

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
Minutes
Workforce & Technology Center
September 11, 2019

Members Present:

Anil Lewis, Chair
Marsha Legg, Co-Chair
Scot Dennis
Chris Conklin
Cindy LaBon
Tom Laverty
Denise Carter-McCormick
Rene Averitt-Sanzone
Christy Stuart
Sue Schaffer

DORS Liaisons to Council:

Jody Boone, DORS – OFS Director
Jean Jackson, DORS – WTC Director
Kim Schultz, DORS – Public Relations

Support Staff for Council:

Sandy Bowser

Welcome/Introduction:

Anil Lewis welcomed guests and members to the Council meeting and asked that everyone introduce themselves.

The May 8, 2019, minutes were approved as written.

FY19 Federal Budget – Scott Dennis:

DORS was granted 2 million dollars in re-allotment. Approximately 300,000 will be used for Pre-Employment Transition Services and 1.7 will go towards VR services. The appropriation of this re-allotment will help to create a little extra funds going into FY20.

As of today, the Federal Budget for FY20 has not been approved.

CRP Advisory Committee:

The CRP Advisory Committee will be reinstated. Scott Dennis, Kate Drake, and Toni Cobb-Cannon will hold the first meeting in early November. A Save-the-Date email will be sent within the next few weeks to State Agency Partners and Providers. A few topics for discussion include:

- Expansion of Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Discussion on changes in Fee Schedule

DORS Planning Meeting:

The DORS Annual Planning Meeting will be held on October 1, 2019. All SRC Members are invited to attend and participate.

DORS/MRA Conference:

The MRA Conference will be held November 7, 2019 and November 8, 2019 at Sheraton Baltimore North Towson, Maryland. SRC members are invited to attend.

Competitive Integrated Employment:

Update – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), places extensive emphasis on the achievement of competitive integrated employment (CIE) for individuals with disabilities. Per WIOA regulations, DORS resources may be used to assist consumers to achieve and maintain CIE outcomes, and a DORS successful closure outcome must meet the following three criteria to be considered CIE:

- Competitive wages
- Integrated location
- Opportunities for advancement

CRPs interested in DORS assistance to fill vacant positions must request a review by DORS to determine if those positions meet the criteria for CIE, and provide the position description, including the essential functions and qualifications. To make this determination, designated DORS staff will review the request and schedule an on-site visit.

A survey tool template was created to allow the CRPs to self-evaluate and test the location of the worksite with the expectation that we would post those job sites and job openings on our website. To date 12 organizations have submitted 164 positions around the state. Of those 164 positions, 163 have been approved as Competitive Integrated Employment.

These changes were implemented January 1, 2019.

DORS 90th Anniversary Celebration:

The Division of Rehabilitation Services is celebrating its 90th Anniversary this year. Celebrating will begin in October and will be broken down into 3 different areas.

- The local Regional Areas will create a history board to be displayed at the October graduation ceremony.
- Graduation Ceremony speakers consisting of past successful consumers
- MRA Conference

Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Report:

Summary of MSRC Executive Retreat:

Anil Lewis and Marsha Legg continue to be impressed with the comradery and professionalism of DORS Staff and their true commitment to serving consumers.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment:

DORS is required to conduct a triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to look at the needs of individuals with disabilities in Maryland. The last CNSA was completed in 2016. A team of 35 individuals began work on the CSNA in April of this year. The 35-member team consisted of DORS staff, including participants in the Agency's Leadership Exploration and Agency Program (LEAP) and consultation from MSRC. The Needs Assessment team

collected and analyzed relevant existing data, conducted and analyzed findings of supplemental surveys, facilitated focus groups and key informant interviews, in order to ascertain the needs of individuals throughout the state.

- I. Comprehensive Assessment of the Vocational Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities in Maryland.
 - A. Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities, Including Their Need for Supported Employment Services:
 1. The Need of Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities for Supported Employment Services in Maryland.
 2. Individuals who are Blind/Visually Impaired and Deaf-Blind
 3. Individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened
 4. Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disability, including Section 511 Considerations.
 5. Individuals with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness
 - B. Individuals With Disabilities Who are Minorities And Individuals With Disabilities Who Have Been Unserved or Underserved By The Vocational Rehabilitation Program:
 1. Individuals With Disabilities Who Are Minorities
 2. Individuals with Disabilities Who Have Been Unserved, Or Who Are Underserved By The Vocational Rehabilitation Program.
 - C. Individuals with Disabilities Served Through Other Components of the Statewide Workforce Investment System.
 - D. Youth with Disabilities and Students with Disabilities.
- II. Assessment of the Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs within the State

