

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council Meeting Minutes

November 6, 2024

Members Present:

Katherine Jones – Chair
Erikk Bonner
Kristen Patterson
Marla Friedman
Todd Tolson
Cory Richo

Members Unable to Attend:

Ronza M. Othman
Rosa Raez
Marlo Lemon
Penny Reeder

DORS liaisons to Council:

Toni March, Director, Office for Blindness and Vision Services
Wanda Peele, Program Manager II Business Relations Branch
Patrick Peto, Program Manager Policy, and planning DORS Kim
Schultz, Director, Office of Communications & Accessibility
Marla Friedman, Director, Client Assistance Program
Tom Liniak, Director of Community Based and Workforce Services
Beth Lash, Director, Office of Field Services
Samantha McGinley, Program Manager, Individual & Community Liaison

Support Staff for the Council:

Erica Kneessi, Staff Specialist, Training & Professional
Development
Sherri Alban, Executive Associate DORS HQ

Guest

Sherria Young 'Smith
Neill Christopher
Jamie Stoner
Labria
Jamie Stoner
Michele Hamlin
Kristina Richards

Welcome: Katherine Jones

Katherine Jones welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

September 11, 2024 minutes have been approved.

Public Comment: No public comment

Dr. Erik Bonner, Assistant State Superintendent

- Thank you to the DORS executive team and Ms. Boone for standing in during the time of transition.
- The importance of Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity (A part of my decision-making process)
- Expectations: P.A.C.S. (Professionalism, Accountability, Communication, and Safety) (Internal Core Values for DORS)
- Field Office visits are happening. It is important to hear directly from boots on the ground.
- External partner visits and/or meetings are scheduled for Fridays. Please add me to your calendar if you would like to meet.
- I look forward to continued partnership with all members.

Kimberlee Schultz, Director Office of Public Affairs

- Todd Tolson will be joining the Strategic Planning & Public Relations committee sub committee

Recruitment Flyer:

- If anyone needs copies of the Recruitment flyers email kimberlee.schultz@maryland.gov
- The flyer will be posted on the MSRC website.

Patrick Peto, Program Manager for Quality Assurance, Policy & Planning

Policy Updates

- Reviewing COMAR
- DDS Records Exchange
- Consumer Laptop Pilot
- SARA policy
- Intake/EDU Procedures
- In-person Policy Review Committee Tuesday, December 3rd 9:30-12

- SRC **Policy & Quality Assurance** Committee Meeting to follow

Upcoming discussion- “Earn While You Learn”

QA Update review update

- QA Wrap Up Event, Friday 11/1
- Reviewing the QA instrument- align with policy and procedures
- ILOB Case Reviews

Miscellaneous

- 1st Quarter PY24 Case Services Report due 11/15
- New Staff Specialist Group in person meeting in December

Toni March, Director of the Office for Blindness & Vision Services

Blindness Subcommittee met on August 28, 2024, with the next meeting scheduled for November 20, 2024

- OBVS Video
- Pre ETS services provided in Summer 2024
 - 12 students completed BISM Gold Star
 - 5 students completed MSB MISLE
 - 1 student attended WTC SMILE
- Introduced Dr. Leo Yates the new Deaf/Blind Specialist
- Discussed adult Learning Experiences. There was considerable discussion and recommendations to ensure that the participant is self-advocating

BEP:

Vending Machine Rout Training started on October 10th and 11th 2024. Additional sessions took place on October 24th and 25th 2024. Two more sessions are scheduled for November and one for December 2024. This will allow the blind vendors to take over vending machines where their facilities are located and potentially establish independent vending routes. The initial trainees are current blind vendors. Currently have 42 Blind Managers with licenses and 2 awaiting licensure. Currently we have 40 open facilities out of 63 with permits.

ILOB:

Completed Quality Assurance Reviews for ILOB Cases in October 2024

We have reviewed the summary report and have scheduled an all-day training day for February 20, 2024. Overall, we did pretty well in our first Quality Review.

We were very good at initial interviews and assessments, identifying services, addressing needs and planning the next steps. We do need to work on timeliness in terms of referral to application and making sure we are considering comparable benefits. We also need to make sure we are documenting the services provided.

