**State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**

**State Plan and Interagency Relations Committee Meeting Minutes**

**December 18th, 2024 11:00 – 12:30 pm ET**

**Attendees:**

* **Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Members:** Joe Bellil (Committee Chair), Naomi Goldberg (Client Assistance Program – CAP), Heather Wood (SRC Chair)
* **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Staff:** William Noone, Joan Phillips, Graham Porell, Amy Karr
* **Other individuals present:** Kevin Goodwin, Milo Plass (CAP)
* **Absent SRC Members:** Dawn Clark, Steve LaMaster

Please note: This meeting was held remotely.

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Bellil called on the attendees, and they introduced themselves.

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

Mr. Bellil read the following and shared it in the chat:

The Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the federal workforce, Executive Order 14035, was signed by President Biden on June 25, 2021. Its goal is to advance DEIA across all federal agencies to ensure the federal government sets a standard for inclusive employment practices.

Building an equitable pipeline for senior leadership positions.
Strengthening support for employee resource groups (ERGs).
Reviewing federal hiring systems to eliminate bias and promote equitable opportunities.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/06/25/executive-order-on-diversity-equity-inclusion-and-accessibility-in-the-federal-workforce/>

President Trump’s administration is planning on looking at how much money has been spent on DEI information and perhaps capping that money and changing that process. ThisI will affect federally funded agencies. There may be an intent to claw back the money.

We will need to be able to talk about MassAbility’s DEIA scorecard and what we will be able to do with that.

It will be necessary for us to keep an eye on the process and federal landscape as the new administration takes power.

1. Approval of minutes

Mr. Bellil called for a motion to approve the April 2024 minutes. Mr. Bellil asked whether there were any corrections to the minutes. The April 2024 minutes were approved with no corrections.

1. Updates on the final SRC FY25 Recommendations.

Mr. Bellil shared the final draft of SRC FY25 recommendations. **(See SRC FY25 Recommendation MRC Response and SRC input- final 10-3-24.docx.)**

**FY25- 1c**

**The recommendation is to consult with MassAbility and to prepare a proposal to restructure the SRC committees by merging redundant ones, establishing distinct objectives, harnessing technology, and offering training to boost productivity and impact.**

The Executive Committee will be reviewing this. Chair Wood had been waiting for the SRC membership to be settled. Nominated members are still waiting for appointments and the terms of long time members may be ending. There had been talk of the State Plan committee’s functions to fall under the Executive Committee. Chair Wood feels that the SRC is functioning well currently. Also, no one has expressed interest in taking on more of a leadership role yet.

**FY25-2**

**This recommendation will have MassAbility provide an overview of DEIA work across the agency to SRC members, to help educate on current efforts and identify areas of meaningful partnership with the SRC. One area that MassAbility could partner with the SRC on DEIA is in the review of in-development VR training modules.**

The SRC will be looking for Mr. Mason to provide information about this moving forward.

**FY25-3**

**This SRC will advise MassAbility on strategies to enhance business and employer awareness of the Disability Employment Tax Credit (DETC): a state-sponsored incentive to promote employment of people with disabilities.**

Mr. LaMaster and the Business Employment Opportunity (BEO) Committee have been working on this and will continue to do so.

**FY25-4**

**MassAbility has been involved in receipt of a year-long examination of national best practices in self-employment of people with disabilities, the final recommendations of which are expected in October 2024. The SRC will then work with MassAbility to involve stakeholders in presenting it’s findings and discuss a future MassAbility self-employment strategy to support Job Seekers with disabilities in pursuing self-employment vocational goals.**

Mr. LaMaster and the BEO Committee have been working on and will continue to do so.

**FY25-5**

**For the last several years, MassAbility has implemented a model of employment service delivery for Department of Mental Health Services (DMH) ACCS service recipients. SRC will collaborate with MassAbility and DMH stakeholders to enhance stakeholder awareness of the current collaborative delivery model and associated employment outcomes.**

This will also be under the BEO Committee. Mr. LaMaster has not provided an update on this.

The committees do hear presentations about topics related to the recommendations. But what are the committees doing regarding the recommendations? Committee members are not just supposed to be learning, but also to advise and offer feedback.

Mr. Noone noted that specifically regarding the DETC the BEO Committee discussed getting a list of what organizations have received information about the DETC and reviewing if there are organizations that have been missed and could be targeted. Now that MassAbility’s name change has occurred and the DETC can be more robustly promoted, there may be opportunities for the SRC to offer MassAbility ideas they have not thought of.

1. Discussion on having SRC and MassAbility work together to develop the FY26 SRC Recommendations and the need for MassAbility liaisons for this process

It was discussed at a previous meeting that the quantity and quality of recommendations that were most recently presented to MassAbility were improved and appreciated. The SRC has been working more with MassAbility to develop the recommendations. Mr. Bellil thinks that the SRC will need MassAbility liaisons to be part of the process so that as the SRC develops the new recommendations we understand how MassAbility thinks about it. Additional MassAbility input early in the process may be useful for both the SRC and MassAbility. Mr. Bellil wants to hear any thoughts from the committee about this.

In the past the recommendations were developed by the SRC mostly without input from MassAbility during the process. The original intent was to provide independence for SRC to make the recommendations. Then the recommendations were discussed and refined. The information about recommendations is maintained and included in the State Plan.

Mr. Bellil asked about a potential recommendations timeline. The SRC could have a draft of the recommendations done in early May or even April so MassAbility could look at them and provide feedback, in advance of the SRC voting on the recommendations in June. Chair Wood noted that Commissioner Wolf will be at the next Executive Committee meeting in January. Potentially there could be discussion about the working with MassAbility liaisons and the proposed timeline.

1. Status of the combined MassAbility and SRC Annual Report- 2024

Mr. Bellil has given all of the material to Colleen Casey. Ms. Casey does have Chair Wood’s letter. Ms. Karr and Sahara Defensor are working with Ms. Casey to finalize the list of appointed SRC members for the Annual Report. Mr. Bellil is looking forward to seeing the combined report.

1. Other input from committee members

Chair Wood would like to see the Ad Hoc Membership Committee working on recruitment in the future. The committee can still exist for another six months as an ad hoc committee. Maybe eventually it can become a standing committee. If funding becomes available maybe the committee can work on some education and training for the SRC, in addition to the recruitment and orientation of new members. Other SRCs have standing Membership Committees. Chair Wood will contact Ms. Goldberg to discuss future meetings of the ad hoc Membership Committee.

At the next State Plan Committee meeting, there will be a draft timeline for the recommendations, updates on the Annual Report, and any issues or comments relating to the FY25 recommendations the SRC is currently working on.

The next State Plan Committee meeting is scheduled for February 19th, 2025 at 11:00 AM.

1. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 am.