

**MICHIGAN COUNCIL FOR
REHABILITATION SERVICES (MCRS)**

ANNUAL REPORT

**FISCAL YEAR 2021
(October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)**

Submitted by:

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December 30, 2021

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MCRS OVERVIEW

Purpose

The Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services (MCRS or Council) gives advice and works in strategic partnership with Michigan's two Designated State Units (DSUs), the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) and Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), for providing Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services. MCRS members provide an external, consumer-oriented perspective when working in collaboration with BSBP and MRS to review, analyze and advise on policy and programs. The MCRS also offers customers of VR services, other citizens with disabilities, and advocates a formal and accessible mechanism to inform Michigan's VR programs of constituent feedback through open meetings and public comment. The MCRS is Michigan's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), as set forth in The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), its implementing regulations, and Michigan's Executive Orders, 2012-10 and 2019-13. These documents describe the work of the Council, the required member composition for Governor appointments, and the Council's placement within the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). The appointed Council members serve as volunteers. For more details and references, please visit the MCRS website [Labor and Economic Opportunity - Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services](#), or call the MCRS office at 517-335-2400.

Mission

To improve public vocational rehabilitation (VR) services delivered by the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) and Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS).

Vision

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) and Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) will provide VR services utilizing service delivery models that are respectful, equitable and effective in achieving meaningful employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

Values

- The right to choose is realized by access to all information.
- Work opportunities open doors to individual independence and participation in community life.
- A focus on an individual's assets and strengths leads to employment success.
- Person-centered goals, service plans and delivery systems lead to individual employment success.
- Shared roles and responsibilities improve satisfaction with the rehabilitation process.
- Collaborative partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies, and business entities are critical for VR system effectiveness.

Membership

With the exception of the MRS and BSBP ex-officio members, MCRS members are appointed by the Governor for terms not to exceed three years. Members cannot serve more than two consecutive terms, That two-term limit does not apply to the Client Assistance Program (CAP) or the American Indian VR Program representative(s) as specified by federal mandates.

The composition of the Council is set forth in The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA and consists of at least 15 people who voluntarily serve to represent specific disability stakeholders from across Michigan. The MCRS member list, presented below, is inclusive of people who served at any time during FY2021, October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021. With some appointed terms ending, Governor Gretchen Whitmer appointed six members with terms beginning on January 1, 2021.

Governor Appointed Members Serving Terms During FY2021

Current FY2021 MCRS Members

Elizabeth Abdnour, of Lansing, representing Business, Industry and Labor – Bylaws Work Team

Kimberly Barrington, of Byron Center, representing Disability Advocacy Groups - Partners Work Team and Customer Work Team

Carol Bergquist, of Escanaba, representing the American Indian 121 Vocational Rehabilitation Projects – MCRS Chair and Executive Team

Kellie Blackwell, of Lansing, representing current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services.

Myrtel Brown, of Flint, representing Business, Industry and Labor

Tiffany Burge, of Mt. Pleasant, representing the Parent and Training Information Center – MCRS Secretary, Executive Team Member and Partners Work Team

Lisa Cook-Gordon, of Melvin, representing Disability Advocacy Groups – Partnership Work Team.

Todd Culver, of East Lansing, representing Disability Advocacy Groups – Membership Engagement Work Team

Elham Jahshan, of East Lansing, representing the Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Russ Kavalhuna, of Dearborn, representing the Michigan Workforce Development Board.

Steve Locke, of Auburn, representing the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) – Partnership Work Team.

Brent Mikulski, of Canton, representing community rehabilitation program service providers – MCRS Vice Chair, Executive Team and Membership Engagement Work Team.

Travar Pettway, of Canton, representing Disability Advocates – MCRS Treasurer, Executive Team and Policy Work Team.

Karen Schulz, of Lansing, representing Business, Industry and Labor – Customer Work Team

Jackie Tahtinen, of Pelkie, representing Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors – Policy Work Team

Previous FY2021 MCRS Members

Mikyia Aaron, of Taylor, representing Business, Industry or Labor – Chair of the Bylaws Work Team

Yvonne Fleener, Need City, representing the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

David Szyldowski, of Alpena, representing Community Rehabilitation Programs – Executive Team Member at large

Janet Timbs, of Mt. Morris, representing the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education – Chair of the Partners Work Team and Bylaws Work Team

Ex-Officio Members

Tina Fullerton, State Director of Michigan Rehabilitation Services

William Robinson, State Director of Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

DSU Liaisons

Lisa Kisiel, Director of Field Services, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

Eric Bachmann, Division Director, Michigan Rehabilitation Services

MCRS Administrative Support

Alicia Kirkey, Departmental Analyst, Dept of Labor and Economic Opportunity

Financial Responsibility

FY2021 MCRS Resource Plan	Projected Budget
LEO E&T Staff Support	\$ 40,000
Travel - Conference Out of State	\$ 20,760
Travel - Conference In State	\$ 25,500
Travel - Meetings/Other	\$ 10,530
Communications/IT Support	\$ 13,500
Marketing Materials	\$ 1,000
Public Education/Consumer Satisfaction	\$ 1,000
Miscellaneous Contingency	\$ 3,870
TOTAL	\$ 116,160

Due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on travel restrictions and in-person conference and meeting participation, MCRS actual FY2021 expenditures were considerably less than the approved MCRS Resource Plan.

Building Expertise

In FY2021, MCRS achieved its federal mandates by offering valuable perspectives throughout the development and review of state VR priorities, goals, policies, and procedures. Both VR agencies consistently provided

requested plans, reports, data, and other relevant information. Through MCRS analysis of these documents, as well as customer and constituent interactions, members directly impacted State level VR planning and decision making. For MCRS administrative assistance, MRS and BSBP have provided funds to support the designated time of a departmental analyst, housed within the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), who serves as the primary contact person for the Council. The analyst assists MCRS members with various technical and clerical tasks, helps the Council comply with the Open Meetings Act, assures accessibility of documents and website, prepares for and participates in quarterly business meetings and designated work team sessions, communicates with partner organizations and facilitates necessary liaison communication with various State of Michigan (SOM) personnel. This staffing arrangement has been very effective. During FY2021, MCRS, MRS and BSBP benefited from an effective working relationship that is intentionally strong, vibrant, and honors the MCRS purpose as a knowledgeable and powerful Voice of Michigan's Citizens with Disabilities, which meaningfully informs Michigan's vocational rehabilitation community.

