SRC Annual Report
Reports Template

**Executive Committee**

*Chairperson: Inez Canada*

*This Committee guides the goals and priorities for the Council’s work, facilitates decision-making for the administrative functions of the Council, and liaises with the MRC Executive leadership team to ensure the Council receives the necessary information and resources from the agency to offer meaningful input and advice to the vocational rehabilitation division of MRC*.

This year, the Executive Committee continued its work to bring the SRC and its members into compliance with the federal and state requirements for the advisory body and its members. With the help of our new Administrative Support staff, the SRC has begun to document, organize, and track essential processes and mandates. This foundation has provided a framework for the SRC’s current operations and will encourage growth so that successors can continue building a more effective Council of influential advisors for the MRC vocational rehabilitation division.

**Recommendations**

The Executive Committee did not take the lead on any recommendations this year. In the coming year the Committee will lead on:

**Recommendation FY24-7:** MRC will collaborate with SRC to identify, recruit, and engage more MRC Consumers and stakeholders from specific backgrounds, groups, and organizations required by federal regulations, including Un-served/Under-served communities, individuals with disabilities, and businesses.

**Policy Committee
Chairperson: Naomi Goldberg**

The SRC Policy Committee reviews and analyzes Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) policies and procedures to ensure service delivery aligns with federal and state VR regulations and policy guidance. The Committee recommends revisions to and the development of policies that help consumers better understand the VR process and what is necessary to attain competitive integrated employment. Also, it recommends changes to policies to fix systemic matters as appropriate. Finally, the Committee periodically reviews and recommends updates to the Council Bylaws.

For FY23 the SRC tasked the Policy Committee with two specific recommendations. The first was to develop SRC orientation materials focused on understanding the role of the SRC and the basics of vocational rehabilitation. The intent behind this recommendation was to provide SRC members with information that would assist them in performing their advisory role. The second recommendation was to create informational materials for VR consumers that explain the basics of the VR process in clear and understandable language. This recommendation was made with an understanding that VR consumers often struggle to understand how to navigate the vocational rehabilitation process and what they should expect and often this delays their services from progressing.

**Developing SRC Orientation Materials**

During the first half of FY23 the committee focused its efforts on developing content that serves to educate SRC members on both the role of the SRC and the basics of vocational rehabilitation. The ultimate goal of these efforts is to help SRC members better understand their advisory role and the topic on which they are advising.

The committee spent time gathering and reviewing available content on the subject of SRC and vocational rehabilitation from a range of agencies and organizations with this expertise. While the committee understood that the topic of vocational rehabilitation with its various regulations can be complicated, all recognized the critical importance of making sure that the materials selected would strike a balance between offering thorough explanations and making sure the language used would be clear and not overly complicated.

The materials that the committee selected in the end included a document that provides a brief overview of vocational rehabilitation services and the duties of the SRC as well as a video that provides a more detailed overview/training of vr basics. The information was forwarded to SRC members and participants for review and can be used going forward as part of an orientation curriculum for new SRC members.

**Create informational materials (e.g., fact sheets) for VR consumers that explain the basics of the VR process in clear and understandable language.**

The Policy Committee began this project with an understanding that VR services are individualized and therefore can be complicated to explain. With that in mind the committee sought to identify important VR topics that are confusing for consumers and would require written explanations using clear and simple language. The ultimate goal of the project was to educate VR consumers about the services they are receiving, as well as their rights and obligations so that the services are more effective.

The committee settled on three VR subjects for which it would create facts sheets in simple language; the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), financial policies, and due process. Over the course of several months, the committee drafted, reviewed, and revised three fact sheets. At the end of FY23 the final versions of the three fact sheets will be shared with MRC for potential use with consumers.

**Fair Hearing and Administrative Review Decisions**

At the end of FY23 MRC began providing updates to SRC via the Policy Committee about consumer appeals. This includes summaries of administrative review decisions, fair hearing decisions, as well as summaries of cases that have been settled**. (You may want to verify with Sahara that this is an accurate description of what they are providing because it hasn’t happened quite yet. I think this is what they are doing and it should happen in a few days, before the end of the FFY but I can’t confirm the particulars as of the due date for this document)** The summaries will provide enough information that will allow the reader to understand the basic dispute that led to the appeal and the decision without disclosing confidential information that would identify individual consumers. The purpose of sharing the decisions is to give the SRC a better idea of consumers’ experiences and an opportunity to track patterns of systemic problems if applicable.

Going forward, MRC will provide these summaries to the Policy Committee twice a year and that information will be shared with the wider SRC membership.

**The State Plan and Interagency Relations Committee**

*Chairperson: Joe Bellil*

*The State Plan and Interagency Relations Committee (State Plan Committee) ensures the SRC meets its obligations regarding input from consumers in the development of both the MRC public VR (vocational rehabilitation) State Plan and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan.*

**Recommendations**

During the FY23 State Plan Committee meetings, committee members reviewed and responded to Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s responses to the FY23 SRC Recommendations. The committees, in partnership with MRC, worked on their assigned recommendations throughout the year. The committee members appreciated the support given by MRC’s staff liaisons. Each MRC liaison brought a wealth of information to the committees, which helped the members progress through their work.

In April of 2023, the Office of Learning and Community Engagement included an online opportunity for MRC Consumers and their families to provide input and recommendations on how MRC vocational services could effectively support the disability community. The committee plans to continue finding new ways to engage MRC Consumers in the process of developing new recommendations.

The State Plan Committee met in May 2023 and reviewed all the submitted draft FY24 Recommendations. The committee then forwarded the final draft list of FY24 Recommendations to the Executive Committee for their review. The final FY24Rrecommendations were submitted to MRC for their review and response.

**Recommendation Questions**

The Executive Committee requested that each person who submitted a recommendation provide responses to the following questions during the SRC June Quarterly Meeting: What problem does this recommendation aim to solve or what issue does it seek to address? How does this recommendation contribute to achieving "competitive and sustainable employment for all people with disabilities," as stated in the SRC mission, and what is its intended value and purpose in relation to vocational rehabilitation? What are the expected outcomes or deliverables of this recommendation, and what impact is it expected to have?

The State Plan Committee is enthusiastic about continuing discussions on enhancing the recommendation process to ensure alignment with DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility) principles.