

MCRS Quarterly Report - Quarter 4 (July-September 2023)
Disability Right Michigan (DRM) / Employment Team (CAP & PABSS programs)

Objective A: Improve Access and rights to services within vocational rehabilitation and centers for independent Living.

Case Consideration Criteria:

- Handled all calls related to agencies receiving vocational rehabilitation funding (e.g., MRS, CIL, BSBP, SILC).

Objective A cases summary:

- Closed- 20
- I&R- 26
- Still open - 27

Challenge Cases:

- MRS Small business cases.
- College cases
- Eligibility status cases.
- Assistive Technology cases (Hearing Aid).

Employment Team Activities -:

Systemic/Group Advocacy Project:

Q4: Staff engaged in meetings with MRS policy directors and division directors in July and September. These discussions covered various topics, including:

- Pre-ETS and the collaboration between MRS and schools.
- Eligibility issues related to MRS services.
- Clients being compelled to take loans for small businesses.
- Delay of appeal process.
- Encouragement for clients to seek employment over participating in the STEMM-UP program,
- Challenges with Trial Work Experience (TWE) placements.
- Counselors not appropriately applying comparable benefits.

CAP will continue addressing issues with MRS when policy misaligns with the Rehab Act. Additionally, MRS has requested that CAP notifies counselors when cases are closed. Consequently, CAP will send emails to the counselor, site manager, and district manager upon the conclusion of their involvement in cases, providing the effective date of closure.

Training/Outreach project:

Q4: Staff provided training to 18 new MRS counselors about DRM services and CAP/PABSS programs.

Educating Policy Makers projects:

Q4: CAP continue discussed the eligibility status with MRS policy director among the issues that MRS appears to be requiring documented diagnoses of disabilities, but this is not required by the federal regulations .CAP is continuing to engage with MRS to help MRS align its eligibility policy with the federal regulations, and CAP's view is that if MRS makes these changes, it may shorten the time it takes MRS to make eligibility determinations and it may make the MRS eligibility process less intrusive.

Q4: The CAP director continued to attend the MCRS meetings. The MCRS held its quarterly meeting on August 10, 2023. At the meeting, new MCRS members were introduced. The group then discussed reports from its partners. In the afternoon, there was a presentation of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) report.

On September 7, 2023, the MCRS held an orientation meeting for the new members. The meeting covered the MCRS's mission, goals, and activities and the MCRS members presented info about their agencies. The new members also had the opportunity to meet other MCRS members and learn about the resources that are available to them.

Objective B: Individuals with disabilities will have employment options in the competitive and integrated workforce.**Case Consideration Criteria:**

Assisted individuals with disabilities needing advocacy to gain Competitive Integrated Employment, including those in sheltered workshops and individuals who requiring work accommodations.

Challenge Cases:

- Addressed issues concerning the request of receiving work accommodations.
- Termination of employment based on an employee's disability.

Objective B cases summary:

- Closed-4
- I&R- 89
- Still open-4

Objective C: Individuals with disabilities will have access to Social Security Work Incentives**Case Consideration Criteria:**

- Handled calls from social security beneficiaries regarding work-related overpayments as a barrier to employment.
- Assisted beneficiaries experiencing issues with vocational rehab agencies (MRS, BSBP) or Disability Networks.

- Addressed calls from beneficiaries of social security regarding a lack of accommodation at work or in a post-secondary education setting resulting in a barrier to employment.
- Assisted caller with housing accessibility issues affecting employment.

Challenge Cases:

Addressed work-related overpayment cases.

Objective C cases summary:

- Closed- 19
- I&R- 10
- Still open-7

Employment Team Activities - Objective C:

Educating Policy Makers – Collaboration Activities Project:

Q4: Staff continue to meet quarterly with WIPA to discuss updates and case study. Discussed what happens to Medicare when a Childhood Disability Beneficiary (CDB) gets married to someone with no disability. POMS are not clear but appears that Medicare would be suspended, and the beneficiary should explore Freedom to Work. The team was introduced to Cathy Randall from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), who indicated that she is available for case consults for WIPA staff. Heather Meyer will be taking another position at SSA, and a new AWIC will be designated in her place within the next 2 weeks.

Objective D: Transition Needs from Post Education to Integrated, Community Employment will be Identified and Addressed

Case Consideration Criteria:

- Handled calls regarding students aged 14 or older needing transition services from MRS & BSBP.
- Assisted students with IEPs enrolled in school not receiving appropriate transition services.

Challenge Cases:

- Lack of Pre-ETS services from schools and MRS.
- Postsecondary education transition supports.

Objective D cases summary:

- Closed- 2

Employment Team Activities - Objective D:

Training/Outreach project:

staff Participated in back-to-school bash outreach activity. Staff met with foster care families, support partners, support agencies in Livingston and Genesee counties to provide information about DRM services and CAP/PABSS programs including transition services.

Systemic Activities projects:

Q4: Staff continue to attend Michigan- Association on Higher Education and Disability (MI-AHEAD) meetings were held in both August and September. The team addressing various important topics including, accommodations for test-taking, room arrangements, accessibility to braille texts, concerns related to dual enrollment students, accommodations for nursing students, plans for Disability Employment Awareness Month activities, and documentation procedures for Emotional Support Animals.

Q4: Staff met monthly with MITT members both virtually and in person. Their primary focus remained on the goals set for the year, primarily centered around the establishment of a youth council. Within this context, the team also organized workgroup meetings to advance the pilot model, the flow of services model, and the training model. There was a concerted effort to determine the optimal location and methods for housing the associated materials to support these initiatives.