Activities and Achievements

- In August 2021, elections for the MCRS executive team were held for four officers: chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary and treasurer. MCRS officers were elected for a two-year term, serving in FY2022 and FY2023. The current Officers are:
 - Carol Bergquist, Chair
 - Brent Milkulski, Vice Chair
 - Tiffany Burge, Secretary
 - Travar Pettway, Treasurer
- Governor Gretchen Whitmer appointed six MCRS members with terms beginning January 1, 2021. Four new members were appointed and two members were reappointed. Due to a continuing influx of new members as terms expire, the executive team decided to utilize an ad hoc work team structure in FY2020 and the beginning of FY2021 to more immediately perform the work of the Council, rather than the past structure of two standing committees. This structure allowed for a diverse mix of people participating in short term focused work teams that achieved

specific goals. Such teams offered more members leadership opportunities as ad hoc chairs. The FY2021 work teams included:

- FY2020 MCRS Annual Report – Carol Bergquist, Jackie Tahtinen, Bill Robinson (BSBP), Lisa Kisiel (BSBP), Sue Luzinski (BSBP), Tina Fullerton (MRS), Jonathan Bischoff (MRS), Eric Bachmann (MRS), and Alicia Kirkey (LEO-ET).
- Unified State Plan – Carol Bergquist, Jackie Tahtinen, Lisa Keisel (BSBP) and Bill Columbo (MRS).
- Bylaws – Mikyia Aaron, Chair, Elizabeth Kamm Abdnour, Janet Timbs, Jackie Tahtinen, Bill Robinson (BSBP).
- Partnership Work Team – Janet Timbs, Chair, Tiffany Burge, and Lisa Cook Gordon.
- FY2021 MCRS Annual Report – Carol Bergquist, Brent Mikulski, Bill Robinson (BSBP), Lisa Kisiel (BSBP), Sue Luzinski (BSBP), Tina Fullerton (MRS), Jonathan Bischoff (MRS) Eric Bachmann (MRS), and Alicia Kirkey (LEO-ET).

In August FY2021, three permanent Work Teams were added, and the Partnership Work Team became permanent. Current Work Teams are:

- Policy Work Team – Kellie Blackwell, Travar Pettway and Jackie Tahtinen
 - Membership Engagement Work Team – Todd Culver and Brent Mikulski.
 - Customer Work Team – Kimberly Barrington, Myrtel Brown and Karen Schulz.
 - Partnership Work Team –Tiffany Burge, Kimberly Barrington, Lisa Cook-Gordon, Steve Locke.
- The appointment structure of the MCRS, with members appointed for terms of three years or less on a rotating basis, creates the need for professional learning opportunities to gain knowledge about the role and function of a State Rehabilitation Council, the requirements of the Federal - State public VR system, and the provision of VR services through Michigan’s two Designated State Units, Michigan Rehabilitation Services

(MRS) and Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP). Learning opportunities included national and state level VR conferences, presentations by experts during MCRS business meetings, professional development sessions of specific topics, and training and technical assistance through the National Association of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). Examples of the MCRS professional learning opportunities are interspersed throughout this report.

- Three MCRS members participated virtually in the Incompass Michigan's VR Leadership Conference in June 2021. This conference was an opportunity to learn about Michigan's VR community, and statewide and national VR issues. Participants and speakers represented a variety of federal and state agencies, local community organizations, people with disabilities, experts in various aspects of vocational rehabilitation, and numerous advocacy groups.
- The MCRS chairperson and vice chairperson are active with the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). They participate in the NCSRS hosted monthly conference calls to learn about SRC requirements, discuss how other SRC's operate and implement the federal mandates, and learn about current VR issues. The NCSRC website is also a valuable source of current SRC training and technical assistance information, which MCRS utilizes for member orientation.
- Staff in various roles with each DSU were readily available to meet the training and technical assistance requests of MCRS members. Some examples include technical assistance offered by both MRS and BSBP on policy updates, WIOA, the VR process, monitoring progress, and measuring outcomes of serving students with disabilities through pre-employment transition services. Information about the continuing impact of the pandemic on VR services and outcomes was provided and discussed.

The following section summarizes the MCRS' activities and accomplishments for each required State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) federal mandate during FY2021.

1. *WORK IN PARTNERSHIP with the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) and Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), the public VR agencies in Michigan regarding essential planning, policy development and service*

delivery intended to result in meeting the employment potential of Michigan citizens with disabilities.

- The MCRS vice chairperson was an active participant in all MRS policy cadre meetings. All MCRS members are advised about the key topic for cadre meetings and may attend virtually based on their interest and availability. Results of the policy cadre meetings held each quarter are discussed during executive team meetings and with the full Council during the MCRS quarterly meetings.
- MCRS members participated in BSBP's 2020 Achievement Honor Roll Awards on October 22, 2020, which empowered customers through recognition of their exemplary goal accomplishments in employment and/or independent living after vision loss. Honorees were nominated by BSBP staff for attaining independence through utilizing the diverse set of quality services offered by BSBP. The telling of the honoree's stories, and hearing about their struggles and successes created a memorable and meaningful program.
- The MCRS chairperson participated in several MRS meetings regarding rate restructuring. As a corrective action to a 2017 RSA 107 monitoring finding, Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) was contracted by the MRS to conduct a rate study and calculate statewide service rates for providers contracted or authorized by MRS to provide vocational rehabilitative services. This action ensures set fees for purchased VR services, including pre-employment transition services, are based on reasonable costs established by the agency, as required by 34 C.F.R. § 361.50(c). Stakeholder and provider participation have, and will continue to be, integral throughout the initiative.
- On October 21, 2020, MCRS members assisted MRS staff in facilitating the powerful Champion Awards ceremony, which honored the successful outcomes of several MRS customers and business partners throughout Michigan. The MCRS chair served as the Master of Ceremony of this amazingly positive ceremony.
- Four MCRS members participated virtually in the two national conferences, the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), held April 6-22, 2021, and the National Council of

State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) conference, held May 4-7 & 11, 2021.

