

Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services (MCRS)

FY2019 Annual Report (10/01/2018 to 09/30/2019)

December 31, 2019

Prepared by:

Carol Bergquist, Ph.D., MCRS Chairperson

Jacqueline Tahtinen, M.A., MCRS Vice Chairperson

MICHIGAN COUNCIL FOR REHABILITATION SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2019 (10/01/2018 – 09/30/2019)

MCRS PURPOSE

The Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services (MCRS) gives advice to and works in strategic partnership with Michigan's two Designated State Units (DSUs) for providing Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services, the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) and Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). MCRS members provide an external, consumer-oriented perspective when working in collaboration with BSBP and MRS to design and implement policy and programs. The MCRS also offers customers of VR services, other citizens with disabilities, and advocates, a formal yet readily accessible mechanism to influence the direction of Michigan's VR programs. The MCRS is Michigan's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), as set forth in federal mandates within the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), its implementing regulations, and Michigan's Executive Order 2012-10 and 2019-13. These documents describe the work of the Council and the required member composition for Governor appointments. The appointed Council members volunteer their time. For more details and references, please visit the MCRS website Michigan.gov/MCRS or call the MCRS office at 517-241-0393.

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

MCRS Vision: BSBP and MRS will provide VR services utilizing service delivery models that are respectful, equitable and effective in achieving meaningful employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

MCRS MEMBERSHIP

Except for the DSU 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. The composition of the Council is set forth in the WIOA and consists of at least 15 people who voluntarily serve to represent specific disability entities from across Michigan. The MCRS member list, presented below, is inclusive of all people who served from 10/01/2018 to 09/30/2019. Governor Gretchen Whitmer has recently appointed several new members with terms beginning in 2020. Information about the FY2020 membership is on the MCRS website.

Governor Appointed Members Serving in During FY2019

Robin Bennett of Canton, representing the Statewide Independent Living Council (MiSILC) – Resigned 12/31/2018

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

Sheryl Diamond of Lansing, representing the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education – MCRS Secretary and Executive Team

Carrie Dudek of Davison, representing Disability Advocacy Groups – MCRS Treasurer and Executive Team

Trina Edmondson of Six Lakes, representing Disability Advocacy Groups

Tiffany Guthrie of Alma, representing the Parent and Training Information Center – Executive Team Member at Large

Brenda Henige of East Lansing, representing Current or Former Applicants for or Recipients of Public VR Services – Executive Team Member at Large

Michael Miller of Homer, representing Business, Industry and Labor

Steve Purdue of Traverse City, representing Business, Industry and Labor – Term Expired 12/31/2018

Michael Poyma of Williamston, representing Disability Advocacy Groups – Term Expired 12/31/2018

Anne Riddering of Novi, representing Business, Industry and Labor – Term Expired 12/31/2018

Brian Sabourin of Midland, representing the Client Assistance Program – Term Expired 12/31/2018

David Szyldowski of Alpena, representing Community Rehabilitation Programs

Jackie Tahtinen of Pelkie, representing Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors – MCRS Vice Chairperson and Executive Team

Jennipher Wiebold of Kalamazoo, representing Disability Advocacy Groups

MCRS 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

Karsten Bekemeier, Policy Unit Manager, Michigan Rehabilitation Services

MCRS Administrative Support

Nichole Lepley, Michigan Rehabilitation Services

FY2019 a Year of Empowering Change

For the last several years, MCRS administrative responsibilities were fulfilled by a fulltime Executive Director. The Council's independent office suite was located in the Lansing area. MCRS grant funded fiscal responsibilities were handled through a third-party fiscal agent, most recently MARO (rebranded to Incompass Michigan) followed by MiSILC. Unexpectedly, with a 30-day notice, MiSILC terminated the fiscal agent contract, effective February 4, 2019. With this short notice, MCRS was unsuccessful in attempts to secure another fiscal agent. This sudden change resulted in an immediate review of MCRS' organization, processes, outcomes, and resource plan expenditures. Following discussions among MCRS members and DSU (MRS and BSBP) staff, a collaborative decision was made that more effective and efficient operations could be achieved through utilizing DSU resources and staff (DSUs are the federal grant recipients), to support MCRS in its administrative and fiscal functions. The Council terminated the Executive Director position and closed the office. This change resulted in significantly reducing operational costs, while empowering the MCRS membership with more decision-making influence and direct communication with each DSU, including a range of interactions across a variety of staff levels and geographic regions.

