

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council

December 20, 2017

As Chair of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC), it is an honor to serve the people of Maryland. The MSRC is the people's champion for employment of Marylanders with disabilities, for enhanced awareness of the capabilities of students, youths, and adults with disabilities, and for promotion of State and national policies that support those goals.

The MSRC is appointed by the Governor of Maryland, in compliance with federal law, to monitor, advise and oversee the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). Established in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Council reports its findings annually to the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Governor of Maryland and, most importantly, the people of Maryland.

For the fiscal year 2017:

- WIOA Section 511, Limitations on the Use of Subminimum Wage

Section 511 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act imposes requirements on employers who hold special wage certificates under the Fair Labor Standards Act that must be satisfied before the employers may employ individuals with disabilities at the subminimum wage level. In accordance with Section 511, DORS staff provided certain information and career counseling-related services to 2,021 individuals earning subminimum wage, to assist them in maximizing opportunities

to achieve competitive integrated employment. A total of 89 presentations were provided at 26 partner organizations statewide.

- Federal Monitoring and Technical Assistance

Staff of the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration conducted a federal on-site Monitoring and Technical Assistance review in mid-April 2017. Focus areas included performance, transition services including pre-employment transition services, supported employment services, allocation and expenditure of Vocational Rehabilitation and supported employment services funds, and joint workforce implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

- Waitlist

DORS waitlist has been reduced, thanks to a combined effort involving numerous members of DORS staff, and the use of GovDelivery technology.

In April, DORS contacted 4,700 clients to determine whether or not they were still interested in receiving DORS' services. This was done using mass emails, letters, and phone calls. While the majority of the individuals wished to remain engaged with DORS, approximately 2,000 individuals either no longer needed DORS services or did not respond to multiple modes of communication. As a result, the open pending caseload was reduced by 2,479 cases by the end of June.

DORS then focused on contacting the more than 4,000 clients on the waitlist and closed the cases of individuals who indicated that they no longer needed DORS services and

individuals who did not respond to any communications. As of the end of August, the waitlist was reduced to 2,693 individuals who continued to be interested in receiving possible future services from DORS.

As a result of all these efforts, for the first time since March 2015, DORS began moving individuals off of the waitlist onto active case status. Between September and December 2017, approximately 394 consumers will have come off of the waitlist and begin working with DORS staff.

The MSRC will work with DORS staff and other stakeholders in the coming year to look at ways to continuously evaluate and improve Maryland's vocational rehabilitation services. One such effort is the development of a customer services satisfaction survey for consumers that will be implemented in fiscal year 2018.

In closing, I would like to commend DORS for its commitment to the employment needs of people living with disabilities and also for its transparency to the people of Maryland through its partnership with the MSRC.

Sincerely,
Jeffrey Moran, Chair, Maryland State Rehabilitation Council

By The Numbers

In 2017, the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS):

- Provided services to more than 24,900 individuals with significant disabilities.
- Prepared 8,306 students with disabilities to move from high school to employment, higher education or career training

through vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. The agency also provided Pre-Employment Transition Services to an additional 1,910 students. Students in VR and Pre-Employment Transition Services make up 38% of DORS' caseload.

- Personnel and programs helped 1,853 Marylanders with significant disabilities to become successfully employed. This number reflects changes related to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- DORS Business Services staff provided 377 direct services to Maryland businesses, including recruitment assistance, disability training, and information and technical assistance on hiring and tax incentives.