

Statewide Rehabilitation Commission (SRC) Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2021

1pm-3pm

Attendees

- Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Members: Chairperson Dawn Clark, Joe Bellil, Inez Canada, Naomi Goldberg, Steve LaMaster, Olympia Stroud
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Staff: Kate Biebel, Amanda Costa, Bill Noone, Adetokunbo Owolewa
- Public: Cheryl Scott, Sarah Wiles, Bree Larson

Please note: This meeting was held remotely.

Minutes Approval- Ms. Clark:

- Ms. Clark motioned to approve minutes from the previous Executive Committee meeting. Ms. Goldberg moved to amend the last meeting's minutes to add the discussion regarding duplication of presentations to the Executive Committee. Ms. Goldberg's motion was noted and seconded by Mr. Bellil motion. The January 7th meeting minutes with revisions were approved.
- Intro: Amanda Costa, Director of Individual and Family Engagement
 - Amanda Costa joined Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) as Director of Individual & Family Engagement. Ms. Costa comes to MRC from UMass Medical School in Worcester, MA. Ms. Costa has a decade of experience engaging people with mental health conditions and other disabilities and building advisory councils at UMass.
 - Ms. Costa introduced herself, and the Executive Committee members introduced themselves.
 - Ms. Costa will attend future meetings and participate in committee work in order to inform the SRC of MRC's engagement with persons with disabilities, their families, and support networks.

Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Consultant Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Response (RFR)

Discussion:

- The Executive Committee is looking for a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) consultant to build capacity and support around racial equity
- This person will interface with Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) members and leadership, as well as Massachusetts Rehabilitation Council (MRC) staff and leadership
- Ms. Canada did some preliminary work on a template for a Request for Proposal (RFP), borrowing from some other organization's work.
- The entire committee had input into the drafting of the Request for Proposal and what they are looking for in a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) consultant.
- Some criteria requested in no order:
 - A person with experience working with employment systems for persons with disabilities
 - A person with extensive knowledge of African American history, systemic racism, and the barriers to employment for persons with disabilities, people of color, and other marginalized groups.
 - A person who is familiar with resources for persons with disabilities
 - A person who can utilize different analytical techniques with a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) lens.
 - A person who can use analytical skills to examine policies and practices through a DEI lens.

- A person who is capable of meeting and working remotely.
- Deliverables/Requested Services:
 - This is a small selection, as the Exec. Committee will add several more before an RFP is complete
 - Compile a final report that summarizes key findings, Statewide Rehabilitation Councils Diversity Equity and Inclusion vision and key definitions.
 - Develop a three-year Action Plan (i.e. one-year action plan plus a high-level action plan for years 2 and 3). The plan will incorporate the consultant's key findings, the DEI vision and will be linked to SRC's mission and budget.
 - Present the final DEI vision and action plan to SRC membership.
- Anticipated work timeline: April-Sep 2021, or May-October 2021
- Proposed Qualifications:
 - *A few agreed upon during the discussion in no order:*
 - Experience working with people with disabilities and familiar with employment related systems serving people with disabilities
 - Knowledge of culturally responsive and equitable evaluation frameworks and possess experience using evaluation frameworks
 - Background in historical and current race and equity issues, especially in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Open Meeting:

- Ms. Canada will circulate a clean draft of the Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Request for Proposals to Statewide Rehabilitation Council Members by close of Business Friday February 5, 2021. The Executive Committee & relevant MRC staff will take the next week to review. By Friday February 12, 2021 edits will be submitted to Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission staff to post. February 19, 2021 is the aspirational date, to put the Request for Proposals out to bid. Ideally the month of March 2021 will be spent reviewing and scoring proposals. However, this may get pushed into April-May 2021.
- Mr. Bellil requested a report from MRC regarding Independent Living Community (ILC) services in the current COVID-19 pandemic landscape. Mr. Bellil expressed concerns regarding some rumbling from the ILCs, related to Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETs) and Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living services.
- Mr. Noone, Director of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Analytics & Quality Assurance Dept (AQUA) suggested Jessica Cimini, Operations Director for Vocational Rehabilitation, as a potential resource for this data.
- There will be further follow-up with Ms. Cimini, Ms. Biebel, and other relevant parties at MRC, regarding Mr. Bellil's request.
- Mr. Bellil mentioned that former Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) & Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) Commissioner, and current Consulting partner Janet LaBreck will attend the State Plan Committee meeting on Thursday February 11, 2021. There may be an opportunity for a discussion of the SRC's Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Request for Proposals with Ms. LaBreck.

Motion to Adjourn:

- Ms. Clark motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:00pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. LaMaster and Ms. Canada. The meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.