Through this new collaborative partnership, established one quarter into FY2019, MCRS has achieved the federal mandates by directly 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 information in user friendly formats. MCRS analysis of these documents, as well as customer and constituent contacts, members directly informed State level VR planning and decision making. For MCRS administrative support, MRS has provided designated time of a Rehabilitation Analyst, housed within the MRS Policy Unit, who serves as the primary contact person for the Council. She assists MCRS members with various technical and clerical tasks, helps with Council compliance with the Open Meetings Act, assures accessibility of documents and website, participates in quarterly Business Meetings, and facilitates necessary liaison communication with various State personnel, thus offering seamless support. To date, this arrangement has been very effective. During the last three quarters of FY2019, MCRS, MRS and BSBP committed to and achieved 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

- Following the change in structure, the expiration of terms for four members and the resignation of one member in December 2018, elections for MCRS officers and the Executive Team were held. The newly elected four officers and two "members at large" comprise the current Executive Team, who are identified in the Membership List. With a new Governor elected in November, 2018, appointments to fill open positions in the federally mandated membership, would occur at the Governor's discretion during FY2019. Current MCRS members would fulfill the remainder of their appointed terms.
- Under new leadership, the 10 continuing MCRS members decided to utilize an ad hoc committee structure to do the work of the Council, rather than the past standing

committee structure. This would also allow for an interesting mix of people participating on short term focused work groups to achieve specific goals. Such groups would also offer more members leadership opportunities as ad hoc “Chairs”, based on interests and expertise. Examples of work groups include the “FY2019 MCRS Annual Report”, the “MCRS Response to Michigan’s Unified State Plan”, the “MRS Customer Satisfaction Report Review”, and “Expanding Options for Gathering Customer Satisfaction Information”.

The reorganization of the MCRS resulted in identifying needs for professional learning opportunities for members to gain knowledge about the role and function of a State Rehabilitation Council and Michigan’s VR system. Learning opportunities included:

- Three MCRS members of the Executive Team participated in the three national conference sequence of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC), the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB), in Bethesda during April 2019.
- During the NCSRC Conference, three members facilitated a World Café activity, which engaged all participants in a collaborative dialog about building a strong SRC. The World Café is based on the assumption that ... “People already have within them the wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges; that the answers we need are available to us; and that we are Wiser Together than we are alone.” Through dividing into small groups that responded to specific questions, interesting conversation was generated and creative ideas were shared about how each SRC could develop a strong foundation, create an effective State VR – SRC partnership, and build a unified SRC membership.
- Sherry Taylor, Vice President/Treasurer of the NCSRC, utilized teleconference format for an on-line learning event “SRC 101: The Basics” for all MCRS members on May 21, 2019. Her presentation was followed by an interactive Q&A that was very informative.
- Four MCRS members participated in “re: con”, Michigan’s premier statewide VR conference in November 2018, and three members participated in MARO’s VR Leadership Conference in June 2019. Both conferences were opportunities to learn about Michigan’s VR community, and statewide and national perspectives, as participants and presenters represented a variety of state level agencies, local organizations, people with disabilities and advocacy groups.
- The MCRS Chairperson and Vice Chairperson have been active at the national level with NCSRC. In addition to facilitating the World Café, they participated in regularly scheduled national conference calls to learn about how other SRCs function. The NCSRC

website is also a valuable source of current SRC training and technical assistance information. The MCRS ET is utilizing this information to design an Orientation for new members in FY2020.

- 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, the VR process and progress, and measuring outcomes of serving students with disabilities through Pre-Employment Transition Services.
- The most poignant example of the effectiveness of the MCRS, MRS and BSBP partnership, was collaboration in preparing for visits to Capitol Hill during CSAVR in April 2019. MCRS members, MRS and BSBP staff worked together through several meetings and conference calls to discuss and agree on important messages, gather data, prepare materials, and identify Senators and Representatives with whom the group wanted to meet. Group configurations were organized and reorganized to best provide the most meaningful discussions with each legislator on the meeting list. Finally, the group felt ready. All planned Hill visits were completed, as were a few impromptu meetings. At the end of the day, all agreed that the visits were successful, and the day together was personally and professionally significant, energizing and fun! The relationships the group formed have continued and encouraged conversations that matter long after the Hill visits.

The following section summarizes the Council's FY2019 activities and accomplishments under required MCRS mandates.