2. *REVIEW AND ANALYZE program effectiveness, create and analyze consumer satisfaction materials, render concerns and recommendations to BSBP and MRS derived from performance standards, measurements of rehabilitation services, and public input.*
 - Across several business meetings, MCRS members along with MRS and BSBP staff discussed the importance of gathering customer satisfaction information. MRS completes a comprehensive statewide Customer Satisfaction Survey each year, with information gathered at two milestones, at plan and at exit. The survey process is conducted by Michigan State University's Project Excellence. MCRS received the MRS Customer Satisfaction Report and Sukyeong Pi, Ph.D., Project Excellence Research Director, had previously presented a 3-year overview at a MCRS business meeting. MCRS customer work team will further review 2021 reports, other customer satisfaction data and discuss their implications for possible policy or process change.
 - BSBP uses a variety of methods to capture customer satisfaction embedded throughout their service delivery system. BSBP staff is interested in working with MCRS in exploring innovative, accessible and engaging ways of capturing satisfaction data.
3. *ADVISE the governor and state agencies on the performance of vocational rehabilitation in Michigan regarding eligibility, program effectiveness and effect on individuals with disabilities. This includes preparation and distribution of this annual report.*
 - The vice chair was a member of the MRS policy cadre. At each business meeting she presented information about the topics of recent meetings and the focus of the upcoming cadre meetings. These discussions are interactive with MRS staff present and MCRS members. Members have an open invitation to join any cadre meeting of interest. All meetings are accessible through statewide virtual meetings. The MCRS policy work team will assume involvement with the policy cadre in FY2022.

- BSBP reviews, updates and creates policy on a regular basis at specific meetings scheduled for that purpose. MCRS members are invited to participate at each level of policy consideration. Input is also solicited from members at quarterly business meetings.
 - MRS and BSBP state directors serve as ex-officio members of the MCRS. Directors actively participate in every business meeting by providing an overview of the VR process and outcome statistics and a discussion of current or emerging issues. Invited expert staff also offer their perspective and everyone has the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations.
 - MRS and BSBP state directors each appointed a key administrator who serves as that DSU's liaison to the MCRS. Liaisons are directly involved with the executive team on an on-going basis and provide timely access to data and other information. Liaisons readily participate in discussions with the MCRS executive team and when requested, the work teams.
 - MCRS business meetings offer the opportunity for all members to access information, participate in open Q&A with DSU staff, and offer their personal perspectives and those of the constituent groups they represent. Throughout FY2021, requested information has been provided by each DSU in a timely manner.
 - MCRS chairperson and vice chairperson worked with MRS and BSBP liaisons and ex-officio members to complete the MCRS FY2020 Annual Report, which was submitted to RSA by the December 30, 2020 due date.
4. *COORDINATE the work of the SRC with the activities of other Michigan statewide disability-related councils. This includes establishing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the State Independent Living Council (SILC).*
- One of the MCRS priorities for FY2021 was to learn about other disability-related councils in Michigan and establish partnerships to achieve common goals for Michigan citizens with disabilities. Members established a partners' work team that began reaching out to potential partners, including the SILC, the Developmental Disabilities Council, and the Michigan Interagency Transition Team (MITT).

- After several years absence, a representative of the SILC was appointed to the MCRS by Governor Whitmer.
 - The MCRS chairperson and vice chairperson regularly participate in the SILC's virtual business meetings and in additional activities as requested.
 - Partner roles represented by MCRS members include Special Education, Michigan's Parent Training Center, Centers for Independent Living, Community Rehabilitation Organizations, Incompass Michigan, the Client Assistance Program (CAP), and Native American VR.
5. *CONDUCT BUSINESS OPERATIONS to assure that the Council holds four Business Meetings each year, with an Agenda that includes transparency for operations, education about the VR programs and dedicated time for the public to make comment.*
- MCRS conducted four required quarterly business meetings in FY2021. Due to COVID-19 closures and restrictions, virtual meetings were held utilizing Microsoft Teams on November 12, 2020, February 11, 2021, and May 13, 2021. Once Covid-19 closures and restrictions were partially lifted, a hybrid meeting was held on August 12, 2021. The business meeting format includes a morning business meeting with a comprehensive VR update by MRS and BSBP facilitated by their respective state directors, followed by an interactive Q&A. Afternoon professional learning sessions covered a variety of topics:
 - **November 12, 2020** – Virtual Participation by MCRS members in the CSAVR Annual Conference.
 - **February 11, 2021** – Interactive Presentation Michigan's 2020 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment by CSNA Committee Members and Participants. Presenters: Sukyeong Pi, Project Excellence, Michigan State University, Maureen Webster, MRS Rehabilitation Consultant Manager, Claudia Pettit, MRS Rehabilitation Consultant, and Lisa Kisiel, BSBP Field Services Division Director.
 - **May 13, 2021** – Two presentations were given: 1) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) presented by Bill Columbo, MRS Deputy Director, and Lisa Kisiel, BSBP Field Services Division Director, and 2) Michigan Interagency Transition Team (MITT),

presented by Janet Timbs, Coordinator, Monitoring and Technical Assistance Team, MDE-OSE, Jennifer Hirst, MRS Rehabilitation Consultant, and Shannon McVoy, BSBP Transition Services Manager.

- **August 12, 2021** – Two presentations were given: 1) State Rehabilitation Council Federal Mandates, presented by BSBP’s Director Bill Robinson and Field Services Division Director Lisa Kisiel and MRS’s Director Tina Fullerton and Division Director Eric Bachmann, and 2) the State Rehabilitation Council: A National Perspective, presented by Graham Sisson, President, NCSRC, and SRC Liaison, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, and Sherry Taylor, Vice President/Treasurer, NCSRC, and Executive Director, West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The lives of Michigan's citizens, including individuals with disabilities who are potential or current customers of the VR system, have been dramatically disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Valued services to support this vulnerable population, and connecting individuals with disabilities to employment opportunities, have been significantly impacted as well. In response to a combination of executive orders from Michigan’s Governor’s office, guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other reliable sources of public health subject matter expertise, many VR customers were unable to connect with in-person services, in the best interests of the health and safety of persons served and the staff who support them.

