

Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Executive Committee Meeting Minutes  
March 4, 2021  
1pm-3pm

**Attendees**

- Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Members: 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

Please Note: This meeting was held remotely.

**Minutes Approval – Mr. Bellil**

- Mr. Bellil motioned to approve minutes from the previous Executive Committee meeting. Mr. LaMaster and Ms. Stroud seconded and thirded the motion respectively. Ms. Goldberg's motion was noted. The February 4, 2021 meeting minutes were approved with no amendments.

**Introductions:**

- MRC staff in attendance and the Executive Committee members present, went around and introduced themselves.

**Subcommittee Updates:**

- State Planning Committee:
  - The State Plan Committee met on February 11, 2021.
  - Janet LaBreck of Synergy Consulting gave a very informative presentation.
  - The SRC State plan recommendations, the goals of the recommendations and plan for implementation were discussed. Mr. Bellil has posted notes from that meeting.
  - Mr. Bellil has proposed another meeting of the State Plan Committee prior to June 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Full SRC Meeting. The tentative date is April 8, 2021. Mr. Bellil will send some communication later when this has been confirmed.
- The Business & Employment Opportunity (BEO) Committee:
  - Chair Mr. LaMaster and his Committee met on February 11, 2021.
  - Mr. LaMaster reviewed the Business and Employee Committee's contribution to the State Plan and their recommendations.
  - Ms. Canada provided committee members with a 2019 Office of Diversity & Equal Opportunity (ODEO) document to review. The committee anticipates that this review will be finished by March 11, 2021.
  - Mr. LaMaster, Ms. Costa and Colleen Casey, MRC Communications Director have agreed to collaborate in the future around marketing and communications for the BEO committee.

- Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) Director Mary Mahon McCauley was mentioned as a potential resource to the BEO subcommittee. Ms. McCauley may be invited to attend future meetings.
- The development of self-employment resources for MRC VR clients is another goal of the BEO committee. Ms. Canada has offered to take a leading role in compiling self-employment resources for persons with disabilities.
- The committee is reviewing employment numbers for persons with disabilities, both within MRC and without. Mr. Noone (MRS Staff, Analytics and Quality Assurance Department) will be providing the MRC disability employment numbers to the subcommittee. Mr. Noone will also investigate statewide employment numbers.
- Needs Assessment Subcommittee:
  - This Subcommittee led by Ms. Stroud met recently as well.
  - They are working with Synergy Consulting and Janet LaBreck on revamping the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.
  - The Consumer Satisfaction Survey Revamp project team will meet within 2-3 weeks to set a workplan. Ms. Stroud, Ms. Costa, Mr. Noone, and the MRC Analytics and Quality Assurance Dept. (AQUA) will be involved
  - There is raw data available from the most recent Consumer Needs Assessment, that is being redacted for Personal Identifying Information (PII). Once this is completed, there will be a report on the survey results.
  - The needs assessment committee worked to disseminate a mental health resource guide for consumers who are Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) shared by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The resource was disseminated to MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.
  - The Department of Mental Health (DMH) collaborated with MRC and the Subcommittee to disseminate a DMH multicultural resource directory during Black History Month. MRC shared this resource through their social media outlets.

**Diversity Equity & Inclusion (Request for Response) RFR Updates:**

- The SRC has developed a Request for Response to seek support on infusing Diversity Equity and Inclusion principles into their work, as well as provide a strategic vision and structure for SRC leadership. There will be more meetings around the strategy and planning for the DEI RFR.
- This (Request for Response) RFR was posted to COMMBUYS on Friday February 26, 2021 and will be posted for three weeks, until Friday March 19, 2021.
- A Bidder's Conference will be held virtually on Friday March 5, 2021. Vendors bidding for the contract will be able to ask questions and bring up any concerns.
- Ms. Biebel, Ms. Canada, Ms. Goldberg, Ms. Costa, and Ms. Stroud have volunteered to sit on the review committee. A tentative date for the review committee to review applications is Friday March 26, 2021.

- The review will be conducted via consensus scoring. Committee members will come in having read the proposals and scoring them individually. The committee will then average the scores of each proposal and come to a consensus.
- Then a final recommendation will be presented to Commissioner Wolf for her to approve or disapprove.
- Once this is done, MRC will need to seek prior approval from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), in order to spend federal funds on the winning proposal.
- **Anticipated Work Timeline:**
  - April-Nov 2021, or May-October 2021
  - Compile a final report that summarizes key findings, SRC's DEI vision and key definitions.
  - Develop a three-year SRC 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.
- **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

#### **RSA Innovation Grant-**

- RSA recently published a five-year up to \$18 million-dollar Innovation grant in the federal register. RSA wants VR agencies to focus on higher income careers for VR clients.
- Synergy Consulting is helping MRC develop a new VR service model, in order to apply for this grant.
- The meetings have already started ahead of the April 7, 2021 deadline.
- The concept is to increase Vocational Rehabilitation clients' innovative practices to support increased self-advocacy and self-efficacy skills. The goal would be to increase self-sufficiency and decrease reliance on public benefits. This would run alongside the mainstream VR services.

#### **Development of March 18, 2021 SRC Meeting Agenda:**

- Introductions
- Roll Call
- Commissioner Wolf remarks
- Vote on the Pro-tem Chair of the SRC.
  - Ms. Inez Canada has been nominated to serve as Chair Pro Temp until the Fall 2021 Full SRC meeting and officer elections.

- Recognition of Dawn Clark, who recently resigned as chair of the SRC.
  - An email will go out on Friday March 5, 2021 informing members of Dawn's resignation. It will also mention the voting procedure that will be used at the meeting.
- Synergy Consulting presentation the MRC RSA Innovation Grant proposal.
- Diversity Equity & Inclusion RFR presentation and overview.
- The Office of Individual & Family Engaging will present, led by Ms. Costa.
- Last on the agenda will be open meeting.
- Subcommittee updates may be submitted via writing in order to save time for the presentations.

#### **Open Meeting-**

- Ms. Scott mentioned her role coordinating the Mass Hires Advisory Board meetings. They meet on a quarterly basis. Like the SRC their meetings are open to the public. Ms. Scott invited Executive Committee members to attend and participate at future meetings.
- Mr. Bellil motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:55pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Goldberg and Ms. Canada. The meeting adjourned at 2:55pm.