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 is an active participant in MRS Policy Cadre meetings. All members are advised about the key topic for each Cadre meeting, and may attend based on their interest and availability.
- Two MCRS Members are active participants on the 2019 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) Team. Another member completed a CSNA Stakeholder interview regarding the MCRS and the impact of her membership role. At least three other members were interviewed as stakeholders because of their professional work roles.

- In October 2018, MCRS members and MRS staff facilitated the powerful “Champion Awards” Ceremony, which honored the successful outcomes of several MRS customers and business partners throughout Michigan.
- MCRS also participated in BSBP’s “Achievement Honor Roll Awards” which empowered customers through recognition of their exemplary goal achievements in employment and/or independent living after vision loss”. Honorees were nominated by BSBP staff, for attaining independence through the diverse set of quality services offered by BSBP. Talking with Honorees about their struggles and successes created a most memorable day.
- Two members participated in BSBP’s “Annual Stakeholder Meeting” in Lansing on May 17, 2019.

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.*

- The MCRS Chairperson is participating in the MRS “Rate Restructuring” Team, a significant statewide initiative that kicked off in FY2019 and will continue through FY2020.
- During several Business Meetings, MCRS members, and 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. MCRS received the MRS 2018 Customer Satisfaction Report, and has established an ad hoc work group to review the report and lead a discussion at the February 13, 2020, Business Meeting.
- BSBP uses a variety of methods to capture Customer Satisfaction throughout their service delivery system. BSBP staff is interested in working with MCRS in exploring innovative, accessible and engaging ways of capturing satisfaction data. MCRS members formed an ad hoc work group to explore options in FY2020.
- To disseminate information about MCRS, members hosted a Vendor Booth at the November 2018 re: con conference. While hosting, they took the opportunity to solicit input from attendees visiting the booth through their completion of a brief survey. Questions focused on identifying the greatest needs of people with disabilities relating to employment, and the greatest challenges for employers and service providers as they assisted people with disabilities seeking employment.

Results of this informal survey were shared with the DSUs at the February 2019 meeting, and summarized in a written report.

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.*

- All MCRS members were invited to participate in the MRS Policy Cadre meeting on 9/12/19 that was focused on Eligibility Determination. Several members participated.
- The Vice Chair is a member of the MRS Policy Cadre. At each Business Meeting she presents information about the topics of recent meetings and the focus of the upcoming Cadre meetings. These discussions are interactive with MRS staff and MCRS members. Members have an open invitation to join any Cadre meeting of interest. All meetings are accessible through statewide teleconferences.
- 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. Each actively participates in the Business Meetings by providing an overview of VR process and outcome statistics and a discussion of current or emerging issues. Everyone present has the opportunity to engage in open conversations.
- Each Director appointed a high-level administrator who serves as that DSU's Liaison to the MCRS. Liaisons are directly involved with MCRS members, and provide timely access to information requested by the Council or new State or Federal developments about which MCRS should know. When requested, Liaisons readily participate with the MCRS Executive Team and ad hoc work group meetings.
- MCRS Business Meetings offer the opportunity for all members to access information, participate in open Q&A interactions with DSU staff, and offer their personal perspectives and those of the constituent groups they represent. Throughout FY2019, requested information has been provided by each DSU in a timely manner.

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).*

- The Chairperson of the SILC was appointed to the MCRS in August 2019. Other disability agencies and organizations are represented by members including Special Education, the Parent Training Center, Centers for Independent Living, Community Rehabilitation Organizations, the Client Assistance Program, and Veteran’s VR.
- One of the MCRS priorities for FY2020 is to learn about other disability- related councils in Michigan and to coordinate activities. Some years ago, Michigan disability organizations worked together to create a “Common Disability Agenda”, a written document that guided multiple efforts. The Council would like to recreate this collaboration to identify and work together to achieve common goals benefitting people with disabilities across Michigan.
- Two MCRS members attended the “Family Engagement Training on Employment First” in Marquette. Hosted by MARO and offered at various locations throughout Michigan, this training allowed for interaction among students with disabilities, parents, teachers, MRS and BSBP Counselors, and staff from disability service agencies. The daytime skill building, “train the trainer” presentation and the evening parent and student discussions, were rich sources awareness and accurate information. MCRS members talked about the role and function of the Council. The entire group discussed the need for collaborative employment programming for students with disabilities in the Upper Peninsula.

