

FY 2009 Annual Program Performance Measures

DEPARTMENT: MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH

APPROPRIATION UNIT: Sec 115 Boards, Authorities and Commissions

PROGRAM: MICHIGAN COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

TIMELINE: October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009

PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT (Customer-Focus Direction)

To provide opportunities to individuals who are blind or have visual impairments to achieve employability and/or function independently in society.

VISION STATEMENT

If a person is going to be blind, she/he could not be in a better place than Michigan.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

The Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a partnership of the federal and state government to provide VR services to blind individuals throughout the State of Michigan. Some of the services provided are: Evaluations, counseling, job development, vocational training, college and technical training, low vision aids and follow-up services.

Independent Living Program

The Independent Living Program provides services to older blind individuals so they can remain independent in their own homes.

MCB Training Center

The Michigan Commission for the Blind Training Center is a residential facility. The primary focus for the Center is assisting blind persons in developing more positive attitudes toward blindness and to help them attain the necessary skills to function independently.

Business Enterprise Program

Michigan Commission for the Blind's (MCB) Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides opportunities for blind persons operating vending stands and cafeterias in federal and state buildings as well as highway rest stops and visitor centers.

Youth Low Vision Program

The Youth Low Vision Program provides low vision evaluations and devices to visually impaired school age children throughout the state.

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Deaf Blind Services

The DeafBlind Unit of the Michigan Commission for the Blind provides statewide Vocational Rehabilitation services and/or Independent Living consultations to adults and high school students who are legally blind and have moderate to profound hearing loss.

FUND SOURCE:

Federal Title I Vocational Rehabilitation (Basic Support); Federal Supported Employment; Federal Independent Living (State IL Services and Older Blind); Federal Training Grant; GF/GP including Youth Low Vision; BEP Set-Aside Funding; Local Match; Gifts and Donations; Stanley Hermann Trust Fund

LEGAL BASIS:

Michigan Public Act 260 of 1978 (MCL393.51) and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and the Randolph-Sheppard Act P.L. 74-732 as amended

CUSTOMER IDENTIFICATION:

Rehabilitation is a cooperative venture with visually impaired individuals, client families, MCB staff, community, employers, other state, local and federal government agencies, public and private rehabilitation facilities, high school, colleges and training institutions, Business Enterprise Program customers and operators

CRITICAL GOALS/MAJOR OBJECTIVES and RESULTS

Program Goals:

- 1. Continuously improve and implement customer responsive service systems to provide employment opportunities to blind individuals.**
 - Workforce
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Retain and Grow Jobs in Michigan

- 2. Provide premier technology, training, and equipment for MCB clients and staff.**
 - Workforce
 - Retain and Grow Jobs in Michigan

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3. Through collaboration, partnerships and communication make Michigan a “cool” and inclusive place for blind people to live, learn, work, raise a family and enjoy life.

- Cool Cities

4. Through collaboration and partnerships expand funding and resources to MCB to increase services to consumers.

- Workforce
- Entrepreneurship
- Retain and Grow Jobs in Michigan

Objective 1.1 Develop a survey instrument to measure customer satisfaction with the instructional programs and housing accommodations at MCBTC. Identify a means whereby the survey may be administered to all consumers shortly after completion of an MCBTC program, while preserving the anonymity of survey participants and guaranteeing universal accessibility. Gather survey results quarterly and report to Commissioners beginning in June 2009.

Status: A survey has been developed. The Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns agreed to administer the survey each quarter to a list of customers completing a training program at the Center since the previous survey. The MCDC will provide results to Center staff to tally and share the information with the EMT and Commission Board, as appropriate.

Objective 1.2 Work collaboratively (MCBTC Director, Consumer Services Director, Administrative Services Manager, and Rehabilitation Consultant Manager) with MI Commission on Disability Concerns (MCDC) to develop assessment and tracking tools to measure client satisfaction with MCB services and also to determine the extent to which clients whose cases are closed successfully remain employed and independent at 18 months or 24 months following case closure. The survey will be done by telephone and conducted by MCDC staff. Meet with Director by May 18 to update progress on survey instrument and specific responsibilities for EMT; by the end of July develop survey instruments and report to Director; implement survey by the end of August and report to Director; provide progress reports to Director at the end of September and December.

Status: The first two surveys (one for VR and one for IL) were done and reported to Commissioners and the Director.

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Objective 1.3 BEP and the Consumer Services Division will continue to work together to promote greater participation of MCB clients to gain work experience at BEP facilities.

Status: Several BEP sites were identified as work experience locations and VR clients worked during the summer to gain some helpful work experience.

Objective 1.4 Enhance the current BEP system to include an operator point report. This report would provide on demand information for operators' at their request. In addition, the BEP manager would provide the detailed information regarding all operator points at the annual BEP Workshop in April. Report progress to Director quarterly.

Status: The BEP manager provided details of this system with the operators and the Director.

Objective 1.5 Work with MRS and the Dept of Corrections to develop and implement the Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Program and the Veteran's MOU for MCB. Report progress to the Director quarterly.

