

Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
July 1st 2021
1-3pm EST

Attendees:

- Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Members: Joe Bellil, Inez Canada, Steve LaMaster, Olympia Stroud, Naomi Goldberg
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Staff: Amanda Costa
- Public: Sarah Wiles (CAP), Cheryl Scott (WIB)

Please Note: This meeting was held remotely.

Meeting was called to order at by the Chair at 1:04 pm.

Introductions: Attendees went around and provided basic introductions.

Opening Remarks from the Chair: A discussion occurred regarding how Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) should respond to ongoing acts of violence against people of color considering the recent murders in Winthrop MA. Chair asked for ideas of how to acknowledge these heartbreaking stories at each meeting without focusing on the violence. The group discussed:

- telling the stories of the people whom communities lose and/or
- hosting a healing circle in partnership with our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant, Health Management Associates, as well as resource sharing and including a reference to supporting our communities of color during in all meetings moving forward.
- Mr. Bellil suggested hosting an upcoming disability and family forum about supporting MRC consumers of color.
 - MRC's Office of Individual and Family Engagement expressed a willing to partner on this, especially because one of the people in Winthrop was an individual receiving MRC services.

Minutes Approval – Mr. Bellil

- The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 3rd meeting. Mr. Bellil motioned to approve minutes from the June meeting. Mr. LaMaster seconded the motion. The June 3, 2021 Executive Committee meeting minutes were approved with no amendments.

Old Business:

- **Membership Update**
 - Mr Fujii's SRC membership application has been sent to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) for preliminary vetting. We have had two

other community members submit SRC Applications. As Chair, Ms. Canada will meet with them to discuss their application and any next steps.

- Robert Jones from EOHHS is working with Ms. Canada to document the SRC membership application process and track membership status. Applications include the written application form, a resume and cover letter, as well as a letter from Ms. Canada as SRC Chair.

New Business:

- **Subcommittee Updates:**

- **Policy Committee: Ms. Goldberg**

- Ms. Golberg hosted a discussion with MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Director of Operations, Jessica Cimini to hear updates on recent VR work and how SRC can be of support. Ms. Cimini communicated that the Vocational Rehabilitation team liked the college readiness packet developed by SRC members and are thinking through how to best use this resource.
- Many MRC consumers have come to CAP with a lack of understanding of the basic Vocational Rehabilitation services, and don't understand their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The Committee is consider draft language re: purpose and importance of the IPE to recommend that MRC remind consumers at different stages of services. The Committee also wants to develop more structured and clear material about the breadth of VR services and steps to engage.
 - During Q&A on reports, a discussion occurred regarding having Ms. Casey support the development of a basic video outlining the MRC onboarding process for any new VR service recipient.
- The Committee continues to work on the procurement recommendation and ultimately plans to make recommendations for providing services in places where there is a gap in the state contract.

- **Consumer Satisfaction & Needs Assessment Committee: Ms. Stroud & Ms. Costa**

- The group is in the process of reviewing the 2021 annual Needs Assessment report drafted by MRC. Analytics Dept asked for more time so the meeting was moved to July to grant that time. MRC Analytics Team will review the needs assessment report at the Committee meeting. The Committee will invite Synergy Consulting to participate. The Committee will be coming up with recommendations based on the report.
- The Synergy workgroup focused on revamping the consumer satisfaction survey and will invite diverse employee resource groups from MRC to an upcoming working meeting to help the team think about best practices for engaging underserved and underrepresented populations.

- **The Business & Employment Opportunity (BEO) Committee: Mr. LaMaster**

- Mr. LaMaster had a meeting with Juanita Allen and Sandra Borders from Human Resources Division and the Office of Diversity and Equal

Opportunity on June 8th, where they gave an overview of the disability employment project they are focused on. Also, they wanted to better understand the Committee and how it relates to MRC. Mr. LaMaster is working to set up another meeting to further discuss how SRC can support the effort to employ more people with disabilities in state agencies, and across the Commonwealth.