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 the four required Quarterly Business Meetings in FY2019. Based on the travel convenience of the majority of MCRS members, all meetings were held in the Lansing area on November 13, 2018, February 12, 2019, June 11, 2019 and September 10, 2019.
- In addition, an Emergency Meeting was held in Lansing on July 12, 2019. The purpose of this meeting was to review and prepare comments about the amended State Plan for both MRS and BSBP regarding Executive Order – No. 2019-13, which transferred both DSUs to Michigan’s newly created Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). Public comments were also sought. An interactive discussion ensued among all

participants and a written response to the DSUs and RSA was submitted by MCRS members.

- MCRS complies with Michigan’s Open Meetings Act requirements. Public Announcements, Agendas and Minutes of all meetings are posted on the MCRS website and in other locations as required. Agendas and Minutes document opportunities for Public Comment. The Council is concerned about the Act’s requirements that restrict members from full participation in Business Meetings or having their vote count, unless they are physically present at the meeting. Members feel not providing telecommunication options for full participation is discriminatory. Learning more about the Open Meetings Act, the practices used by other Michigan Councils and SRCs in other states is the focus of an ad hoc work group.

MCRS Plans for FY2020

FY2019 was a year of change and reorganization for MCRS. As of December 2019, six new members were recently appointed by Governor Whitmer and there are four continuing members. New members will attend their first MCRS meeting in February 2020. The Council is excited about increasing membership and will work with Governor Whitmer’s Appointment Office to reach out to people who might fill open positions, specifically Business, Industry and Labor. The MCRS Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, along with one member at large of the Executive Team (ET) continue with their appointments. MCRS will hold an election at the February Meeting to fill vacated ET positions. Members selected “learning more about transition services for youth with disabilities as they move from school to adult life”, as a priority for FY2020. In May 2020 MCRS is meeting at MRS’s Michigan Career Technical Institute (MCTI) in Plainwell and the August Business Meeting is at the BSBP Training Center in Kalamazoo. Additional goals for FY2020 include increasing Council membership to full capacity and collaborating with other disability related groups to achieve common goals for Michigan’s citizens with disabilities.

**Designated State Units
Summary Statistics
For the Fiscal Year 2019 ended September 30, 2019**

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 (DLEO):

- 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 clients are blind citizens of the state. Eligibility can vary based on program requirements, but all clients 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 are primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and responsible for the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program of the State agency (DLEO), as mandated under 34 CFR § 361.

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 is currently in a benchmarking phase to establish a basis for negotiating goals in program year 2020 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020).

- 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

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 all the advantages of a full, independent life.

BSBP FY 2019 Performance Highlights

- Vocational Rehabilitation served 921 consumers.
- Placed 90 individuals in Competitive Integrated Employment.
- Staff served more than 500 individuals requiring independent living skills.
- Pre-Employment Transition Services Unit served approximately 360 students.
- BSBP staff designed and delivered 36 transition programs which prepared students for post-secondary training and competitive integrated employment.
- BSBP has and continues to focus on cultural change, core values and Pre-ETS
- BSBP has dedicated time and energy to a “back to basics” approach to providing vocational rehabilitation services, and building upon those necessary and basic fundamental skills to prepare Job seekers for competitive integrated employment
- Strategic Planning Initiatives at the Training Center and joint planning with Field Services
- Use of Labor Market Information and The Career Index Plus for development of Individualized Plans for Employment
- Start of Customized Employment service delivery model pilots in collaboration with MRS, WINTAC, ODEP and other Employment First partners.
- Continued momentum from investment in Motivational Interviewing and Pre-ETS Training of both Staff and Partners
- BEP continued momentum of increasing operator income and modernization of vending machines

BSBP Financial Numbers

BSBP saw its VR Grant increase by 2% year over year and its ILOB Grant decrease by 1.4% year over year. Both are formula grants, however the ILOB grant is fixed and has not been increased since 2000 while the VR is adjusted for CPI and other factors. The other grants approximated the same amounts as the previous year. The Supported Employment grants were partially relinquished and returned to the Treasury due to the complicated matching formula and requirements of these grants. Most states are returning the Supported Employment grants as a result.

BSBP was fully matched for FY19 and was also awarded additional VR federal funds through the RSA Re-Allotment process.

