

Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC)
State Plan and Interagency Relations Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2023, 11:00-12:30pm EST

Attendees:

Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Members: Christine Tosti, Naomi Goldberg, Steve LeMaster, Joe Bellil (Committee Chair), Inez Canada, Olympia Stroud; Ex-Officio: Kevin Goodwin

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Staff: William Noone, William Allen, Graham Porrell, Amy Karr

The meeting was called to order at 11:04 AM.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Joe stated the names of all attendees.

2. Opportunity to share any diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility thoughts and ideas

Mr. Bellil tested out BARD (Google's AI), asking about DEI. It provided definitions and suggestions.

Ms. Tosti spoke about meeting a pet trainer and shared the link to his business, Bet on Black Pet Care: <https://www.betonblackpetcare.com/>

Ms. Stroud spoke about the Commission of Blind; the Commissioner was let go. Mr. Bellil said some SRC members have connections to the council.

3. Approval of minutes

Mr. Bellil called for a motion to approve the February minutes. Mr. Goodwin motioned to approve the minutes. Ms. Stroud seconded. Mr. Bellil asked whether there were any corrections to the minutes. The February 2023 minutes were approved with no corrections.

4. Any updates/issues regarding the SRC FY23 Recommendations and developing FY24 Recommendations

No comments about the SRC FY23 Recommendations.

Ms. Canada had emailed the members an article about why people with disabilities choose not to return to work. The article included recommendations about developing recommendations to MRC, which Ms. Canada thinks could be helpful for the SRC. Discussion about how the MRC doesn't directly deal with people who choose not to return to work. However, could have PSAs encouraging individuals to consider returning to work. People may fear returning to work, fear the unknown, fear losing benefits, and fear what happens if job ends. Part of MRCs current outreach is targeted to people not currently being served by MRC. MRC can include confidence-building training for consumers and training for employers to be more inclusive.

Mr. Goodwin spoke about the closing of the coffee shop Bitty and Beau's. Mr. Allen was at the closure meeting for the coffee shop the previous evening, left with many resumes, and is inspired to help the individuals move forward. Discussed desire to have more employers

receive Windmills training, which is national training to help employers understand the world of disabilities.

Mr. Bellil stated that he is not looking for recommendations at this meeting, just wants members to think of the process of developing recommendations. Ms. Tosti stressed the importance of ensuring consumers with poor experiences with MRC are targeted. Mr. Bellil said after review of schedule will review MRC Consumer Experience survey Mr. Fujii sent out.

Ms. Canada presented two suggestions regarding recommendations. The first is to learn what MRC is currently doing to assist the population of people with disabilities coming out of incarceration, and to see if MRC can do better in that area. The second suggestion stems from the BEO committee and CAP; to have more business consultants as vendors for MRC. Currently there are only two consultants. Suggestion to open an RFR. Consumers wanting self-employment should have more support. In a CAP case, the business consultant provided only surface level assistance to the consumer. Consumers need to understand that a self-employment IPE will take longer than conventional employment. Ms. Canada feels business consultants must offer more to consumers.

Ms. Tosti discussed programs where dogs live with inmates. As a recommendation for 2024 she would like to create partnerships between incarcerated or out of incarceration people and animal shelters. She shared a link of such as program:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2_SU8fA0f4&ab_channel=KarmalizedPictures

Ms. Stroud wanted to emphasize that hearing the voice of individuals with disabilities is very important and would like to discuss a specific recommendation about hearing the voices of disabled people.

Mr. Noone stated that a template for recommendations is coming from the MRC.

5. Review the Draft Schedule and Tasks for State Plan and Annual Reports – 2024

The schedule for the WIOA State Plan was reviewed:

- SRC reviews, analyzes, and advises MRC on the VR section of the WIOA State Plan from June 2023 to October 2023.
- Draft WIOA State Plan to be sent to Governor's Office by March 2024.
- Final WIOA State Plan to be sent to RSA by July 2024.

The Draft Schedule and Tasks for Annual Report FY 2024 was reviewed:

SRC must come up with recommendations for the FY2024 Annual Report. Chairs of committees have been asked to come up with draft reports of their activities for the year.

- The recommendations for FY2024 Annual Report are due to MRC by June 30, 2023.
- The MRC Responses to the SRC FY2024 Recommendations are due by July 31, 2023.

- SRC Chairs provide draft committee reports by August 1, 2023.
The due date was October 11, but it was changed at this meeting so that the SRC can get content to COMS before October. The committee annual reports will be reviewed and finalized at the August 9 State Plan meeting,
- FY2023 Final SRC Annual Report, including MRC Program Results, is due to RSA by November 1, 2023

Detailed SRC recommendation timeline was reviewed:

- February 2023 - April 2023- Committee start the process of developing their FY24 Recommendations
- May 4, 2023 - All recommendations are due at the Executive Committee meeting.
- June 1, 2023 - The Executive Committee reviews and approves the recommendations to be presented at the June SRC meeting.
- June 22, 2023 - SRC members vote on recommendations at the SRC Quarterly meeting.
- June 23, 2023 - SRC forwards the approved recommendations to MRC for MRC's response.
- July 31, 2023 - MRC's response to the recommendations is due.
- August 9, 2023, at 11 am - State Plan Committee reviews MRC's responses and prepares a work plan with MRC.

6. Review MRC Consumer Experience survey

Discussion of the results of the MRC Consumer Experience survey (**See MRC Consumer Experience Survey Report 2022 Q4 (002) PPT**). This has not yet been fully reviewed by CSNAC; that is on the agenda for the next CSNAC meeting. Market Decisions Research is the vendor who designed the survey and is providing results. Mr. Bellil encouraged members to attend the CSNAC meeting for more discussion of the survey. Ms. Canada doesn't feel the survey has enough information about why people are dissatisfied, which would help the SRC to develop suggestions about how to lower dissatisfaction.

7. Other input from committee members

Ms. Tosti shared this link about inmates working with dogs in prison:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2_SU8fA0f4&ab_channel=KarmalizedPictures

Mr. Noone mentioned that some correctional facilities in Massachusetts offer similar programs. The Worcester County correctional facility does have a program where inmates train dogs; the Sheriff of Worcester would be the contact.

Joe thanked the attendees for their input and time.

The next State Plan meeting is May 31, 2023 at 11:00 am.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 pm.