Facing uncertainty in the transition into 2022, this impact is continuing into next year, affecting the number of customers supported through the VR system and outcomes achieved as a result. Additional emphasis on the potential for remote service delivery through virtual platforms will also continue, to maintain these vital connections among people with disabilities, their families and advocates, and Michigan’s comprehensive VR network. The work of MCRS will adapt as well, not only in conducting the business of the Council remotely or in hybrid models as conditions dictate, but in adjusting the lens through which the Council fulfills its SRC mandate to support improvement of public VR services delivered by BSBP and MRS, thus opening doors to individual independence and participation in community life.

DESIGNATED STATE UNITS' SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following two sections display summary statistics from Michigan's two Designated State Units (DSU's) housed within the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO):

- Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP)
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)

The two DSU's provide State Vocational Rehabilitation Services which are administered under the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration. The vocational rehabilitation (VR) program is designed to provide VR services for individuals with disabilities, consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, so that they may prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment, achieve economic self-sufficiency, and live independently. While the two DSU's both serve individuals with disabilities within the State of Michigan they serve different populations:

- BSBP customers are blind residents of the state. Eligibility can vary based on program requirements, but all customers must have blindness as their primary disability impeding them from employment or living independently.
- MRS' eligible individuals are those who have a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment, who can benefit from VR services for employment, and who require VR services.

Both agencies administer and provide vocational rehabilitation services to eligible customers according to the terms and conditions of federal formula grants and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and its implementing regulations under 34 CFR § 361 – State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program. BSBP and MRS are housed within the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity also known as the Designated State Agency (DSA).

Primary Indicators of Performance

Section 116 of WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of states and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system's six core programs. Vocational rehabilitation performance accountability indicators include:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Credential Attainment
- Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in serving employers

All of the above performance indicators are in a benchmarking phase except for measurable skills gains.

BUREAU OF SERVICES FOR BLIND PERSONS (BSBP)

Mission

The mission of the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons is to provide opportunities to individuals who are blind or visually impaired to achieve employment, and/or achieve maximum and meaningful independence in life through comprehensive rehabilitative services.

Vision

It is the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons vision to help Michigan become a better State for blind and visually impaired persons to be equal contributing citizens that enjoy the advantages of a full, independent life.

Programmatic Goals and Objectives

BSBP continues to frame both short-term and long-term goals and objectives by embracing:

- 1) Fiscal responsibility and accountability employing the RAAN principles codified in federal regulations – Reasonable, Allowable, Allocable and Necessary.
- 2) Transformational service models and processes.
- 3) Modernization.
- 4) Next generation leadership.

These pillars provide a framework for continuous improvement for services to internal and external customers and businesses.

Fiscal goals and objectives included being fully matched, achieving social security cost reimbursements of \$400,000 or greater and coordination of the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) reserve with MRS.

Field Services Division goals and objectives included roll-out of the Purchased Service Provider Policy, customized employment, virtual service models, case services manual updates, business engagement, job placements and meeting measurable skill gains (MSG) targets set forth in the Unified State Plan.

Pre-employment transition services (Pre-TS) goals and objectives included virtual service models, coordination with Michigan Department of Education Low Incidence Outreach (MDE-LIO) and Intermediate School Districts (ISD) and increasing family and student engagement.

Independent Living (IL) service goals and objectives included surveying BSBP past customers to inform services, utilization of Independent Living Part B (IL Part B) funds to expand services among the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and to set up contactless delivery and a return to in-person services to Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) customers.

Training Center (TC) goals and objectives focused on a return to in-person services despite challenges of the pandemic, virtual services, improved referral processes and linkage to field services and collaboration with Kalamazoo Valley Community College to expand opportunities for TC participants.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP) goals and objectives included management of program with in-person services to support preservation of sites and exploration of opportunities to address the paradigm shift of lower building occupancy and create new training models for operator candidates.

Braille and Talking Book Library (BTBL) goals and objectives for continuous improvement embraced continued implementation of the National Library Service (NLS) WebReads software, reduction of cartridge footprint in the stacks, and succession planning for leadership.

FY2021 Performance Highlights

Field Services Division (FSD) – Vocational Rehabilitation (VR):

Description	FY2020	FY2021	% Change or Comment
Closures resulting in CIE	62	56	-9.7%
Median Earnings 2 nd QTR after exit	\$3,016.87	\$3,499.40	16%
New VR Applications	181	243	34%
Number of VR Customers	854	747	-12.6%
Number of Counselors	16	17	6%
Average Caseload	53	44	-17%
Percent of caseload consisting of SWD receiving Pre-ETS services	44%	46%	4.5%
Exit from VR without CIE	270	184	-32%
Number of Initial IPEs Developed	143	161	12.5%
Number of IPE Amendments Completed	349	370	6%
Credential Attainment as a percentage of eligible participants	6%	4%	-33.33%
Post-secondary sponsorship expenditures	\$1,922,399.93	\$967,249.70	-50%

Primary Indicators of Performance

As indicated above, the primary indicators of performance are in benchmarking phase except for Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) which is included in the current Unified State Plan. As reported by RSA for the program year 2020 (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) for blind agencies only, BSBP MSG enrollment was 26% compared to a 23% national average and its MSG rate was 53.1% compared to a national average of 52.1%.

Customized Employment

BSBP continued the customized employment (CE) pilots in all three of its regions (East, Central and West) to address the unique services for its most significantly disabled customers working with the Employment First

stakeholders, community providers and community mental health. CE is a process for achieving competitive integrated employment (CIE) or self-employment through a relationship personalized to meet the needs of both employee and employer. BSBP expects to assist 1-2 individuals in becoming employed by the end of FY2022 and add an additional 1-2 placements in Pilot 2 by the end of FY2023.

Shift From Virtual to In-Person Services

VR counselors (VRC) continued virtual services until mid-July when field service professionals began to return to in-person services.

Policies and Procedures

Working with the newly formed Training, Innovation, Policy and Procedure Unit, (TIPP), FSD began an update of its Case Services Manual. An updated post-secondary policy and an updated provider services policy was rolled out and a newly updated vendor guideline and attestation was implemented to address third-party services in the midst of a pandemic.

FSD: Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS):

Description	FY2020	FY2021	% Change/ Comments
Potentially Eligible Students	123	129	5%
VR Participants receiving Pre-ETS services	320	270	-15.6%
Total BSBP SWD served	443	399	-9.9%

Outreach included collaboration with MDE-LIO to provide joint virtual programming which included MDE-LIO Career Day. Staff moved to virtual programming for historically in-person programming for Camp Transition Zone, College Prep Program and created new virtual programming. Regional and local offices also provided innovative virtual services. In-person services for students began in July.

