

Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services (MCRS)



- PROPOSED DRAFT -

Quarterly Business Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2022, 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). in-person attendees met at the Horatio Earle Learning Center, 7575 Crowner Drive, Dimondale, MI 48821 and virtual attendees participated via Microsoft Teams.

Participation

Council Members Attending In-Person:

Carol Bergquist, Chair; Brent Mikulski, Vice Chair; Tiffany Burge, Secretary; Todd Culver, Karen Schulz

Council Members Attending Virtually:

Kimberly Barrington (Byron Center, MI), Kellie Blackwell (Holt, MI), Lisa Cook-Gordon (Melvin, MI), Travar Pettway (Detroit, MI), Jackie Tahtinen (Pelkie, MI)

Council Members Excused:

Steve Locke

Council Members Absent:

None

Terms Expired as of 12/31/21:

Carol Bergquist shared that four members' terms expired on 12/31/2021. She has contacted the Governor's Appointment Office and the individual members regarding interest in extending these terms. The members are:

Elizabeth Abdnour – representing Business, Industry or Labor

Myrtel Brown – representing Business, Industry or Labor

Elham Jahshan – representing the Client Assistance Program

Russ Kavalhuna – representing the Michigan Workforce Development Board

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Tina Fullerton – MRS (virtual – East Tawas, MI)

Bill Robinson – BSBP (virtual – East Lansing, MI)

DSU Liaisons Present:

Lisa Kisiel – BSBP (virtual – Kalamazoo, MI)

Eric Bachmann – MRS (virtual – Traverse City, MI)

MCRS Support Present:

Alicia Kirkey – Dept of Labor & Economic Opportunity, Employment & Training

Guests:

Mike Pemble –Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (virtual – Okemos, MI)

Amie Weber –Michigan Rehabilitation Services

Jonathan Bischoff –Michigan Rehabilitation Services

Elham Jahshan – Client Assistance Program (virtual – Lansing, MI)

Juan Ortiz – Director, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons Training Center (virtual – Kalamazoo, MI)

Sigrid Adams – Division Director, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (virtual - Lansing, MI)

Call to Order

Chairperson Carol Bergquist called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m. The start of the meeting was delayed due to technical difficulties.

Member Roll Call with Location

Tiffany Burge read the roll call. A quorum was present.

Approval of Proposed Agenda (Attachment 1)

Jackie Tahtinen made a motion to approve the 2/10/2022 Proposed Agenda with suggested changes. Support from Todd Culver. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Business Meeting Minutes (Attachment 2)

Carol Bergquist asked for approval of the 11/4/2021 Business Meeting Minutes. Todd Culver so moved. Support from Karen Schulz. Motion passed unanimously.

Resource Plan (Attachment 3)

Update FY2022 Resource Plan presented by Amie Weber, State Administrative Manager, Michigan Rehabilitation Services. Todd Culver requested a copy of the resource plan. Alicia Kirkey will distribute to the council via email.

Partner Reports

Disability Rights Michigan Quarterly Report (fka MPAS) – Elham Jahshan (Attachment 4).

Michigan Alliance for Families – Tiffany Burge (Attachment 5).

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) – Steve Locke (Attachment 6).

Incompass Michigan – Todd Culver (Attachment 7).

Developmental Disability Council (DD Council) – Carol Bergquist shared that the DD Council will provide a partner report at future meetings.

Unfinished Business

MCRS Travel Reimbursement – Alicia Kirkey and Amie Weber (Attachment 8).

- Member Registration: All reimbursements must be processed through the State of Michigan’s SIGMA system. Members need to be registered to submit travel requests. If you haven’t registered and would like to, contact Alicia Kirkey at MCRS@michigan.gov. A copy of the MCRS Travel Reimbursement Guidelines were provided to the membership with the meeting materials.

DSU Updates

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) – Tina Fullerton, Director

- Jonathan Bischoff, Department Specialist, MRS, presented performance updates (Attachment 9).
- Amie Weber, State Administrative Manager, shared the budget report.

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) – Bill Robinson, Director

- Michigan Career Training Institute (MCTI) – Juan Ortiz, Training Center Division Director, reviewed the current status of operations including key statistics and provided a brief overview of future projects in the works.
- Mike Pemble, Administrative Division Director (which includes central operations and management and oversight of the Business Enterprise Program and the Braille and Talking Book Library), presented an overview of some IT modernization initiatives currently in progress, BSBP's stable budgetary position, and an update on the Business Enterprise Program.

BSBP report interrupted for scheduled public comment.

Public Comment

Jackie Tahtinen read the guidelines for public comment. Comments were limited to and kept within the 3-minute time limit.