FY19 Financial Recap

Grant	Dollar Amount
VR Grant	\$16,968,652
Re-allotment Award	\$ 1,249,000
Total VR Grants	\$18,217,652
Pre-ETS Reserve (Total VR Grants X 15%)	\$ 2,732,648
Supported Employment - Adult	\$ 30,542
Supported Employment - Youth	\$ 30,542
IL Older Blind	\$ 995,286
IL Part B	\$ 190,942

BSBP Field Services - Vocational Rehabilitation including Pre-ETS, Independent Living Older Blind/Independent Living Part B

VR continues to support many consumers in post-secondary institutions providing college sponsorships in a variety of majors linked to labor market and in-demand careers. Additionally, counselors attended IEP's, met with TCVI's as well as provided training to ISD and Workforce partners. The Pre-ETS Unit was re-organized with the a Statewide Pre-ETS Consultant and Departmental Analyst added to the Statewide Manager's team. BSBP's Pre-ETS programs for FY19 increased in both number and quality.

During FY19, VR struggled filling open positions from retirements and turnover. BSBP experienced difficulty in backfilling positions with qualified candidates in certain parts of the state – Flint and Gaylord for example. Field Services expects to be fully staffed by the end of 2019.

BSBP Training Center

High Standards of Excellence:

- 247 Total Participants Served
- 178 Participants Served at the Training Center
- 69 Participants Served through the Mini Adjustment Program (3 mini programs in various locations)
- 62 VR Participants / 24 IL Participants / 91 Pre-ETS Participants / 1 Potentially Eligible
- 17 Participants with early conclusion
- 5 of 17 Participants with early conclusion returning
- New certificates provided to those exiting program
- Participant Satisfaction Survey: 97% of Participants responded favorably when asked to rate their overall experience at the Training Center. 3% indicated needing improvement. Total # of participants who responded to the survey: 39

Performance:

- Number of visitors in PY 18 partial- from 1/1/19 through 6/30/19 – 674
- Total # of referrals received & Processed- 168
- Total # of referrals cancelled/withdrawn- 26

Pre-Employment Transition Services Programming:

- College Assessment
- R U Ready
- Camp Transition Zone- TC Staff Assisted
- PSRP • Socially Savvy
- 3-D Printing

Events

- 3- 2 Day Community Partner Trainings: 18 Agencies

Disability Network of Mid-Michigan	New Horizons
Elite Career Solutions Motor City	Northwest MI Works!
Goodwill Industries of Mid-MI	Preferred Employment & Living Supports
Goodwill Industries of Southwestern MI	Selective Case Management Inc.
Grand Traverse Industries	Social Security Community Partner
Hope Network	STEP
Judson Center	TBAISD
MRC Industries Inc.	Team Wellness
MRS- BND	WMU

- Open House- Community Engagement

Braille and Talking Book Library

BTBL circulates specially formatted books to over 11,000 Michigan residents who cannot read standard print material due to a visual, physical, or reading disability. BTBL delivered over 550,000 digital cartridges and sent 4,167 volumes of braille books to consumers in FY18.

Software System upgrade: BTBL has contracted for a new library software system called WebREADS that is anticipated to be in use early in 2020. Benefits of this system for the Braille and Talking Book Library (BTBL) include:

- The WebREADS project will allow BTBL to send book cartridges containing multiple (up to 10) books identified by patron requests, favorite subjects and favorite authors list.
- Patrons of the library are better served by having multiple books to read in their

hands, and not having to return by mail as many cartridges each year.

- There will be fewer lost cartridges due to reduced volumes. Estimated cost savings is \$20,000 based on 2,500 fewer lost cartridges annually.

Libraries Without Walls: BTBL held our 6th biennial adaptive technology conference at Lansing Community College West Campus on June 4, 2019. More than 150 BTBL patrons, educators, family members and librarians were in attendance to hear keynote speaker Professor Emeritus Paul Ponchillia, former Director of Rehabilitation Services at Western Michigan University. Participants had opportunity to attend three additional workshops from a selection of twelve topics and to discuss adaptive technology products with vendors.

Business Enterprise Program

Increased operator profitability: BEP continues to evaluate sales, costs, and profit margins of our sites and facilities. We have built higher producing facilities by closing extremely low revenue sites and realigning sites with existing facilities. Thus, increasing operator’s average and median incomes. Increasing income has brought more candidates to our program. Three students completed training in November 2019. All 3 have successfully bid on facilities. This leaves BEP with 6 vacant facilities on the bid line. We have 5 students starting class in March 2020. We have 3 potential students for September 2020 class.