FSD: Independent Living (IL): BSBP Vocational Rehabilitation Therapists (VRTs) support VR customers and Pre-ETS students by providing IL skills necessary to function in a sighted world. IL instruction is often the first step for a VR customer to begin honing workplace readiness skills. When not supporting VR, VRTs deliver ILOB and IL Part B programmatic services. ILOB is focused

on blind persons not interested in CIE age 55 or older. IL Part B, a very small program, is focused on IL skills for any customer less than 55 years old. IL services are high-touch and were severely limited during the pandemic. IL objectives included wellness checks and virtual services including contactless delivery of assistive devices until in-person services resumed. Restart of in-person services in late June received early approval through submission of a “Safe Start Plan.” An IL survey was completed in late FY2021 and will be utilized to enhance service delivery and training needs of the IL customers and providers. IL Part B funds were utilized to expand services by providing assistive devices for center-based services by CILs and one-stop job centers.

Business Services

VR serves the “dual” customer that includes “business” as a recipient of services. Services include but are not limited to assessing the need for workplace accommodations and supports, assisting the employer with customizing the work environment and providing education and coordination for the employer.

BSBP has participated in a monthly workgroup hosted by LEO E&T focused on collaborative outreach and seamless services to business by all agencies under the Employment and Training (E&T) umbrella: BSBP, MRS and Workforce Development. BSBP began a collaboration with MRS to engage counselors from BSBP and MRS business network consultants coordinating development of business relationships, educating business about the talent of persons with disabilities and developing employment opportunities. MRS and BSBP are also working toward incorporating MI Business Resource System (MI BRS) as a resource for capturing business information that will also efficiently collect data for common performance measure indicator 6, which is effectiveness in serving employers.

Top five industry sectors served by BSBP in FY2021 include:

1. Education
2. Human Services
3. Healthcare
4. Management
5. Engineering

Top requested business services in FY2021 include:

- Provide education and training to business specific to blindness accommodations.
- Respond to requests to provide accommodations assistance for customers who wish to retain employment.
- Provide technical assistance to business to provide modifications to existing software and hardware to increase accessibility for new hires.

Training Center

The BSBP Training Center (TC) located in Kalamazoo County is a 24/7 residential vocational center for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The TC primarily provides individualized training in adjustment to blindness, workplace readiness, confidence building and independent living. During FY2021, 145 participants were provided training of whom 68 were referrals from VR, 21 were referrals from IL, 56 were referrals from (Pre-ETS), which included 12 potentially eligible students and 44 students with a VR case opened.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, in-person services were significantly impacted. The TC was approved to reopen to in-person services on March 15, 2021, with a robust reopening plan.

Since the reopening, the TC has provided services via a hybrid platform, offering in-person and virtual training. The hybrid model allows for enhanced services reaching a wider audience. TC professionals developed a virtual curricula to support the virtual delivery of services during the pandemic and the hybrid delivery of services after the TC reopened. A total of 54 individuals were served virtually and 91 served in-person.

TC support staff partnered with the Braille and Talking Book Library to fill gaps in services as needed, which ultimately resulted in the TC offering a talking book player repair shop as part of the Industrial Arts curricula.

TC specific Pre-ETS programming:

- Post-Secondary Readiness Program
Pre-ETS Individual Courses: Advocacy, Counseling on Post-Secondary Education, and Job Seeking Skills
- R.U. Ready: Serving participants with multiple disabilities
- Family Engagement- First annual virtual meet & greet

TC hosted events

- 1- 2 Day Community Partner Training: 10 staff from 6 Agencies
- Mini Adjustment Program (1-week hands on program) serving VR and IL participants

Innovation and Special Programs

BSBP established the Training Innovation Policy and Procedure (TIPP) Unit in January of 2021. The TIPP Unit serves both external and internal customers and reports directly to the BSBP Director.

The TIPP Unit was tasked with the following objectives:

- Development of dashboards, user acceptance testing, and training tools for a data analytics platform that interacts in real time with BSBP's electronic case management system – Libera System 7.
- Formulation of a collaborative process for policy input and policy and procedure development.
- Identify an accountable training platform for BSBP.

Libera inSights data analytics platform pulls data in real time from BSBP's current case management system, Libera System 7. BSBP developed dashboards providing customer information at-a-glance to empower counselors in management and organization of case priorities. The TIPP Unit managed the development, testing, scrubbing of System 7 outdated information and initial training and rollout to management of inSights.

The collaborative process for reviewing and updating the FSD Case Service Manual (CSM), allows for local level, on the ground input. Seventeen workgroups were put together to include administrative support, rehabilitation professionals, and managerial staff.

The updating of the CSM aligned with the joint purchase of YesLMS by BSBP and MRS. Through the acquisition of YesLMS, BSBP now has a web-based accountable learning management system to train staff on current policy, procedure, and best practices related to the programs offered by BSBP.

Key Highlights from FY2021

New Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

- Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities – BSBP, MRS, BHDDA

- American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) Project Visions – BSBP, MRS, Hannahville Indian Community
- Developing a Michigan Employment First Data Sharing Agreement – BSBP, MRS, WD, UIA, BHDDA, MDE, DTMB-CEPI

Group Services

The BTBL provides library services to persons who are blind or have a physical disability that prevents them from reading or handling print materials. In FY2021, BTBL served over 6,600 eligible Michigan residents.

BTBL expanded the use of its new WebREADS circulation system which went live in March of 2020, sent over 850,000 audio books on digital cartridges and over 1,250 volumes of braille to Michigan patrons.

The summer reading program returned, doubling the number of participating readers from FY2020 to 46 readers. Braille Enhanced Story Walk returned after a year off due to Covid-19 and includes 17 libraries.

BTBL Technology Club provided ten programs to 175 patrons via phone conference or the Zoom platform. BTBL Book Club hosted ten programs to 80 patrons via phone conference or the Zoom platform.

BTBL closed the physical stack area and mailed over 96,000 unneeded book cartridges back to the National Library Service (NLS) Multi-State Center (MSC) East for recycling. The newly vacant space will be converted to office space for BSBP Central Office and BTBL staff, resulting in overhead cost savings.