1. Caleb Adams from Peckham Cadams@peckham.org
 - Concerns about disruptions throughout provider network regarding new MRS rates. Financial level rates were est. 2019, inflation and wages have increased more than reflected. A lot of information has still not been disseminated and local offices are asking a lot of questions without clarification. Provider network is asking a slowdown of this roll out to prevent disruption of services.
2. Tina Jackson, President & CEO of Work Skills Corp.

- Data use, increase operational costs, and unintentional consequences. Rates from 2019 data. Wages & operational costs increased 20%, labor market & rates dramatically different, difficulty finding labor. Providers are respectfully requesting MRS consider hardships for quality service providers, all the costs to ensuring quality service delivery, and too all different areas across the state.

BSBP report continued after scheduled public comment.

- Mike Pemble, Administrative Division Director, concluded his presentation.
- Bill Robinson, Director of BSBP, reviewed key metrics from the LEO Operations Plan noting an increase in number of participants served since the pandemic which now stands at 859 unique individuals served. BSBP continues to work on outreach.
- Lisa Kisiel, Field Services Division Director, presented an update on field services highlighting the customized employment pilots which has resulted in two BSBP placements in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). One individual age 45 had never worked. This is significant because blind agencies have not been very successful with customized employment. For FY2022, BSBP has 18 successful closures in CIE. BSBP continues to promote business services which in turn facilitates opportunities for customers to obtain CIE. For FY2022, BSBP has launched an initiative to promote benefits planning. Since 10/1/2022, BSBP has provided 24 paid experiences and has 32 open authorizations for those services – a total of 56 individuals either having received benefits planning and counseling or slated to receive these services in the near future. BSBP’s FY2022 goal is for 120 customers to participate in benefits planning and counseling.
- Any Questions/Comments:
 - Brent Mikulski -

- ◆ MCRS would like reports/updates in writing prior to the meeting for council review prior to the meeting and notetaking during meeting.
- ◆ VR partners offer travel training opportunities. Southeast local office is working on improving travel training coordination. The team has been in touch with BSBP and MRS to help coordinate this project.

Working Lunch break 12:00-12:15

New Business

1. Unified State Plan (USP) Mid-Cycle Review:

- BSBP USP Presentation by Lisa Kisiel, Field Services Division Director, & Bill Robinson, BSBP Director, and Carol Bergquist discussed the MCRS Executive Team's response and recommendations to BSBP plan (Attachment 10). Questions, clarifications & suggestions were made by council members and addressed by DSU's. Motion made by Jackie Tahtinen to make agreed upon edits and submit to BSBP by February 15, 2022. Seconded by Brent Mikulski. Unanimously approved.
- MRS USP Presentation by Eric Bachman, Division Director and Carol Bergquist discussed MCRS Executive Team's response and recommendations to MRS plan (Attachment 11). Concerns including MRS rate restructuring addressed. Questions, clarifications & suggestions made by council members and addressed by DSU's. Motion made by Brent Mikulski to make agreed upon edits and submit to MRS by February 15, 2022. Seconded by Karen Schulz. Unanimously approved.

2. Conferences – Carol Bergquist.

- Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) conference is on April 12, 2022 and will be virtual this year. If a council member wants to attend, contact Carol Bergquist.
- Spring Leadership Conference, June 8-10, 2022, in Traverse City, Michigan. Agenda is currently being developed. Todd Culver will provide further detail at the May 12, 2022 MCRS Meeting,

Work Teams Updates

Vice Chair Brent Mikulski indicated that the Executive Team will be engaging with work teams, guiding objectives, and scheduling meetings. Potential for new members (four members terms expired 12/31/2021). The work team members are:

1. Executive Team – Carol Bergquist, Brent Mikulski, Tiffany Burge, Travar Pettway
2. Customer Work Team – Karen Schulz, Kimberly Barrington
3. Membership Engagement Work Team – Todd Culver, Brent Mikulski
4. Partnership Work Team – Tiffany Burge, Lisa Cook-Gordon, Steve Locke, Kimberly Barrington
5. Policy Work Team – Travar Pettway, Jackie Tahtinen

Wrap Up

- Membership: Carol Bergquist shared that four members' terms expired on 12/31/2021. She has contacted the Governor's Appointment Office and the Department of Education regarding vacancies.
- Tech Tuesday: Kellie Blackwell shared Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC) has a Tech Tuesday on the second Tuesday of the month over lunch.
- Partner Connections: Dr. Kimberly Barrington would like council members to connect/collaborate with Disability Advocates of Kent County to present services offered. Contact Dr. Barrington if interested.

- Partnership Work Team: Lisa Kisiel recommended council members ask other partners, such as Wagner-Peyser, to present to MCRS discussing their role in services and workforce contribution. Carol suggested this could be addressed by Partnership Work Team.

Business Meeting Adjournment

Carol Bergquist made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:12 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Upcoming FY 2022 Quarterly Meeting Schedule

May 12, 2022, Location TBD

August 11, 2022, Location TBD

September 8, 2022, Location TBD (make up session)