons, including students and potentially eligible students, to develop and increase the independence needed to be successful in competitive employment, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council’s annual evaluation of the agency‘s progress toward the goal.

## Priorities:

* Advocate and educate consumers and public officials on pedestrian safety issues which impact travel by pedestrians who use a white cane or service dog to seek and maintain employment.
* Advocate for better access to and improvement of public transportation and paratransit systems in order to increase the employment outcomes of persons who are legally blind.
* Increase access to computers and basic keyboarding skills in order to enable more MCB registered consumers to acquire elementary job readiness skills.
* Increase consumers’ access to adaptive equipment as measured by the number served by the agency’s Technology for the Blind Unit or referred to the Carroll Center’s training program.
* Increase pre-employment transition, transition, and college students’ access to educational materials, resources and websites.
* Increase and adjust Assistive Technology training for working age MCB consumers to
  + Support those currently working to maintain or advance their employment opportunities.
  + Improve job readiness technology skills for those MCB consumers hoping to enter or reenter the competitive workforce.
* Advocate for improved accessibility of federal and state government and private internet sites and documents,

# Goal V: Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of vocational rehabilitation services delivery, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council’s annual evaluation of the agency‘s progress toward the goal.

## Priorities include, but are not limited to:

* Annually review the agency performance on RSA standards and indicators and on other statistical measures of effectiveness and recommend actions to improve performance when appropriate.
* Improve communication and collaboration between VR counselors in MCB’s regional offices and VR counselors in MCB’s Deaf-Blind Extended Support Unit to enhance services to consumers.
* Improve communication and collaboration among MCB staff (VR counselors, children‘s service workers and social workers) in order to facilitate services to pre-employment transition consumers who have reached their fourteenth birthday and to identify on a case by case basis the most appropriate departments within MCB and programs offered by service providers to meet these individuals’ needs.
* Improve communication and collaboration between MCB VR counselors and all other state, federal, contracted and private agencies providing technology, vocational training and employment services to MCB consumers, including eligible and potentially eligible pre-employment transition consumers.
* Provide appropriate after-school assistive technology and orientation and mobility services as pre-employment transition services to eligible and potentially eligible middle and high school students.
* Provide appropriate job exploration and counseling pre-employment transition services such as mentorships and exposure to real life career information.
* Provide appropriate work readiness pre-employment transition services in areas such as financial management, budgeting, and social skills.