BTBL Machine Services staff collaborated with Training Center staff to become an NLS authorized Digital Talking Book Machine (DTBM) repair facility. This effort has resulted in BSBP Training Center staff repairing 1,536 DTBMs which are now available for use by BTBL patrons.

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) or the Federal and State Randolph-Sheppard program provides blind persons the opportunity to operate a food service business in State and Federal buildings and State rest areas. The facilities include vending routes, vending machines, snack bars and cafeterias.

The BEP program was able to reopen several facilities that had been closed in FY2020 as some limited return to work policies were adopted, allowing several state offices to reopen with limited services.

Licensed Operators who experienced a financial loss in FY2020 and did not receive compensation through other mechanisms, were provided relief from the Federal Relief and Restoration Payments (FRRP) grant, as part of the onetime Congressional relief bill. The FRRP allowed BEP to provide more than \$500,000 directly to operators to address losses of inventory and income in 2020.

BEP continues to utilize advances in technology to reduce labor costs for Licensed Operators. For example, BEP is expanding the use of micro-markets, which are self-service 24/7 kiosks and increase product selections and sales at several locations while reducing labor costs.

Statewide, sales have continued to decline from FY2020, due primarily to continued remote work options for most of the state workforce that previously occupied State managed facilities.

BEP BY THE NUMBERS			
	FY2020	FY2021	% CHANGE
GROSS SALES PROGRAM TOTAL	\$7,099,802	\$5,137,623	-27.6%
AVERAGE OPERATOR INCOME	\$54,180	\$41,421	-23.5%
MEDIAN OPERATOR INCOME	\$36,012.00	\$30,260	-16.0%
NUMBER OF OPERATORS	42	44	4.8%
NUMBER OF SITES	147	229	55.8%

The National Vending Contract for vending machine leases and repairs renewed with an extension of leases to a 6th year and a 15% discounted rate. BEP also continues to utilize a virtual training program, resulting in 6 additional candidates who will be eligible to bid on facilities in the coming year.

Modernization

All BSBP staff became intimately familiar with the Microsoft Teams and ZOOM applications resulting in expansion of virtual services as well as promoting ease of meetings and collaborations.

BSBP also migrated local and shared drives to the Microsoft OneDrive – cloud storage application – which will ensure continuous backup and preservation of files.

BSBP received an Information Technology Innovation Fund (ITIF) award in a prior fiscal year to fund its modernization of systems and processes unique to programmatic services. Using this funding source and the related federal match, BSBP acquired a data analytics platform that pulls real-time data from the Libera System 7 case management system. BSBP developed data dashboards to empower counselors with real-time snapshots and drill-down capabilities for case flow to inform services in real time.

BSBP continued to develop and implement use cases for its Citrix ShareFile document management and e-sign platform acquired with the use of ITIF.

Next Generation Leadership

In FY2021, there were 4 internal promotions of manager level and above. Working with HR, staff finalized the senior standards for vocational rehabilitation counselors looking to advance to the highest level for the non-managerial VRC position. BSBP was also able to backfill 2 positions with people new to working in state government.

FY2021 Federal Awards

Grant	Dollar Amount
VR Grant	\$17,525,897
Re-allotment Award	\$ 1,500,000
Total VR Grants	\$19,025,897
Pre-ETS Reserve (Total BSBP VR Grants X 15% = BSBP Portion of State WIOA mandate)	\$ 2,853,885
Supported Employment - Adult	\$ 30,400
Supported Employment - Youth	\$ 30,400
IL Older Blind	\$ 988,139
IL Part B	\$ 188,625

Fiscal Responsibility

BSBP was fully matched for FY2021 and was also awarded additional VR federal funds through the RSA Re-Allotment process.

BSBP internal controls are reviewed at least annually. Allocation to the cost objectives occurs based on the use of specific accounting templates and labor distribution payroll codes. Monitoring of expenditures occurs monthly in collaboration with LEO fiscal. Approval authorities are established as an additional control for expenditures and hiring.

BSBP's VR grant award increased by 1.5% in FY2021. Its Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) grant award decreased by 1.2% in FY2021. Both the VR and ILOB awards are formula grants, however the ILOB award is fixed and has not been increased since 2000 while the VR award is adjusted for CPI and other factors.

The Supported Employment grants totaling \$60,800 were relinquished and returned to the US Treasury due to the complicated matching formula and requirements of these grants.

Social Security Cost Reimbursement (SSCR) is a method of obtaining reimbursement of vocational rehabilitation expenditures when a customer is placed in a job and works a certain number of months receiving wages over the Social Security Administration's baseline of substantial gainful activity. BSBP exceeded its goal for SSCR bringing \$454,000 of program income into its funding sources.

BSBP coordinates the 15% mandatory Pre-ETS reserve and expend requirement of the VR grant with MRS. The coordination with MRS facilitates meeting this mandate for the State of Michigan. As a result of the partnership between the blind and general VR agencies, the State continues to meet its WIOA mandatory Pre-ETS reserve and expend requirement.

BSBP Contact Information

BSBP Web Page: www.michigan.gov/bsbp

Toll Free voice: 1-800-292-4200

Toll Free TTY: Dial 711 and provide the relay operator with the toll-free number 1-888-864-1212

MICHIGAN REHABILITATION SERVICES (MRS)

Mission

Develop customized workforce solutions for businesses and individuals with disabilities.

Vision

A diverse and inclusive workforce that unites businesses and individuals with disabilities toward a common good.

Programmatic Goals and Objectives

Section 116 of WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of states and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system's six core programs. Vocational rehabilitation performance accountability indicators include:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Credential Attainment
- Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in serving employers

All of the above performance indicators are in a benchmarking phase except for measurable skill gains.

