



# MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION

## STATEWIDE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

**Chairperson**  
Dawn Clark

**Vice Chairperson**

**Secretary**

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Steve Aalto

### Statewide Rehabilitation Council

MRC Framingham Area Office

463 Worcester Road, Suite 305 Framingham, MA 01701

March 21, 2019

12:00pm-2:00pm

## Meeting Minutes

### Call to Order/Introductions

The following Gubernatorial Appointee Members were in attendance: Ms. Rosanna Woodmansee; Mr. Yousef J. Bellil; Ms. Naomi Goldberg; Mr. Richard Colantonio; Ms. Dawn E. Clark, Chairperson; Ms. Lisa Chaingo; Ms. Barbara Cipriani

The following Ex Officio Members were in attendance: Kevin Goodwin, Joseph Paniciotti, AnnMarie Paulson, and Hong Lee.

MRC Staff - Toni Wolf, Commissioner; Kate Biebel, Deputy Commissioner; Adetokunbo Owolewa, Office Support Specialist

Other attendees: Mr. Alec Scarlis; Ms. Inez Canada

### Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Dawn Clark, moved to approve the meeting minutes, from the December 2018 meeting. Richard Colantonio moved to second the motion. AnnMarie Paulson motioned to correct the minutes, to show that she was present at the December 4, 2018 meeting in Natick, MA. All voted in favor of approving the minutes from December 2018. None were opposed.

### Exciting Committee News

Naomi Goldberg: The SRC Policy Subcommittee is going to be holding two meetings in the near future.

### Priority for Service Updates

Commissioner Wolf acknowledged the significant time and effort that went into planning Order of Selection (Priority for Services). January 8, 2019 was the targeted start date. However, MRC received a one-time \$10.1 million supplement; as a result of these additional dollars, MRC did not enter into Priority

for Services at this time. We will not have to close a priority category to new applicants. The revised functional limitations and assessment tool will still be used. Questions included:

Q. What is MRC's annual VR budget?

A. \$10 million from the Commonwealth, and \$64 million from the federal government for a \$74 million total. MRC has been flat funded for many years, with no annual budgets increases.

Q. Will MRC be able to update forms, and centralize things more?

A. Yes, MRC is moving to centralize, streamline, and utilize data more to inform decision-making.

## Eligibility Unit Update

Paula Euber, Springfield Area Director, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Eligibility Unit. MRC will pilot a team of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in the West District. These counselors will be tasked with intakes and determining eligibility for new VR applicants. The purpose of this team is to streamline the process for consumers, so they have a better experience; to provide timely services; and, to improve service delivery through rapid engagement. MRC is concurrently exploring how to incorporate Community Living eligibility processes, to facilitate more streamlined access to the array of services offered by MRC. The unit will be piloted for six months, and will start the beginning of May 2019. During the pilot MRC will closely monitor and assess successes, failures, areas for improvement, and data. The hope is that lessons from the pilot may be applied to the other districts, as we determine if we should expand the pilot. Questions included:

Q. Is there an Eligibility Unit in the North and South Districts?

A. The six month pilot is limited to the Area Offices in the West District.

Q. How will we measure consumer satisfaction?

A. We'll use surveys, and other data methods to measure consumer and staff satisfaction.

Q. Will Deaf & Hard of Hearing counselors be part of the eligibility unit?

A. There will be one Deaf and Hard of Hearing counselor, and one Bi-lingual (Spanish) counselor.

Q. Does this pilot eligibility process start after an application is complete?

A. The process starts at initial referral to VR.

Q. Will new applicants have to attend an orientation session, or will they watch an orientation video?

A. We want to be accessible to applicants wherever they are. If we do a new orientation video, we want it short and sweet, to the point. We'll try out different approaches.

Q. Will in-person orientation be required?

A. In-person orientations will not be required. They've been a barrier to many applicants in the past.

Q. Is it business as usual in the other parts of the state?

A. Yes, it is business as usual outside of the West District.

Counselors on the Eligibility Unit team are meant to be mobile. They are assigned a home office, but are expected to be in the community. There will be monthly assessments to see where everyone is at, and to make adjustments as we go.

### **MRC & DMH Employment Initiative**

Commissioner Wolf gave a PowerPoint presentation on the MRC and DMH Employment Initiative. This will officially begin July 1, 2019; the last 6 months have included intensive planning. This program will provide employment supports to DMH Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) clients. The model emphasizes meeting job seekers “where they are at,” and acknowledges the need to be flexible, mobile, and focus on engagement (before, during, and after employment). MRC will have an ISA with DMH for 4.5 Million Dollars that will primarily fund: 1) 18 Mental Health Specialty Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors; and 2) ACCS-specific employment supports through Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES). This model was informed by Vermont Model of Supported Employment, and the Maryland integrated Departments of Mental Health and Vocational Rehabilitation. Services for job seekers will be individualized, and will be grounded in an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) that specifically targets delivery of employment supports and employment outcomes. We are aiming for a caseload of 1:50 for these specialty counselors.

### **Procurement Updates**

MRC is in the process of procuring two services – the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES). Pre-ETS is a brand new procurement, introducing a new service delivery model that focuses on students with disabilities from age 14 till they graduate or their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday. This “light touch” model provides exposure to employment and career development supports for high school/post-secondary students who may or may not need traditional VR services. Pre-ETS focuses more on awareness, exploration, and preparation, which are delivered through 5 distinct pre-employment transition services. The goal is to provide students with the skills needed to be successful with employment or further education after high school. CIES is a re-procurement of an existing model of employment supports. The new procurement has introduced some new elements, including emphasis on increased flexibility and the potential for peer supports. New Pre-ETS and CIES contracts will begin July 1, 2019.

### **Business Process Redesign**

From September 2018 – January 2019 MRC conducted a Business Process Redesign. A “Roadmap” for the next 3 years was developed, and MRC has begun initial implementation. MRC will provide a more complete update on the Roadmap at the June SRC meeting.

### **Open Meeting Time**

Rich Colantonio motioned to revisit the scheduled length of each SRC meeting. Previously, there was a survey circulated to the council members on the length of each meeting. After a lively debate, this motion was tabled to be debated later.

Kevin Goodwin asked about the status of the SRC retreat. The idea of a retreat has been tabled for now.

Joe Bellil mentioned that the SILC will be part of the planning for the 2019 Consumer Conference. Commissioner Wolf said the target timeframe for the conference is end of June 2019.

SRC members interested in training on Microsoft Outlook may call Commissioner Wolf to find out more info.

Commissioner Wolf mentioned there may be an opportunity for SRC members to travel to Bethesda, MD for the spring 2019 CSAVR Conference, which includes training for State Rehabilitation Advisory Councils. Joe Bellil commented that these sessions were great when he went, and he recommends attending.

The State Plan Committee is meeting March 28<sup>th</sup>.

The Executive Committee will be meeting on April 4<sup>th</sup>.

The next full SRC Meeting is June 27, 2019 at the Burlington Public Library.