

February 21st, 2024 minutes

State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

State Plan and Interagency Relations Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 21st, 11:00-12:30 pm EST

Attendees:

Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Members: Joe Bellil (Committee Chair), Naomi Goldberg

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

Other individuals present: Kevin Goodwin, Christine Tosti¹, Sarah Wiles

Please note: This meeting was held remotely.

The meeting was called to order at 11:03 AM.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Bellil stated the names of all attendees.

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

Mr. Bellil stated that Easterseals Youth Leadership Network (YLN) celebrates Black History Month by having a session on black advocates with disabilities. The chosen black advocate is Brad Lomax. He was a disabled Black Panther and a disability rights/independent living movement leader. He was the reason the Black Panther party provided food to activists during the 26-day 504 Sit-in in San Francisco. Mr. Bellil shared the following link:

<https://www.centerforlearnerequity.org/news/brad-lomax-uniting-the-civil-rights-and-disability-rights-communities/>

3. Approval of minutes

Mr. Bellil called for a motion to approve the August 2023 minutes. Mr. Bellil asked whether there were any corrections to the minutes. The August 2023 minutes were approved with no corrections.

Mr. Bellil called for a motion to approve the October 2023 minutes. Mr. Bellil asked whether there were any corrections to the minutes. The October 2023 minutes were approved with no corrections.

4. Any updates/issues regarding the SRC FY24 Recommendations

There were no updates on the SRC FY24 recommendations

¹ Upon request, attendees' names are used when they contribute to the discussion.

5. Update on WIOA State Plan virtual public hearings

Ms. Tosti and Mr. Bellil attended separate WIOA State Plan public hearings and they both submitted comments. Ms. Tosti spoke to Darien Johnson, who will replace former member Cheryl Scott as the representative from the state workforce development board. Mr. Noone attended a hearing and helped refer an individual seeking services for a relative to MRC Connect. MRC is in the process of submitting the WIOA State Plan to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

6. Updates on SRC Annual Report

The SRC Annual Report has been completed and was sent to members. **(See SRC Annual current 2.7.pdf.)**

Once the SRC Annual Report is posted on the SRC website, it also needs to be submitted to RSA. The Annual Report is submitted to RSA every year.

7. Review the Draft Schedule and Tasks for State Plan and Annual Reports and guidelines for State Plan recommendations - FY25

Mr. Bellil shared the schedule document, which was also sent out to members. **(See SRC State Plan Committee- Schedule for State Plan and Annual Reports Updated 1-4-24.docx.)**

He reviewed the schedule. The key point about the SRC FY2025 timeline is that recommendations will be developed between February and April, with the goal of getting them to the Executive Committee in June.

Mr. Bellil discussed the section of the document that lists three questions that should be answered by anyone submitting a question. These questions were suggested by former SRC member Cheryl Scott.

1. What problem is this trying to solve or what issue is this trying to address?
2. The intended value and purpose as it relates to vocational rehabilitation. In other words, how will this help achieve “competitive and sustainable employment for all people with disabilities”? (The quote is from the SRC mission.)
3. What is the expected outcome or deliverable for this recommendation? What impact is it expected to have?

Mr. Bellil asked for opinions about the questions. Ms. Tosti praised Ms. Scott and the questions. She feels that anyone submitting a recommendation should answer these questions.

The SRC recommendations along with MRC’s response are part of the WIOA State Plan. The Governor’s office needs to review the State Plan before it is submitted to RSA. So, MRC needs to confer with the SRC in developing the State Plan.

8. Next steps for getting FY25 Recommendations

Usually, the SRC committees develop the questions. MRC wants rationales for the recommendations, and the committees work on providing that.

Methods of reaching beyond the SRC for recommendations were discussed.

- Usually, when MRC sends out its spring newsletter there is an opportunity for people to give recommendations online.
- The MRC consumer conference might be a venue to solicit recommendations. Mr. Bellil asked members whether the SRC should have a table there. The SRC can ask consumers what they should advise MRC to do. SRC members can be recruited to attend the conference to obtain consumer input and to also disseminate information about the SRC and recruit new SRC members.

There was a discussion of recruitment materials. Some recruitment materials were previously created by Colleen Casey and the Communications team. Contacting Ms. Casey may be a good idea because MRC is in the process of changing its name and rebranding.

MRC has been recruiting employers to sit on the SRC. Approximately four to five employers have expressed interest.

- Ms. Tosti would like VR counselors to provide information to consumers about the SRC and how consumers can contribute. She thinks this should be part of the sessions between VR counselors and consumers, and that it should be part of the counselor-consumer relationship. Mr. Bellil acknowledged that this is a good idea but is unsure of how that would work.

Mr. Bellil acknowledged that ending up with many recommendations causes more work for the Chairs and their committees.

Mr. Bellil thanked the attendees for their input and time.

The next State Plan meeting is April 17th, 2024 at 11:00 am.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 pm.