FY2021 Performance Highlights

- 34,897 total cases during FY2021
 - 8,031 total cases for Prior to Application (PTA) and potentially eligible students with disabilities
 - 26,866 total vocational rehabilitation (VR) cases, of which more than 23,000 were significantly or most significantly disabled
 - 5,290 Michigan residents with disabilities exited VR services employed

- Measurable Skill Gains (MSG): MRS had a negotiated Program Year performance goal of 20 percent. For federal program year 2020, MRS reported an MSG rate of 46 percent.
- Customer satisfaction rates:
 - VR customers at plan: 96.1%
 - VR customers at exit: 88.9%
 - Business customers: 95.7%
 - VR customers that received OT services 87.5%
- \$17.75 per hour was the average wage for those customers who exited VR service employed, ranging from a high of \$150 per hour to minimum wage, for those who exited VR services employed

Business Services

- The top five industry sectors served by MRS in FY2021 Included:
 1. Manufacturing
 2. Health Care and Social Assistance
 3. Public Administration
 4. Educational Services
 5. Other Services (except Public Administration)
- The top requested services from businesses in FY2021
 1. Employee Recruitment
 2. Disability Awareness/Sensitivity Training / Consultation
 3. Recruitment & Hiring Event Support
 4. Resource and Asset Development Outside of Agency's Scope of Services / Expertise Referral
 5. Other Talent Sourcing and Networking
- More than 4,500 business contacts were made, including outreach and relationship development as well as businesses that hired VR participants, with more than 750 businesses that received core agency services.
- At least \$450,000 in direct service costs were saved by the business community for technical guidance and support services rendered by MRS.
- MRS partnered with the Michigan chapter of the National Diversity Council to deliver two trainings that promoted the intersectionality of disability and diversity. This collaboration led to opening opportunities and potential for

vocational rehabilitation supports to universities, businesses, and people with disabilities across the nation.

- MRS recommended at least ten VR customers to Dell’s Neurodiversity Hiring Program, a program modeled after Hewlett Packard and Microsoft’s neurodiverse hiring programs. Two candidates were accepted into the program and one MRS customer was hired earning approximately \$75,000 annually. These programs provide an alternative interview process, facilitate career readiness training, and offer internships that may lead to possible full-time career opportunities for neurodivergent job seekers. MRS’s collaboration was made in partnership with the National Employment Team, the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and the other VR programs across the country to coordinate business and talent supports and successful outcomes.
- In recognition of the 100 years of vocational rehabilitation, MRS and BSBP supported a virtual panel discussion that saw 245 attendees. Participants engaged with the director of and several featured individuals from the Hearts of Glass film that aired on PBS. This followed the first critical months of the start-up and operations of a state-of-the-art hydroponic greenhouse called Vertical Harvest (VH) located in Jackson, Wyoming. Cutting-edge food production meets social good in an ambitious experiment to provide year-round produce to a mountain town while creating meaningful careers for community members with disabilities. Hearts of Glass demonstrates the collaborative approach by State VR and community partners to meet local economic and employment needs.
- MRS received recognition in several Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation’s (CSAVR) weekly national e-newsletters:
 - “American Red Cross: Thanks to the Michigan team for introducing the American Red Cross to the NET.”
 - “Lear Corporation: Thanks to the Michigan team who has had discussions regarding the Lear talent and Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion (DEAI) initiatives.”
- Numerous virtual events including employer spotlights were hosted at the state, regional and local levels to engage businesses, VR customers, and stakeholders throughout the year as well as during National Disability and

Employment Awareness Month in October 2020. During the month of October more than 23 events were held locally, regionally, or statewide on topics including disability etiquette, interview strategies, finding job opportunities using virtual resources, stress management, mental health and mindfulness, inclusive hiring strategies, service animals in public places, and ergonomics in a hybrid work environment. Events hosted by VR were attended by over 1,500 individuals in just October of 2020.

- Michigan VR also hosted numerous cost-free public educational events and programs throughout FY2021, which include National Disability and Employment Awareness Month events in October. These events ranged in topics from the ADA and the Workers' Disability Compensation Act, the ADA and public spaces, the ADA and housing, accessibility and the ADA Accessibility Guideline Assessment (ADAAG), resume writing, and the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP).
- VR provided customized staff training and events to businesses upon request, including training for Fifth 3rd Bank, American House, American Red Cross, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Comerica Bank, Henry Ford Health System, MESSA, Michigan State University, Sysco, and many other businesses.
- VR partnered with LEO-Workforce Development for job fairs via Brazen as well as continued job fairs via VR's platform, TAP. This includes the following NET business partners: CVS, Walgreens, Wells Fargo, Amazon, and Sodexo.

Training Center - Michigan Career and Technical Institute

- Within MRS, MCTI is a statewide post-secondary school and residential facility that provides specialized vocational training and comprehensive rehabilitation services to help individuals with disabilities prepare for competitive employment and self-sufficiency. MCTI is accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE) and Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). MCTI features the following 13 trade training programs including Automotive Technology, Cabinetmaking/Millwork, Certified Nursing Assistant, Commercial Printing, Construction, Culinary Arts, Custodial, Grounds Maintenance and Landscaping, Industrial Electronics, Information Technology, Machine Technology, Pharmacy Technician, and Retail Marketing.

- All MCTI occupational training programs utilize an Occupational Advisory Council (OAC) of external members from business and industry. The OAC reviews training programs objectives, lengths, competencies, curriculums, equipment, job opportunities and assist in aligning resources to meet the needs of youth, adults, and employers. Students attending MCTI come from all 83 counties and are referred by MRS, BSBP and Veteran's Affairs. Prior to enrollment, many students have received transition services while in high school. MCTI starts students in Career Assessment Services to assess and evaluate individual abilities, aptitudes, and interests.
- During the 20-21 school year, MCTI served 170 (29% of the total student population) students identified as individuals with ASD as a primary diagnosis, as well as 145 students with Specific Learning Disabilities (24%) and 105 students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (18%). ASD is also the top disability-type served by the school. MCTI had notable results with a 99% graduation rate, 87% employment rate, and 100% classroom retention rate.
- Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) received \$19 million in funding for apprenticeships in FY2021. MRS/MCTI implemented its first Certified Nursing Assistant apprenticeship pilot with Advantage Living and the Apprenticeship Institute. MCTI is also a partner in the Michigan Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Network (MI-YARN) program, committed to 124 apprentices in the next four years.
- Infrastructure investment: MRS approved essential MCTI facilities maintenance projects necessary for effective, safe operations for students and staff. Several projects were initiated in FY2021 and will continue into FY2022. MCTI expects there to be no interruptions to either student living or training program and curriculum facilitation.
- Several MRS customers and counselors participated in the virtual Career and Technical Education Month event with the Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II.
- Brian Smith, program developer with Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI), co-presented with Kevin Chau, talent development liaison with Workforce Development, at the Michigan Occupational Special Populations Associations (MOSPA) spring conference held May 7, 2021.