- Mr. LaMaster met with MRC Director of Communications in June to get an update on marketing and branding for MRC and how it overlaps with SRC work. Ms. Casey provided a viewing of a marketing video currently in progress, that outlines what MRC does for individuals with disabilities. A discussion occurred surrounding Ms. Casey's role, which is focused on updating digital communications and messaging the work of MRC to all audiences. Ms. Casey is developing a strategic branding plan and developing an MRC team to execute these initiatives. The Committee would be open to connecting Ms. Casey with folks from the business and consumer communities to support this work. Ms. Casey would like to see the SRC members as brand ambassadors to MRC and will join the next Committee meeting to talk further about partnerships.
- Mr. LaMaster discussed a priority focused on updating the self-employment resource tool and how that looks going forward since Ms. Canada is leading the subcommittee. Ms. Canada wishes to continue but recognized the effort will be at a slower pace. She is working to put a team together to focus on updating this tool and will be reaching out this month.
 - During Q&A on reports, Mr. Bellil noted that lack of support for Self-Employment was raised at MRC Disability forum.
- **State Planning Committee & Fiscal Year 2022 Recommendations: Mr. Bellil**
 - The FY 2022 recommendations were approved at the June 2022 SRC quarterly meeting in June. The Recommendations were emailed to Ms. Biebel as the MRC Staff representative, who accepted them. MRC has until July 31st to provide SRC with responses to their recommendations. The SRC meeting in August will review responses from MRC.
- **Diversity Equity and Inclusion work Schedule: (Ms. Canada)**
 - Some upcoming SRC Executive Committee meetings will entirely focus on Diversity Equity and Inclusion work in partnership with Health Management Associates to allow for proper time to address this important topic with our consultant.
 - HMA has provided a Doodle poll to develop meeting dates outside of regularly scheduled meeting. Ms. Canada reminded everyone to respond, and once completed, meeting invites will go out to all members. Ms. Canada updated the group that HMA was appreciative of the team's timely responses to their recent DEI requests.
 - Because of DEI focused meetings, Ms. Canada would like Committees to start submitting written Committee reports since time may not permit verbal reports.

- This will help with preparation of SRC Annual report which be developed in August/September and due at the end of October 2021. Committees can pull from written reports to compile the draft.
- **Mass Hire Apprenticeship Program (Cheryl Scott)**
 - Ms. Scott reviewed a power point presentation on a new Massachusetts Apprenticeship Expansion Initiative at the Mass Hire Workforce Board (*see power point presentation*).
 - Registered apprenticeships were covered during the presentation, which are defined as apprenticeships registered with the government. Massachusetts is interested in expanding apprenticeships in new industries, and to enhance diversity the workforce.
 - MRC is partnering with Mass Hire to support engaging people with disabilities in apprenticeships.
 - A discussion centered around how to engage more businesses through the Business and Employment Committee to support apprenticeship work.
 - **Question:** how can the general public can get access to more information about these apprenticeships?
 - Currently, the most effective process is working with intermediary organizations who take on the role of recruiting individuals to match with an apprenticeship.
 - **Question:** How will MRC outreach consumers regarding apprenticeship programs?
 - Outreach strategy has not been decided.
 - Ms. Scott agreed that SRC should and will be involved in thinking this through.
 - **Question:** Can individuals with a degree become an apprentice?
 - Anyone can apply as long as they have the interest and skill set the employer seeks
 - Suggestions came up surrounding engaging Personal Care Attendants (PCA) as apprenticeship options.
 - Ms. Scott acknowledge the challenge with PCA apprenticeships is that salary is ultimately very low and there is no promotion opportunities, making it hard to use an apprenticeship to incentivize career growth and salary growth.
 - Ms. Scott stated that her colleagues in workforce development, and, the state healthcare collaborative are working on this issue.

Open Meeting

- **Grant update- Steve LaMaster**
 - Mr. LaMaster provided an update on addressing the affects of COVID-19 on the workforce through a recent grant application he submitted in partnership with Mass General Hospital (MGH). COVID had a disproportionate impact on people of color entering the workforce, as well as individuals with disabilities. Mr. LaMaster hosted a meeting with team members at MGH, who partnered with

Mr. LaMaster's team to pitch a grant to Social Security Administration to address these concerns. The grant application focuses on those who applied for and not yet receiving SSDI, getting people back into employment, and are individuals of color. The grant work focuses granting benefits coupled with a rapid employment strategy for these individuals so they are not solely supported by SSDI and are less likely to stay on benefits long-term. Mr. LaMaster asked the Committee for help spreading the word about this grant.

- **Question:** Are MRC consumers of color eligible if they are not on SSA benefits?
 - Yes, if the Committee members know someone meeting the basic criteria, contact Mr. LaMaster for information.
- Mr. Bellil updated the business committee that the interest in gig economy work came up during the MRC Disability forum as an area of focus for young adults.
- Ms. Goldberg requested that someone is available to take notes during Committee meetings. Ms. Canada provided an update that MRC is working on hiring a staff member that would be made available for SRC note taking soon.

Adjourn: The Chair called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. LaMaster made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Bellil seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:53pm.