

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
Executive Retreat Minutes
August 24, 2017

In Attendance:

Jeff Moran
Sue Page
Jean Jackson
John Stem
Kim Schultz
Tom Laverty
Toni March
Scott Dennis
Sandy Bowser

Welcome & Opening Remarks – Jeff Moran

Jeff Moran opened the meeting by commenting that DORS is doing a great job considering all the changes that have been recently implemented.

Open Public Meeting – Discussion:

The Open Meetings Act was amended this legislative session to require a member of public bodies to take the on-line open meeting act training. It states the goal that “public business be conducted openly and publicly” and sets as the policy of the State that, except in certain “special and appropriate circumstances,” “the public be provided with adequate notice of the time and location of meetings of public bodies, which shall be held in places reasonably accessible to individuals who would like to attend these meetings.” This means that the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council is required to have representation of council member/members who have taken the training attend Public Meetings, MSRC meetings and MSRC Sub-Committee meetings. This is approximately a two hour training broken down into six sessions and is accessible. Print your Certificate of Completion at the end of the training for proof of record. All MSRC members are encouraged to complete the training by October 1st. A link to the online course can be found under the “Other Resources” heading at

<http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/OpenGov/Openmeetings/default.aspx>

Compliance Checklist – is posted under “Sample Forms and Checklists”

Planning Meeting:

The DORS Planning Meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2017 in Hunt Valley from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. This meeting is held every year to establish DORS goals, priorities and objectives for the next fiscal year. Jeff Moran, MSRC Chair and Anil Lewis, Co-Chair are invited to attend along with DORS staff – Executive Staff, Regional Directors, Program Managers, Assistant Directors, Staff Specialists, and ELI participants. A few agenda topics for break-out sessions will include Supervisor Preparation and Q.A. & Internal Controls.

MSRC Membership – New Appointment/Renewal Process:

There is a new online process required by the Governor’s office for potential new members to apply for appointment to the MSRC. Current MSRC members must also complete the online application for re-appointment.

Online Application Link: www.govappointments.maryland.gov

Go to Quick Links

Submit an Application

2 Drop Down Menus complete as listed below:

Desired Appointments

Areas of Expertise: SELECT – Education

State Agencies/Commissions: SELECT – Rehabilitation Council, Maryland State

Toni March indicated that there is an individual who is deaf/blind that is interested in joining the Council.

Budget/Staffing:

State Budget FY 2017 – Governor Hogan included an additional one million dollars to help with the DORS Waiting List and help offset the impact of Pre-ETS.

DORS requested a re-allotment of two million dollars with the hope that we receive at least 10%.

There is a projected state deficit for this year; no plans have been announced by the Governor as to how this is going to be addressed.

Federal Budget – FY2018 – the President’s target number is a little over \$47 million. There is a 6.9% reduction due to sequestration which gives DORS a budget of about \$44.3 million for FY2018. This is approximately a \$2.4 million increase over FY2017. Fifteen percent of this budget will be allocated for Pre-ETS. FY2016 Pre-ETS funds has been encumbered; FY2017 funds will be rolled into the next federal fiscal year starting 10/1/17.

Inactive Cases/Wait List:

Background –WIOA has eliminated the Performance Standards & Indicators including the Rehabilitation Rate, and replaced them with Common Performance Accountability Measures.

Inactive Cases – **Phase One** focused on contacting individuals on the open pending caseload for whom no actions had been taken in over a year. In April, we contacted 4,700 clients to determine whether or not they were still interested in receiving DORS’ services. 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.

In an effort to reduce open caseloads, clear out old inactive cases, and open up the waiting list, DORS initiated a plan, with MSDE’s support to close cases that did not have any activity in over a year. As of April, 4,300 individuals in Service Status that had no authorizations issued from 2016 to present were considered inactive and were contacted for possible closure. As of June, this number of individuals dropped to 2,300.

Wait List – In June, the DORS wait list consisted of more than 4,000 consumers with a three year wait for services. In looking at a solution to reduce this large number and wait time, DORS surveyed these consumers to determine how many continue to be interested in receiving possible services. The survey was distributed by email to consumers who provided an email address and mailed to consumers that did not. Phone calls were also made to individuals whose email were undeliverable or bounced back. As of the end of August, the Wait List has been reduced to 2,693.

A big thank you, and job well done goes out to Patrick Peto, John Stem, Natalie Dizik and Headquarters Support Staff for their hard work in carrying out this initiative.