The joint presentation highlighted innovative strategies for developing non-traditional Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs and featured best practices and successful methods for increasing RA opportunities in occupations that are non-traditional apprenticeship trades. The presentation included RA fundamentals, MCTI RA programs and services, and USDOL Mi-YARN apprenticeship expansion grant opportunities.

- MCTI facilitated several virtual informational sessions. While MCTI was not able to offer on-campus tours and visits earlier in the year, virtual information sessions were made available via teams to VR customers, their families and MRS staff.

Innovation and Special Programs

- Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO)/MRS, in partnership with Michigan State University, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and Southern University in Baton Rouge has been awarded a \$15.8 million federal grant to support the development and use of career pathways to assist vocational rehabilitation-eligible individuals with disabilities to advance their careers. The Disability Innovation Fund – Career Advancement Initiative Model grant funds are from the U.S. Department of Education’s Rehabilitation Services Administration. Funds will be used over a five-year period to develop and use career pathways in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine that benefit racial, ethnic, and other marginalized individuals with disabilities. The grant will serve 850 customers between the efforts of Michigan and Louisiana.
- Twenty-seven Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) parks, an additional eleven sites from last year, hosted summer work programming for numerous youth and students with disabilities. An inter-agency cash transfer agreement with the DNR generated \$293,428 in federal match, which was used to serve students and provide work-based learning experiences and employment skill-building in partnership with the DNR.
- MRS is part of the Michigan Interagency Transition Team (MITT), a state-level, cross-agency collaborative infrastructure developed to align

supports and services that ensures a seamless transition for all students with disabilities in the K-12 system (up to age 26) into adult life.

- In partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services - Children's Service Agency (MDHHS-CSA), MRS provides vocational rehabilitation services for adjudicated youth with disabilities at two state-run residential facilities. This project aims to lower recidivism rates, provide workplace readiness training, and increase employment outcomes for adjudicated youth returning to the community. An inter-agency cash transfer agreement MDHHS-CSA generated \$230,571 in federal match to serve this population.

Key Highlights from FY2021

- The Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity initiated in July 2021 a phased return-to-office plan. This plan invited and encouraged MRS staff to return to their official workspaces, allowed counselors to meet with customers for in-person appointments, and afforded flexibilities for community-based activities, such as visiting schools, trial work sites, or facilitating business services. This effort included the collection, organization, and submission of information for roughly 40 locations to help plan for a safe return to the workplace and in-person customer services, including the delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) and barriers to protect staff and the public.
- MRS workgroup completed recommendations for achieving compliance with Rehabilitation Services Administration's Policy Directive 19-03 regarding the validity, accuracy and reliability of reported program data.
- MRS and University of Scranton co-facilitated a virtual panel discussion February 2020. The event highlighted the success of individuals who are neurodiverse through the power of partnerships, family, and the business community. The event featured an MRS customer, Ethan Idzior, who previously completed an internship with HP at their Idaho headquarters. The invitation was extended to Michigan Legislators.
- The MRS Annual Champion Awards ceremony were held virtually October 21, 2020. The event recognized 11 award recipients, including MRS customers, businesses, and community partners. The event included several special guests to celebrate the occasion, including

Governor Gretchen Whitmer, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, and State Representative Julie Calley.

- MRS Southeast Division initiated monthly virtual “First Friday” events, which were designed to engage customers and provide them with relevant information related to employment acquisition and retention, promoting informed decision making, as well as increasing participation in the VR process. VR staff, community leaders, and partners, including WIOA core and strategic partners participated in and/or facilitated these events.
- MRS and the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition implemented a loan program to provide iPads that fulfilled a vocational need for individuals with disabilities who lacked access the internet or hardware to access the internet. The program was intended to assist in narrowing the digital divide of access to and familiarity with internet communication technologies that is pervasive between geographies, income levels, and disability status.
- MRS Detroit Renaissance District Rehabilitation Counselor Omar Deadwilder was nominated as the National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC) 2021 recipient of the *TK Bridges Practitioner Award*. The award, presented virtually at the NAMRC annual conference Friday, July 16, 2021, acknowledges and honors those who:
 - Are engaged in direct service delivery in rehabilitation as counselors, technicians or specialists, supervisors or managers;
 - Have provided extended, dedicated and exemplary service to persons with disabilities from culturally diverse backgrounds; and
 - Demonstrate a commitment to professionalism and competence in their field.
- A new learning management system, YesLMS, was initiated June 9, 2021, to all MRS staff. The system replaces the former MRS e-Learn system as an electronic learning management platform.
- MRS maintained monthly meetings with both Centers for Independent Living and Incompass Michigan members, including community rehabilitation organizations. These meetings afforded dialogue between the partner and MRS to enhance service delivery to VR customers.
- MRS asked by the CSAVR Chief Executive Officer to participate as one of four states to serve on the Rehabilitation Services Administration’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act state plan redesign work group.

MRS to join Texas, California, and Connecticut in the redesign workgroup effort, which has potential implications nationally for other state vocational rehabilitation programs.

FY2021 Federal Awards

Grant	Dollar Amount
US Department of Education, Office of Special Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)	
Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Grant	\$ 99,313,415
Re-allotment Award	\$ 2,500,000
Total VR Grants	\$101,813,415
Pre-ETS Reserve (Total VR Grants X 15%)	\$ 15,272,012
US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL)	
Independent Living (IL) Part B	\$ 350,303
Assistive Technology	\$ 731,475

Fiscal Responsibility

- MRS received Social Security vocational rehabilitation service cost reimbursements for FY2021 in the amount of \$5,886,853.
- Program income generated by MCTI for FY2021 totaled \$203,309, which included Pell and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) grants.
- For FY2021, MRS fully met the 21.3 percent non-federal VR match requirement of \$27,555,600.
- The Supported Employment grants totaling \$455,854 were relinquished to the US Department of Education due to the complicated matching formula and requirements of these grants. Although the grant funds were relinquished, program efforts were maintained to ensure that services were available and provided to those with the most significant disabilities.

MRS Contact Information

MRS web page: www.michigan.gov/MRS

Toll-free voice: 800-605-6722

Toll-free TTY: dial 711 and provide the relay operator with the toll-free number 800-605-6722

Email: MRS-CustomerAssistance@michigan.gov