

FY 2020 Recommendations Assigned to the Policy Committee

5. Procure other important services on the state contract (e.g., math tutors at each area office, standardized test registration) to avoid having consumers pay upfront for these services (or not receive them at all), especially when many consumers (e.g., clients on SSI and/or SSDI) are not obligated to contribute to the cost of their VR services. The SRC Policy Committee is requesting a list of MRC services that are currently on the state contract to understand what MRC can already write purchase orders (POs) for and thereby also know what services MRC cannot pay via PO.

Meanwhile, the SRC Policy Committee would coordinate with the SRC Consumer Needs/ Satisfaction Committee to determine whether survey responses can also identify services needed on the state contract and will share its findings with MRC. The SRC recommends MRC conduct a survey of area offices asking counselors what services they believe are needed on the state contract and share survey results with the SRC Policy Committee.

Lastly, the SRC requests the following to better inform members on the procurement process: a) the job title and department of MRC staff who handle procuring services on the state contract, b) how MRC makes decisions on what services to procure including how often a review of needed services occurs, c) a brief description of the key steps and barriers to procuring services on the state contract including the approximate duration of the procurement process, and d) what the current remedy is for services needed by a consumer that are not on the state contract.

MRC response:

MRC will make available a list of services utilizing contracts to the SRC. MRC can provide information from the Needs Assessment in terms of services identified by consumers as important and needed. MRC can utilize its counselor satisfaction survey to ask counselors about what services could be procured on a statewide basis. MRC is in the process of enhancing our Contracts Department including staffing, and will provide an update to the SRC on progress. MRC conducts an annual review of contracts that involves program and fiscal staff, and MRC follows applicable state procurement rules and processes to procure services. MRC can have a fiscal staff person attend a SRC meeting to review the procurement process.

7. Increasing post-secondary training outcomes by adding dedicated college liaisons to MRC staff who encourage VR consumers to seek postsecondary training, ensure consumer connections to college disability services, and research grants/scholarships. In addition, the SRC is recommending MRC counselors refer consumers, as appropriate, to the American Student Assistance program for help finding grants/scholarships and navigating higher education.

MRC response:

MRC counselors serve as liaisons, and work closely with colleges and universities to refer consumers to college disability service offices. MRC staff and vendors work closely with post-secondary institutions on assisting consumers in obtaining post-secondary training. MRC will research information on the American Student Assistance program and can make available to its counseling staff.