We will be providing training on the areas identified as needing improvement as part of an

all-day training for the teachers for the blind, that will also include resource sharing and AWARE guidance.

Tom Liniak, Director WTC

- We are running a CVS Retail Training Program year-round in Laurel in collaboration with Prince Georges CC. The placement rate for the first two cohorts of the program has exceeded 70%.
- The National Restaurant Association, Education Foundation has selected us to be a primary partner in their Restaurant Readiness program We will be receiving a National Curriculum and Connections to State Restaurant Association members who can provide us with training sites and primary hiring pathways.
- We will be providing the first ever WTC CVS Retail Training Program in Salisbury in early 2025 in conjunction with Wor-Wic CC.
- We are in discussions with Prince Georges CC and Montgomery College about additional employment training programs in 2025.
- We launched an Autism Job Club pilot program in Columbia, MD that combines Employment Services and Autism Services with both an Employment Readiness component and Soft Skills component.
- We will be offering behind the wheel driver's ed training in the community in early 2025.
- We added a number of employer partners in our WTC based employment training programs who are also using the on-site internships as an alternative interview pathway as well as training. This work has already led to placements in Baltimore and elsewhere in the state.
- A new component was added to our Work Readiness program, Functional Independence for Employment. This enhancement focuses on executive functioning, compensatory cognitive skills and education and training in physical endurance and proper body mechanics.
- We were selected by Sodexo as a primary partner in their new Sodexo Works program featuring internships and train to hire opportunities in Baltimore and statewide.
- We took on the task of configuring, delivering and orienting consumers across the state with non-adapted computers.

Beth Lash, Director OFS

- OFS is at 83% of Rehab Goal for this PY (Need 73 more to be at goal by 11/30)
- DORS has partnered with the Howard Community College for their EARN Grant, which provides training opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This grant provides training specifically in nationally recognized credentials: Certified Logistics Associate (CLA) and Certified Logistics Technician (CLT). Tuition is provided through the grant, and other partners include The Autism Society of Maryland, The ARC of Howard County, and the Howard County Office of Workforce Development. The program is open for referrals and started on 10/23/24! There will be another cohort next year.

Samantha McGinley, Program Manager, Individual & Community Liaison

My name is Samantha McGinley, Program Manager, Individual & Community Liaison for DORS. My position is modeled after an Ombudsman role from the MA VR program. I handle inquiries from legislative offices, consumers, and advocacy groups, and I track this data to identify agency needs and guide improvements.

Current Projects

Resource Mapping Project:

- This project involves gathering external resources statewide to develop a comprehensive resource hub guide
- The guide aims to assist counselors in referring consumers to services outside of DORS.

Case Review and Quality Assurance:

- Currently reviewing reports on cases closed within the past year prior to receiving an individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- The purpose of the review is to assess the appropriateness of case closures and identify potential training needs.

Committees:

Policy & Quality Assurance- Patrick Peto N/A

Blindness and Vision Services – Penny Reader N/A

Membership – Vacant N/A

Employment/Career Development – Wanda Peele N/A

Strategic Planning & Public Relations-

If anyone is interested in joining the Strategic Planning & Public Relations committee, please contact Kim Schultz at kim.schultz@maryland.gov

Council sharing

Katherine Jones, Kristen Patterson, and Beth Lash attended the National Coalition for State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) conference on Saturday, October 19th and Sunday, October 20, 2024, in Seattle, Washington.

Katherine shared the following:

- New council members would benefit from receiving a copy of the “State Rehabilitation Council- Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership Under WIOA” to better understand the responsibilities of the SRC.
- Beth Lash mentioned that a PDF version was available online.
- The NCSRC was an eye-opening experience, and Katherine highly recommends that incoming Chairs and Vice Chairs attend annually.
- The SRC should provide more advocacy efforts at the community and legislative levels.
- A legislative subcommittee should be formed so the SRC will be present during this year’s session.
- Nominations for this year’s Vice Chair should be held at the next SRC meeting.

Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherri Alban

MSRC Staff Support