

**Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
Workforce & Technology Center
May 10, 2017**

Members Present

Jeff Moran, Chair
Anil Lewis, Co-Chair
Cindy LaBon
Michael Whitehill
Sue Page
Sue Schaffer
Chris Conklin
Marsha Legg
Christy Stuart
Will Stocker

Members Unable to Attend

Jani Willis
Barry Shaw
Tom Laverty
Josie Thomas
Katja Fort-Rhoden
Joe Barrett

Candidates for Membership in Attendance

Michelle Plummer

DORS Liaisons to Council

Donna Lettow, Policy and Planning
Kim Schultz, Policy and Planning
Jean Jackson, Employment Committee
Toni March, DORS – OBVS Director

Support Staff for Council

John Stem
Sandy Bowser

Introduction and Approval of Minutes:

Anil Lewis, Vice-Chair welcomed guests and members to the Council meeting and asked that everyone introduce themselves. The minutes from February 24, 2017 were approved with the following addition from Anil Lewis - Marsha and Anil met with the delegates and senator from District 4 – Frederick County. One delegate was very connected and shared his experience with autism. Anil was pleased that he and Marsha were able to speak to the legislators and engage them in the services provided by DORS.

RSA Onsite Monitoring:

The Rehabilitation Services Administration with the US Department of Education visited Maryland DORS for an onsite Monitoring and Technical Assistance Review the week of April 10th. Maryland was one of five states selected to be monitored. Over seventy individuals participated in this review including DORS staff, MSRC members, CRP's, and educators. The topics focused on were: Performance of the VR Program, Pre-Employment Transition Services, Supported Employment Services, Allocation and Expenditure of State VR and Supported Employment Funds, and Review of Joint Rule. DORS asked for technical assistance for customized employment. RSA indicated that there are various Technical Assistance Centers that may be helpful such as the Workforce Innovation and Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC). WINTAC is available to provide help on pre-employment transition services, the

implementation of Section 511, sub-minimum wage 14c, how open/closed cases are handled and updating social security numbers. WINTAC has been very helpful to DORS and participated in the opening and closing discussions. Several members of the MSRC were interviewed including Jeff Moran, Anil Lewis and Christy Stuart on a few topics such as:

Competitive Integrated Employment

DORS relationship with the school systems regarding Pre-Employment Transition Services

MSRC members' relationship with DORS

Christy commented that RSA was very complimentary on DORS Pre-Employment Transition Policy. DORS Business Services Representatives were also interviewed on our business relationships and how DORS counselors work with businesses.

The exit interview is scheduled for May 11th after which RSA will provide a draft report. MSRC members will be invited to review the draft report for accuracy. The final RSA report should be published this fall.

Competitive Integrated Employment:

The DORS Career Counseling Information Referral training provided by WTC staff started in February and will continue through July 20th. WTC Staff travel to the various 14c subminimum wage employment holder sites Tuesdays and Thursdays to meet with the employees and their families to inform/explain to them the changes to the Rehabilitation Act. Jean reports that the career counseling is going well and is expected to be completed on time. Several families have expressed concern over these changes as they are unsure what will happen to their adult children.

Sue met with Benedictine, DSS and the school system to discuss the changes with subminimum wage and sheltered employment as they go forward in trying to restructure their program to meet the definition of competitive integrated employment.

DORS received three letters in response to the original letter sent out in January to the 14c certificate holders stating that they did not agree with RSA's interpretation of competitive integrated employment and would like for DORS to re-evaluate our decision. Their responses were answered letting them know that DORS does appreciate that they have reached out to express their concerns. They were reassured that DORS will continue to refer individuals who are not interested in competitive integrated employment but that we must remain in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act changes. DORS will continue to monitor the situation, participate in on-going discussions, and notify the providers of any changes.

Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Report – Jeff Moran & Anil Lewis:

2017 Legislative Visits – Jeff thought the legislative appointments with the delegates and senators went very well.

New Members - The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council would like to welcome and introduce two new members – Ms. Michelle Plummer and Ms. Denise Carter-McCormick. Michelle works for Johns Hopkins Health System in the Human Resource Department and Denise works for Maryland Department and Management, Office of Personnel Services and Benefits/Recruitment and Examination Division. Both Michelle and Denise will bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to our Business, Industry & Labor vacancies. Thank you to Darlene Peregoy for her recommendation to the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council Membership.

Meeting Calendar 2018:

The following dates have been scheduled for 2018 MSRC Meeting Dates:

February 2018	Legislative Event – Annapolis – Date to be Determined
May 9, 2018	Workforce & Technology Center 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
August 2018	Executive Committee Retreat Date to be Determined
September 12, 2018	Workforce & Technology Center 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
November 14, 2018	Workforce & Technology Center 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Director’s Report – Sue Page

MSDE had three bills that were passed:

HB 128 – State Disabilities Plan and Interagency Disabilities Board

Altering the date, from October 1 to December of each year, by which the Secretary of Disabilities must submit an annual analysis of the State’s progress in implementing the State Disabilities Plan and related performance objectives to the Governor and the General Assembly; altering the membership of the Interagency Disabilities Board; and altering the required elements of the State Disabilities Plan.

HB 971 – James W. Hubbard Inclusive Higher Education Grant

Establishing the James W. Hubbard Inclusive Higher Education Grant Program to award competitive grants to institutions of higher education to develop and implement programs that provide inclusive higher education to develop and implement programs that provide inclusive higher education opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities; requiring the Program to be administered by the Maryland Higher Education Commission in consultation with specified entities; requiring the Commission to submit an annual report on the program’s effectiveness beginning June 30, 2019; etc.