BEP BY THE NUMBERS				
	GROSS SALES PROGRAM TOTAL	NET PROFIT	AVERAGE OPERATOR INCOME	MEDIAN OPERATOR INCOME
2015	\$9,625,563.00	\$2,493,024.00	\$36,131.00	\$28,425.00
2016	\$9,598,524.00	\$2,587,391.00	\$40,428.00	\$34,409.00
2017	\$10,066,691.00	\$2,925,360.00	\$48,756.00	\$44,713.00
2018	\$10,326,499.00	\$3,126,877.00	\$53,912.00	\$49,705.00
2019*	\$9,284,127.00	\$3,127,012.00	\$59,000.00	\$49,377.00
<i>*denotes 2019 is only a partial year. Numbers reflect the first 10 months of the year.</i>				
2019 projections	\$10,831,481.50	\$3,648,180.67	\$68,833.33	\$57,606.50

BSBP FY20 Strategic Plan

- Transformative services and modernization of systems
- Training Center linkage to Field Services and Employment goals of VR participants
- Pre-ETS Unit reorganization and engagement with the local educational agencies
- VR service delivery models such as customized employment
- Braille and Talking Book Library modernization of patron case management system
- Business Enterprise Program re-organization and recruitment of new blind vendors
- Other modernization and process improvements

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.

FISCAL YEAR 2019 PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS:

- 6,352 Michigan residents with disabilities to obtain, retain, or advance in competitive integrated employment
- Served more than 5,930 businesses
- Almost \$600,000 saved by the business community for technical guidance and support services rendered by MRS
 - Served 48,098 individuals with disabilities
 - Served 23,558 individuals most significantly disabled
 - Served 7,109 individuals significantly disabled

TOP FIVE INDUSTRY SECTORS SERVED BY MRS IN FY '19 INCLUDE:

- Public Administration
- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade
- Educational Services
- Health Care and Social Assistance

TOP REQUESTED SERVICES FROM BUSINESS:

1. Accommodation / ADA services for Retention, Including Worksite Evaluation
2. Employee Recruitment
3. Windmills Disability Awareness Training
4. On-The-Job Training
5. ADA/Architectural Barrier Evaluation/Consultation

CRITERIA FOR BUSINESS LIST:

1. Businesses that accessed one or more core agency services during the fiscal year as well as by amount of agency resource allocation and collaborative efforts:

SOME OF THE BUSINESS MRS SERVED IN FY '19 INCLUDE:

- Amway
- Beaumont Health
- Belle Tire
- Berkley School District
- FedEx
- Flagstar Bank
- Henry Ford Health System
- Lumberman's

- Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS)
- ChemTrend
- Comerica
- Consumers Energy
- DTE
- Dean Transportation
- MiWorks! Southwest
- Spartan Nash
- State of Michigan & Departments
- TJ Maxx / Marshalls
- University of Michigan
- Walgreens

The MRS Business Network Division (BND) facilitated services to more than 5,930 businesses across Michigan. The BND provided roughly \$48,000 in billable services under Public Act 315 and generated more than \$40,500 in agency revenue – funds that directly benefit public VR customers. Referrals included Auto No Fault, Long-term Disability, Workers’ Compensation and Business Services.

MICHIGAN CAREER AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) is a post-secondary residential facility that provides specialized vocational training and comprehensive rehabilitation services to help citizens with disabilities prepare for competitive employment and self-sufficiency.

The following are Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 MCTI Accomplishments:

High Standards of Excellence

- 362 Graduates
- 87% Employment Rate
- All trade training programs have met COE benchmarks for Completion, Placement and Licensure
- All 13 trade training programs approved through Michigan Talent Connect

Record Setting Performance

- Highest number of graduates - 362
- Highest number of non-duplicated enrollment in the trades, in the last five years – 537
- Highest classroom retention rate – 99%

INNOVATION AND EXPANSION

Since 2014, MCTI has exported program services to offsite locations across the state, to provide more comprehensive, collaborative programming taking training programs to Michigan locations that need them the most.

The goal with MCTI’s community-based training with both transition youth and adults organizes services and training programs to meet the needs from a dual customer-approach; individuals with disabilities and Michigan businesses. Many individuals who otherwise would not attend MCTI appreciate the opportunity for short-term programming that leads to a post-secondary credential, state-certification, and employment.