Recommendations from the Focus Areas of the Needs Assessment Addressing the Required Elements:

1. Continue to monitor, strengthen, and foster relationships with the Department of Labor, Department of Health, and Maryland State Department of Education.
2. Evaluate staffing needs within DORS.
3. Provide continued opportunities for mutual training and collaboration between DORS and other workforce programs.
4. Enhance and expand the provision of Pre-ETS services statewide.
5. Improve information and referral services to American Job Centers and other workforce partners for individuals on the DORS waiting list.
6. Improve the variety of employment opportunities available to DORS consumers by increasing staff knowledge of current labor market trends.
7. Re-establish the Agency's Multicultural Access Committee
8. Promote comprehensive rehabilitation services for Deaf-Blind individuals.
9. Continue to examine the updated DORS policy regarding supported employment.
10. Expand employment services for individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
11. DORS should explore a rate increase for DORS-approved community rehabilitation programs.
12. Enhance relationships with community rehabilitation programs

13. Continue to work with 14c certificate holders.

The report also contains information related to the impact of Federal funding and state government personnel actions on staff capacity. Please refer to the distributed report for detailed information.

There will be a few minor updates/edits made to the report for clarification purposes that was distributed to the SRC today.

- Pre-Employment – a few numbers need to be updated so there is a level of consistency
- Timeframes – how many consumers are being served
- Apprenticeship – explain MD Think Tank

The updates/edits being made will not change the overall recommendations.

The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment report was voted on and approved by the State Rehabilitation Council today.

Once the CSNA report is approved by RSA it will become part of the DORS Strategic State Plan. The CSNA report is due to RSA at the end of September.

Financial Need & Required Financial Contribution WTC Fee Scheduled Policy Change n-Jody Boone:

DORS is proposing a revision of our current policy – Financial Need & Participation of the Individual in Cost of Services. The SRC is being asked to review, comment and vote on the following changes:

1. Waive the Required Financial Contribution (RFC) for vocational and occupational training programs funded by DORS and provided at the Workforce & Technology Center (WTC) or by a Community Rehabilitation program (CRP) when completion of the training program does not lead to obtainment of an industry-recognized credential.
 - a. The reduction of fees collected by WTC for vocational and occupational training program will be offset by the savings created when the staff person currently assigned to collect these fees has more time to handle other revenue-generating tasks, such as handling SSA reimbursements.
2. The following services are subject to a Required Financial Contribution (RFC), as applicable, in accordance with existing policy regarding Determination of Financial Need and the Financial Responsibility Scale.
 - a. Home modifications
 - b. Vehicle modifications
 - c. Rehabilitation technology
 - d. Higher education at any college or university
 - e. Education at a proprietary school for a vocational/occupational skills training program that leads to obtainment of an industry-recognized credential upon completion
 - f. Support services such as transportation and childcare (except when needed to participate in assessment services)

An email was sent on August 21, 2019 for the SRC to review, comment and vote on the above proposed policy. The State Rehabilitation Council voted yes to the changes which will be effective October 1, 2019.

DORS Strategic Plan:

The DORS Strategic Plan is coming to the end of year one. An Internal Control Group, which was required by WIOA and RSA, was developed and put in place. The workgroup meets bi-monthly to review various policy issues. Below are a few areas the group has worked on during this past year.

- 60 Day Eligibility 90 Day Plan – how DORS monitors the progress of those Plans being completed on time. A monitoring tool was developed and will be put in to policy.
- Finances – what is and is not included in our 425 reports.
- Communication – improve communication between staff and consumers – QA Reviews were re-instituted along with the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.
- Partnerships – recently updated our local MOUs with our local Workforce.
- Increase staff's use of the MD Workforce Exchange
- Data Sharing Agreement with MSDE – this is complete

The Internal Control Workgroup will continue to meet bi-monthly for year two of the Strategic Plan.

We will begin working on the new Comprehensive Statewide Combined Plan within the next few weeks. DORS portion of the Plan needs to be submitted to RSA in March, 2020.

Interviews for Program Manager QA and Policy Review were held September 9th and 10th. We hope to have the new person on board by the end of October.

Committee Reports:

Policy and Quality Assurance – Tom Laverty – the Policy Review Committee will meet September 12.

Blindness and Vision Services – Sue Schaffer – the Statewide Needs Assessment was discussed, the DORS Planning Meeting, OBVS Staffing and OBVS services. The next meeting is scheduled for October, 2019.

Anil Lewis would like for all SRC members to participate in a Committee. The Rehabilitation Council Members are encouraged to review the committee's descriptions and pick one to participate in.

Respectfully Submitted
Sandy Bowser
MSRC Staff Support