Open Pending is now 15,890 down from 19,000 at the beginning of the Inactive Cases/Wait List Initiative.

Consumers on the Delayed List – Category II – will start to be rolled off beginning at the end of September.

Public Information:

The State has a contract to send out mass electronic communications. DORS uses this system to send out emails announcing Public Meetings, State Rehabilitation Council Meetings, Needs Assessment, Maryland Rehabilitation Conference, mass emails to consumers, etc. Templates are now being created to send one year follow-ups to consumers and surveys such as the customer satisfaction survey that is mailed quarterly. We would also like to use this system internally with staff to set-up email reminders such as 60 Day Eligibility and 90 day Plan. A future goal is to create a template defining individual information in order to send out appointment letters to consumers by email and text.

A new Pilot Project is being introduced to the WTC lobby; a T.V. Screen will be installed and programmed with DORS information, a list of meetings, room numbers, times, etc.

This project is expected to eventually roll-out to the Field Offices listing specific information in their area such as job fairs, job announcements, statistics on employment outcomes, etc.

Regulatory Reform:

The President issued an Executive Order in February to the heads of Federal Departments to establish a task force to review existing regulations to see if anything is unduly burdensome or costly and make recommendations.

The Department of Education formed a task force and sent out a request for public comments on regulatory reform in The Federal Register. The request was that the commenter provide the specific citation either in the Federal Register or federal guidance to identify the site to make a recommendation for either modifying, replacing or repealing the regulation and a detailed description of why. All comments are due by September 20th.

DORS established a group to look at WIOA regulations both in MD and Nationally. John Stem developed a draft document and the general categories for DORS comments pertaining to pre-employment transition services, supported employment, competitive integrated employment, performance standards and reporting requirements; a general comment is to be added on how RSA can provide better guidance. A recommendation to DORS is to modify our categories. DORS staff are working on suggestions to modifications such as:

- Consider post-secondary tuition and fees to be an allowable pre-employment transition service or authorization activity.
- Provide a more straight forward way of knowing when we can use the reserve fund for authorized activities.

- Transportation for Pre-ETS
- Meals & Lodging for Pre-ETS
- Assistive Technology for Pre-ETS
- Definition of Competitive Integrated Employment - more clear guidance
- Cost factor on Individual Employment Evaluation
- Clarify the different definitions among WIOA Partners
- Clarification on Equipment Purchases over \$5,000 (pre-approval)
- Supported Employment – Extended Services for youth with disabilities – funding by DORS up to age 24 or 4 years whichever comes first
 - More flexibility using Title I funds
- Performance Standards – more instruction
- Allowing individuals who started receiving Pre-ETS services before applying and being determined eligible for VR services to be exempt from the Order of Selection Waiting List.

The draft is due back to RSA by September 20, 2017.

Strategic Plan:

DORS Strategic Plan October 2014 – September 2017. The following goals were developed for DORS focus:

- Goal 1 – Organizational Structure evolves in supporting the success of consumers and accurate/timely disability decisions for claimants in a manner that reflects statutory and regulatory requirements, respond for consumers and claimants and equitable working conditions for staff.
- Goal 2 – Information Technology further enhances administration of the program, provision of services and achievement of employment for consumers and timely and accurate decisions for claimants.
- Goal 3 – Partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers are improved through enhanced monitoring practices and payment systems and rates.
- Goal 4 – Future agency leaders are recognized and developed.

We will need to concentrate on a new Strategic Plan – “What does DORS want to focus on in the next three to five years”. We would like to look at these goals and determine if any need to be continued, changed, or new goals developed.

DORS Executive Staff, Regional Directors, Program Managers, Staff Specialists, and Maryland State Rehabilitation Council Chair and Co-Chair will meet on September 20th to create a new Strategic Plan.

Discussion was held on suggestions for the new DORS Strategic Plan to be developed at the DORS Planning Meeting:

- Supervisor Role - more intensive training such as HR training, managing reports, managing the office, etc.
- Administrative Supervisor Role
- Information Technology
- Implementation of new regulations
- Partnership with Department of Labor
- Performance Reporting
- Consumer Engagement

- Follow-up on Leadership development (ELI, NRLI)
- Staff Recognition
- Leadership Development
- Businesses to be included in Goal 3

The next Maryland State Rehabilitation Council meeting will be held on September 13, 2017 at the Workforce & Technology Center.