- **C.N.A. Expansion Projects:** MCTI has had great success with their C.N.A. community expansion projects. These projects proved to be an effective, efficient training that aligns services from multiple partners. Over the last four years, they have exported program services to offsite locations to provide more comprehensive, collaborative programming, and have delivered a total of 34 sessions across the state: Battle Creek, Benton Harbor, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and Muskegon graduating 347 students with 309 (89%) passing the state licensing exam and 261 (75%) are working. MCTI has two cohorts still in progress in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids.
- **Oceana Food Producers – Apprenticeship:** The Registered Apprentice Program (RAP) in Food Processing with the Oceana County Food Producers has been established with MCTI as RAP Intermediary and provider of Related Technical Instruction (RTI). The plan is to develop a School-to-Registered Apprenticeship (SRA) as part of this RAP.
- **Building Trades:** MCTI partnered with Community Action of Allegan County, Home Builders Institute, United Way, and Michigan Works! for the past 2 years on the Dual Project. The goal is to incorporate entry-level Pre-Apprenticeship Certification Training combined with affordable housing. MCTI was the training provider, developing the USDOL Approved Pre-Apprenticeship Certification Training (PACT). First home was built in June 2019.

MCTI is currently part of a MICA grant to combine accessible training with an affordable housing initiative involving the City of Kalamazoo, LISC, Kalamazoo Promise, Education, NACD, Workforce Development, etc.

- **Information Technology:** MCTI is providing technical assistance in developing a CISCO Cybersecurity Training program in Metro Detroit in partnership with Living and Learning Enrichment Center, corporations, and CISCO. Training is being offered at Madonna University and currently have 14 individuals enrolled. MCTI is both a CISCO and CompTIA Training Academy and has a complete library of on-line curriculum.

INNOVATION AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS DIVISION

The Innovation Unit develops, supports and executes bureau priorities. The following include performance highlights from FY 19:

- MRS and DNR partnered for the fifth year to provide work-based learning experiences at 49 county and state parks in Michigan. This program provides students with disabilities paid work experience from June to August to build confidence through valuable real-world training. Students focus on developing essential employability skills, like problem solving or teamwork, and performance basic maintenance duties around the parks. In addition, these experiences provide students with marketable, transferrable skills to acquire competitive integrated employment. Through an Inter-agency Agreement (IA),

MRS and DNR provided work experiences for 275 students with disabilities in FY'19 and partnered with 28 schools.

- Innovation and Special Programs oversaw 70 Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), contracts, and grants that enhanced agency collaboration, resources, and services for agency customers. In addition, the division oversaw 156 interagency cash transfer agreements.
- Project SEARCH, an internationally recognized work-based learning and internship program for high school students, saw 17 businesses around the state. In FY 19 about 114 students with disabilities participated in three ten-week internships, which helped them to develop social and employment skills for in-demand occupations.
- Contributing and facilitating Unified State Plan development, Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, Federal monitoring coordination and corrective actions, submission of WIOA performance indicator reporting, Customized Employment initiative and special projects/initiatives
- Subject matter experts in School-to-Work Transition, Section 511 Sub-Minimum Wage, Competitive Integrated Employment, Federal match requirements, Centers for Independent Living, Community Rehabilitation Organizations, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and program evaluation.
- MRS and MDHHS Juvenile Justice partnered for the fourth year to deliver an evidence-based service delivery model resulting in lower rates of recidivism and increased education and employment outcomes for adjudicated youth returning to the community. Currently, MRS counselors are assigned to provide Pre-ETS and VR services in the following residential treatment facilities:
 - Bay Pines
 - Shawono
 - Pineview Home
 - Pathways of Hope
 - Everett Academy

Significant expansion is expected to occur in FY'20 with the addition of another large residential treatment facility.

- In February 2019, a comprehensive Benefits Counseling Pilot was jointly launched between MRS and specific Centers for Independent Living. The goal of the pilot is to educate and assist individuals receiving MRS VR services in Flint, Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids who have SSI and/or SSDI to make informed choices about how work may impact their benefits. Since the pilot began, 138 individuals received benefits counseling services covering approximately 39% of the MRS VR SSI/SSDI customers in the pilot areas. The pilot is being evaluated using pre and post tests and customer satisfaction

surveys with assistance from Project Excellence. Results will be available in FY'20 and will help guide future decisions.