Status: The VA training has been completed for managers and liaisons. The MPRI MOU has been signed and efforts are still underway to set-up regional training for staff.

Objective 1.6 Complete four case reviews in 2009 and report progress to Director at the end of February, May, August, and November.

Status: Three cases reviews have been completed and the fourth will be done by the end of December, 2009.

Objective 1.7 Continue to work with the Futuristic Committee to develop short term and long range strategies on how to address the changing needs/demands for services as the number of blind persons increases. Report progress to agency director quarterly.

Status: This is an on-going effort. A decision was made to open this up to more stakeholders and to rotate staff members so as to get new participants periodically. A representative from MCBTC will join the group.

Objective 1.8 Work with Civil Service classifications staff and the DLEG Office of Human Resources to amend, update, and create more appropriate job classifications (i.e., O&M Instructors, blind rehabilitation instructors, etc.) to improve our ability to fill vacancies with individuals possessing the necessary qualifications.

Status: A meeting took place in mid-April with OHR and Civil Service. Suggestions on how to possibly amend the job specs for the Rehabilitation Consultant and Vocational Rehabilitation Manager classifications were discussed. The proposed changes were submitted to Civil Service in July and discussions continue with them to hopefully have this done soon.

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Objective 1.9 With support from the Office of the State Employer's (OSE) Safety Office, develop an agency-wide safety program to minimize workplace risks so that all employees can be safer while doing their jobs.

Status: A survey of staff was done and the results were tallied by OSE's safety consultant, then shared with the Director and the Service Delivery Design Team. At that point, the responsibility for workplace safety was moved to a newly developed Safety Team within MCB. That team was recently formed and progress is being made to identify priorities.

Objective 1.10 To make the pay scale of rehabilitation counselors at MCB more equitable with the rehabilitation teachers as well as other state employees with comparable education and skills.

Status: While this issue remains a priority for MCB, the current budget situation in the State of Michigan prohibits any movement on reaching a resolution. It will remain an issue until some action can be taken.

Objective 1.11 Assess the effectiveness and satisfaction of MCB's efforts to engage consumers and to promote consumer involvement in the Commission's Vision 2020 initiative, the Planning and Quality (PAQ) Team, the Consumer Involvement Council (CIC), the Service Delivery Design Team, the Technology Team, and other opportunities.

Status: MCB continues to work with the various consumer groups requesting their ideas on how to increase consumer involvement. The agency continues to audiostream all Commission meetings and numerous staff continue to attend the state conventions for the two major consumer groups.

Objective 2.1 In FY 2008 the Training Center received a grant of private funds in the amount of \$500,000 to be used in the construction of a technology center. MCB has requested capital outlay funds to add to this sum and it is permissible to spend some of the ARRA stimulus funds on renovation as well. Work with DMB to develop and obtain a comprehensive assessment of the Training Center to include HVAC systems, electrical and infrastructure capacity, and the overall condition and potential of the 43,000 square foot facility in Kalamazoo. Following the assessment, develop a plan and timeline for the construction of a technology center by September 2009.

Status: The assessment was completed in late 2009. A request for an additional grant to replace the HVAC at the Center has been submitted and no decision has been made.

Objective 2.2 Partner with other agencies or groups to do technology training and encourage the community partners to do grant writing and help financially with training. Report results to the Director quarterly.

Status: This continues to be an on-going objective. Some progress has been made with some community partners and ARRA funds have been used to support some activities.

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Objective 3.1 Write and produce a DeafBlind brochure and an MCB Training Center brochure, both in print and online, by December 2008. Report progress to Director quarterly.

Status: These two items are still being developed. It has taken longer than expected to complete them because of a desire to obtain input from a variety of interested persons/groups. The goal for completion was moved to December, 2009.

Objective 3.2 Produce an MCB Annual Report in printed and/or online format by November 2008 for online version and/or December 2008 for the print version. Report progress to Director quarterly.

Status: The 2008 Annual Report was completed as planned and efforts are under way to complete the 2009 Report by the end of December 2009.

Objective 3.3 Continue collaboration with professional organizations of eye doctors through special events and distribution of MCB materials. Also, a new referral form and doctor section will be done. Report progress to Director quarterly.

Status: Working with eye doctors and professional organizations is an on-going project. The agency will continue to build relationships with these valuable community partners.

Objective 3.4 MCB will work with the DLEG Office of Human Resources and the Department of Civil Service to create and establish better ways to recruit new staff (i.e., a recruitment link on the MCB website) and identify and develop training opportunities for current staff to better prepare them to become leaders and managers.

Status: The MCB website was modified to include information about careers in rehabilitation with links to the different programs in Michigan that offer professional education counseling and teaching. The agency continues to notify staff of professional development training programs as they become available.

Objective 4.1 Explore further collaboration with the Office of Aging and area agencies on aging to help leverage human and fiscal resources to more effectively serve older individuals with sight loss. Progress on this long range initiative will continue to be reported on quarterly to the Commissioners.

Status: This is an on-going project. Quarterly reports continue to be presented to the Director and the Commissioners.

