**Policy Committee**600 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111
August 4, 2022
11:00 AM -12:30 PM via Zoom

**Minutes**

**Attendees**: Bill Noone, Paula Euber, Sarah Wiles, Rosanna Woodmansee, and Naomi Goldberg

The meeting began with a discussion of the two recommendations with which the committee is tasked. The first is to curate orientation materials for SRC members. The second is to create basic fact sheets on important vocational rehabilitation concepts and procedures. Some sample orientation materials were shared with the group.

The group brainstormed on these subjects.

Bill suggested that high level examples be provided so that people can see what other things are doing. The information can be shared among staff and consumers to get feedback.

Rosanna noted that there seems to be confusion around eligibility for vocational rehabilitation and whether a person can benefit. This particularly occurs for individuals who are not quite ready and still need supports in place to work but want to begin. For example, a person may not have a PCA yet, they may not yet be connected with SHIP, they may need to move to a more accessible location, or may not have enough sobriety yet to start working. It should be made clear that such individuals do not have to wait to apply for VR services. They should do a referral and go through the process. Bill explained that the overwhelming majority of applicants are found to be eligible for services and that it is about knowing what you want to do and creating a pathway to do it. Paula relayed that the concept of readiness is tricky but that determining eligibility is done in an individualized assessment.

Paula also relayed that she used to use visual aids to help explain the vr process to her consumers and offered that something like this might be helpful. This might look like a navigation map that shows the different steps in the process. It can be used to demonstrate what will be happening with individual consumers and it can be used as a reference throughout the process to chart progress.

It was suggested that information be shared about trial work experiences.

Participants in the meeting noted that they were not sure exactly what materials consumers are given when they begin the relationship with the agency.

Naomi suggested that two common areas of confusion that CAP sees is that people do not understand the Individualized Plan for Employment and the rules around contributing to vr services for SSI/SSDI beneficiaries. She recommends that consumer facing fact sheets be created on these two subjects.

Sarah suggested that materials explaining administrative review and fair hearings would also be helpful. She also reiterated the importance of explaining that all needs have to be related to the employment goal.

Any materials need to be written in plain language AND translated into all of the languages that MRC has already recognized are languages into which all materials should be translated.

Rosanna noted that how often a vocational counselor meets with a consumer probably correlates to how informed a consumer is and reflects that the counselor is taking cues from the consumer about communication that works for them.

The group anticipates that once the committee decides on what materials may be appropriate for an orientation, that the materials will be shared with the wider SRC at an upcoming meeting. It is most likely that this would coincide with the quarterly SRC meeting in December.

The next meeting of the Policy Committee will be on Thursday, October 6th from 11:00- 12:30 via Zoom.