- Innovation and Special Programs developed and enhanced programming to deliver services to populations identified as unserved or underserved. In Fiscal Year 2019, eight projects were approved to serve the following populations: Individuals with Autism, SSI/SSDI beneficiaries, Transition Youth, Arabic-Chaldean individuals with disabilities, and Returning Citizens.
- MRS and Michigan State University (MSU) Collaborative Careers Project is a model to support joint customers of MRS and MSU. This partnership creates opportunities to assist student to secure earn credentials to obtain high-quality employment through an ICTA. An MRS counselor is located on campus to increase student interaction and participation. The project enhances service delivery with the following partners:
 - MSU Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities
 - MSU Career Services Network
 - MSU Rehabilitation Counseling Program
 - MRS Counselor
 - MRS Business Network Division
- Through the Employment First initiative MRS has partnered with multiple agencies including BSBP, DD Council, BHDDA, Community Mental Health, and CRP leadership to initiate a Customized Employment pilot in Southeast Michigan. The pilot includes three CRPs and a total of 15 customers from both VR agencies. All CRPs completed 5 days of Customized Employment Training with one-on-one mentoring to be provided for through FY'20. VR and CRP staff received additional training in fidelity scoring to ensure fidelity to the model ensuring the best service is provided to the customer seeking employment.
 - In addition to Customized Employment pilot, Employment First initiative has brought in technical assistance with TransCen to partner with multiple agencies including BSBP, DD Council, MDE, and Community Mental Health leadership to initiate Seamless Transition model across the state. Currently there are 5 sites receiving TA and support in implementing the model with 2 sites completing the program and continue to work towards seamless employment with the most severe students.
- MRS and Western Michigan University partner to provide two programs for students with disabilities an individualized and supported introduction to postsecondary education. The first program is a semester long for students in twelfth grade or high school graduates. The students live in a dormitory on campus and participate in Pre-ETS, independent living, social skills, and paid work experience. The second program is a

weeklong program for students in tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade. The students live in a dormitory on campus to focus on Pre-ETS, independent living, social skills, identify strengths and needs in transitioning to college, and financial literacy.

- Innovation and Special Programs co-chairs the Michigan Interagency Transition Team (MITT), along with MDE. This team's focus is to align supports and services with all agencies/departments for a seamless transition for all students with disabilities in the k-12 education system.
- MRS has been benchmarking the WIOA performance indicators for two years and recently developed data dashboards to prepare for final goals from RSA. The data dashboards allow MRS to pull real time data on the performance indicators to identify opportunities for improvement and additional support to achieve success for each indicator. This data is also being used to make informed decisions on program enhancements and development to deliver high quality services leading to employment outcomes.
- The Innovation unit monitors and oversees the contract with Project Excellence at MSU for program evaluation. The areas focused on FY18 included: the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, analysis and review of the RSA-911 data (5 briefs), customer service at exit and at plan, Business Network Division business satisfaction survey, transition (pre-employment transition services), benefits planning, and evaluation of staff training.
- MRS has a technical assistance agreement with Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center. The Innovation Unit monitors and leads the project with collaboration from other units in the agency. The areas include pre-employment transition services, competitive integrated employment, workforce integration, common performance measures, Career Index Plus (labor market information) and CAVE training.
- The Innovation Unit leads the collaborative Performance Accountability Work Team focusing on implementation of the common performance measures of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). Through this team, measurable skills gain and credential attainment policy and training were developed and implemented statewide. The trainings provided by the Staff Development Unit, the Aware unit and Innovation Unit staff involved statewide in person trainings and webinar-based trainings. The team has also focused on areas that effect the WIOA performance indicators including reason for exit and characteristics at plan.
- The Innovation Unit is participating in the National Credential Attainment Cohort. Michigan with representation from Title I, II, III and IV is one of nine states that were selected to participate in a National cohort on Credential Attainment. The state

team participates in a series of virtual cohort sessions designed to provide opportunities to hear from experts in the field, engage with peers, and explore new and existing strategies. The outcomes produced throughout this cohort will enhance each state's efforts to determine which degrees, certificates, certifications, and licenses qualify as credentials using the parameters established in federal guidance.

MRS STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

1. Maximize the integration of Business and Consumers as our dual customers
2. Provision and expansion of Pre-Employment Transition Services
3. Consistent achievement of Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes
4. Continued alignment with core and strategic partners

MRS CONTACT INFORMATION:

Contact MRS via link on the MRS web page: <https://www.michigan.gov/MRS>

Contact MRS by toll-free voice: 800-605-6722

Contact MRS by toll free TTY: dial 711 and providing the relay operator with the toll-free number 800-605-6722

Contact MRS by email: MRS-CustomerAssistance@michigan.gov