Objective 4.2 The team will create a system to streamline the purchasing process and to define, develop, and implement financial responsibility procedures and to explore ideas to determine efficiencies in client service procurement.

Status: This effort continues to make progress and reports are given to the Director.

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Objective 4.3 MCB will implement “batch processing” of all client service payments within the current client tracking system. This process will eliminate duplication of effort by support staff and expedite payments to clients and vendors.

Status: The system has been implemented in Lansing and plans are underway to try it out in another office by the end of 2009.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS and Efficiency (Current Year)

Program Goals/Metrics

In FY 2009, the Michigan Commission for the Blind successfully closed 166 blind Michigan residents' cases. Of these, 139 people found jobs in competitive employment, with an average starting wage of \$13.92 an hour. The state and federal income tax paid by these individuals is projected to be \$ 740,961 in FY 2010. The total investment made by MCB to assist these individuals with employment—\$1,725,318—will be “repaid” in approximately 28 months.

During fiscal year 2009, the Michigan Commission for the Blind served approximately 3,200 individuals who are blind or visually impaired to assist them in becoming employed and independent. In addition to the 139 employed individuals mentioned above, nearly 1,611 older individuals facing sight loss received independent living services from the commission so they could remain in their homes and communities, and more than 300 blind youth in the K-12 system received low vision evaluations and aids to help them succeed in school and beyond.

Performance Measures

Processes used include: accreditation reviews of regulatory programs; comply with standards and indicators defined and monitored by the federal government. Failure to comply with the mandates could result in a loss of federal funding. MCB also self monitors its effectiveness by conducting client satisfaction surveys. Several consumer groups are integrated in the strategic planning process and provide direct input to staff and administration when issues arise. In addition, MCB completes quarterly case reviews to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

Data regarding program performance is gathered regularly. Staffing and workload assignments are adjusted accordingly. The information is also used in the development of the agency strategic plan and program revision requests when necessary. The information gathered from internal and external sources is used to develop the annual Federal “*State Plan*”. This plan requires that MCB provide action steps to address specific areas of its service delivery system.

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Program Improvements Made

- MCB's Student Internship Program using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding was successfully launched in September 2009. This internship program provides opportunities for an estimated 40 consumers who are nearing the end of the rehabilitation process to gain valuable work experience within state government. The interns serve as student assistants for one year, with a possible renewal for a second year, gaining practical work experience and building their resumes.
- MCB's work with CVS pharmacies has generated 28 employment opportunities in the company for blind and visually impaired individuals in southeast Michigan.
- MCB entered into an agreement with the Michigan Department of Community Health and Michigan Rehabilitation Services to increase services for MCB consumers with mental illness and developmental disabilities.
- Through continuing collaboration with the Area Agencies on Aging, MCB has established two sites to begin providing technology training for seniors through the use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.
- Provided outreach to Native Americans to work to increase vocational service to improve employment outcomes.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLANS FOR FY10

- Revision of the College Policies
- Development of the Small Business Policy
- Revision of the Older Blind Policies
- System 7 Client Tracking Update
- Physical Upgrade to MCBTC for Advanced Technology Training

CHALLENGES FOR FY10 and BEYOND

- As a result of early retirements when, unlike many other direct field service agencies, Commission vacancies were only filled at a one in four ratio, MCB is still experiencing problems serving its clients, and needs additional staffing to accomplish its mission and goals and to meet the federally mandated performance standards and indicators. MCB also needs DLEG to assist in finding alternative solutions for resources when demands exceed limits.

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- MCB needs additional matching funds to fully capture all allocated federal funds and, in fact, General Fund appropriations provided by the Michigan Legislature has been consistently inadequate to match available federal funds and as a result, Michigan is last among all states when it comes to state's supporting federal rehab programs such as the Commission's.
- In recent years MCB has been innovative in finding matching sources to capitalize maximum federal dollars. However, the rising cost of rent in state owned or occupied buildings for the Business Enterprise Program food service operations in Michigan is making it nearly impossible to capture all funds to serve blind citizens in the State of Michigan. The rent for these locations was to be a pass through in MCB's budget as funding was to keep pace with expenses. MCB has not been fully funded for the rent since before FY2000 when the rent was one third of what it is today.
- Another major challenge facing MCB is its Training Center, which has several building operational health and safety issues that have the potential to create emergency situations. The first is an antiquated HVAC system that could fail at any time and parts for the system are obsolete. Hand in hand with that situation is the lack of a backup generator at the Center to provide temporary power in the case of an outage. MCBTC is a 24/7 residential school that houses 25-35 blind students. Many of these students are elderly, frail or have secondary disabilities that could be affected if power were to be interrupted during the cold of winter or the heat of the summer.



Working to Create Michigan's Future Today

Michigan Commission for the Blind

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- Served approximately 3,200 individuals who are blind or visually impaired to assist them in becoming employed and independent.
 - 1,611 older individuals facing sight loss received independent living services from the commission so they could remain in their homes and communities
 - 300 blind youth in the K-12 system received low vision evaluations and aids to help them succeed in school and beyond.

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