SB/344/HB 448 – Maryland Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE)

Clarifying that a specified amount may be contributed in each calendar year to an account for a disabled individual under the Maryland Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Program; providing that contributions to an ABLE account may not exceed a specified maximum amount; and requiring the Maryland 529 Board to adopt specified procedures to ensure that specified contributions to ABLE accounts do not exceed a specified maximum limit.

CSAVR 2017 Spring Conference:

The Spring CSAVR conference was centered on the implementation of WIOA, monitoring and the technical assistance process. There was a session on business engagement which featured Microsoft and Prevail. CSAVR will celebrate a milestone anniversary in 2020. They will be looking at changes that need to be made within the organization to provide better marketing to the public, working with our partners and the programs/services that the VR program provides. CSAVR has hired a private marketing team to help them with developing these new strategies.

RSA participated in the management session and would like feedback regarding pre-employment transition services. Some states reported that they are struggling to use the 15% while other states

have used their designed funds and then some. Questions are still being asked as to what can be used and counted as pre-employment transition services. RSA has encouraged all questions and are interested in providing technical assistance with all monitoring cycles. The different Technical Assistance Centers were invited to present. RSA is very pleased with how responsive the Centers have been to the VR agencies providing good innovation and is a model that is working well. DORS is very fortunate to have a great working relationship with WINTAC.

DORS Waiting List:

Performance Standards & Indicators Rehabilitation Rate Background:

In years past, DORS was required to meet the Federal Performance Standards & Indicators Rehabilitation Rate which was 55%, which meant cases would remain on a counselor's caseload for several years before closing. WIOA has now eliminated the Performance Standards & Indicators Rehabilitation Rate and replaced them with Common Performance Accountability Measures. Even though the Federal Rehabilitation Rate Standard has been eliminated, DORS will still need to report to the State for managing for results which also includes the number of eligibility decisions, the number of rehabilitations and the one year retention rate.

Wait List:

The DORS waiting list is approximately 4,000 consumers with a three year wait. In looking at a solution to reduce the large number and wait time, Sue has asked John to run a report on open cases that have not had any authorizations issued for a year or longer. The report produced just about over 5,000 cases.

Solution:

In an effort to reduce open caseloads, clear out old inactive cases, and open up the waiting list, Sue discussed with MSDE the idea of temporarily eliminating the state rehabilitation rate. MSDE agreed. DORS staff was notified of this decision and encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. DORS counselors began contacting consumers to see if they were still interested in services and in keeping with policy, cases are being closed rapidly.

Federal Grant:

DORS received a Federal Grant – Work Based Learning Collaborative – working with the University of Maryland. This is a five year grant to work with youth while still in school to provide them more attentive vocational rehabilitation services earlier and also give them paid work experiences. There is a RFP out for LEAs who might be interested in participating. The closing date is May 19th.

Committee Reports:

Employment/Career Development – Michael Whitehill:

The last meeting held was March 23rd at WTC. Two new members attended the meeting – Michelle Plummer and Denise Carter-McCormick. Michelle is the Diversity Outreach Specialist with Johns Hopkins Health System. Denise is the Coordinator with MD Employment with Individuals with Disabilities and Maryland Department of Budget & Management. Thank you to Darlene Peregoy and Jessica Hawes for recommending in the new members for this committee. The main purpose of the meeting was to meet the new members and provide an overview of MSRC responsibilities. Discussion was also focused on the Workforce & Technology Center and their Service Programs, particularly the customized training programs. They were also informed about the Business Relations Branch and their role with the DORS counselors, businesses, and consumers.

Public Relations and Quality Assurance – Jeff Moran:

The committee is working on finalizing the questionnaire survey. MD DORS is modeling the survey on the Iowa VR Agency. The questions are in the process of being built into the survey instrument, reviewing for glitches, and identifying any additions or possibly simplifying the questionnaire form. The intention of this survey is to be made available to individuals with open cases.

Membership – Anil Lewis:

Welcome to Michelle Plummer, new member of the MSRC. Michelle is a Diversity Recruitment Specialist for Johns Hopkins Health System. She supports all the entities under the health system which includes Bayview (main hospital), Hopkins Hospital, Sibley – in DC, Suburban in Bethesda, Howard County General in Columbia, Johns Hopkins Community Physicians in Baltimore, and Homecare Group. In terms of outreach and recruitment, she supports all of the entities.

Blindness & Vision Services – Sue Schaffer/Anil Lewis:

Anil would like to work with Sue Schaffer and Toni March to review a list of OBVS service providers to see if they are interested in participating on the committee. A meeting schedule will be developed by the next MSRC meeting in September.

Council Sharing:

National Federal for the Blind (NFB) will host their 6th Annual Six.Dash on June 4th. The starting point is NFB on Wells Street and circles through the Inner Harbor and back. The funds raised will support braille literacy. Kim Schultz will post the details on Facebook.

NFB National Convention will be held in Orlando July 10-July 15.

NFB will host a summer program the week of July 21st at Towson University for 100 blind youth throughout the country. They will participate in the following activities: building and launching rockets, dissecting sharks, and build robots. This is a great opportunity for these students to participate in different science experiences and build their morale.

The MSRC Group Picture on the website needs to be updated. All MSRC members are encouraged to attend the meeting in September in order to update the picture for the website.

Public Meetings are scheduled for June 7th and June 15th at the Workforce & Technology Center. MSRC members are encouraged to attend. There is also a call-in option.

The DORS Planning Meeting will be held on September 20th location to be determined. The MSRC will be invited to attend. An email will be sent out within the next few months with the specific details.

New Council Business:

The next full Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 13, 2017, Workforce & Technology Center, Baltimore.

Respectfully submitted

Sandy Bowser
MSRC Support Staff

MSRC
May 10, 2017