

**Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)**  
**DSU Update**  
**Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services (MCRS)**  
**Thursday, February 8, 2024**

- Budget Update:

<b>Federal Grants:</b>				
<i>Vocational Rehabilitation:</i>				
FFY24				\$ 115,522,157 - est.
<i>Assistive Technology:</i>				
FFY24				\$262,501
<i>Independent Living - Title VIIB</i>				
FFY24				\$187,226
<i>Disability Innovation Funds: FFY22-FFY26</i>				\$ 15,825,520
<b>Pre-Employment Transition Services:</b>				
FFY24				\$ 17,328,324

- Performance Update:
  - PowerPoint attached.
  - Performance Chart by FY Quarters:

<b>FY 2024 Quarter 1 (Oct-Dec)</b>	
PTA New Referrals	1,000
Application	3,999
Eligibility	3,109
Service (IPE)	2,571
Exit Employed	1,600
Total Cases	19,741

- Bureau Updates:
  - Staffing summary
    - As of 01/29/24 there are:
      - 524 active staff
      - 63 positions in process
- Steve Dalton
  - MRS Establishment Policy
- Sigrid Adams
  - MRS Director Updates – as applicable
- Staff Development and Policy Division
  - Increase in capacity to fund college and vocational training
  - Initiation of project to create an online application for services
- Business Network Division (BND) Services Updates:
  - On October 30<sup>th</sup>, Tonia Peterson, Business Services Manager and Jenny Piatt, Division Director were asked to co-present with the NET Business Director, Kathy West Evans at the Fall 2023 Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), ***“How Business Relations Can Support VR in Achieving Performance Measures”***
  - In November, MRS-BND was requested by Autism Alliance of Michigan to participate and present at the ***Navigating Autism Today Conference*** in Grand Rapids. The presentation focused on employment, accommodations, and resources.
  - Multiple MRS District staff and MRS-BND Team members partnered with the local area MiWorks! for the **MiCareerQuest Southeast** at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi on Tuesday, November 14, 2023. The event hosts the region's largest interactive career exploration event for high school students.



- BND recently announced **new and newly reassigned staff**:

**Tonia Peterson** has been newly assigned as the **Program Manager working with our division Business Relations Consultants (BRCs)** statewide to help businesses become hire-ready by ensuring accessibility, diversity, and inclusive hiring practices. Tonia is also a Kooser © facilitator and a Windmills © trainer. She earned her bachelor's degrees in psychology and occupational therapy and a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling and community inclusion from Wayne State University.

**Ashley Houtz** is our **Talent Sourcing Coordinator (NEW)** with BND through the Pine Lake Fund. Her current projects include providing support to the Business Relations Consultants and Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) district staff in qualifying job-ready candidates with employer partners on a state-wide basis. Currently, she is collaborating with Prosperity Regions 4 and 6 for job ready placements and MCTI graduates. Ashley earned her Bachelor of Arts from Siena Heights University in 2020.

**Claudette Reid** has rejoined the BND through the Pine Lake Fund to serve as our agency **subject matter expert and consultant for assistive technology**. As an Occupational Therapist with BND for 24 years, her professional interests focus on the use of assistive technology for vocational accommodations as well as ergonomics and organization skills development. In her new role she will be supporting the use of assistive technology by both client and business customers through case consultation, training, and collaboration with our agency's AT Grant implementing organization, Michigan Assistive Technology Program ( [Assistive Tech Program – Michigan Disability Rights Coalition \(mymdrc.org\)](http://mymdrc.org) ).

- **Top 20 businesses who have hired MRS Customers in 2024 Qtr1:**

Employer
McDonald's
Culvers
GFL Environmental
Little Caesars Pizza
Arby's
MyMichigan Medical Center
Taco Bell
Wendy's
Green Dot Stables
US Farathane
Chip-In's Island Resort and Casino
Dollar Tree
Lakeland Medical
Motor City Casino & Hotel
Panera Bread
Children's Hospital
Compass Group USA
Detroit Diesel Remanufacturing
Gabes
Harding's Friendly Market
Jackson National Life
Kohl's
Michaels
Pizza Hut

- During the months of December/January, the Business Services Team cultivated **18 new relationships** with the following businesses:

<b>Henry Ford Health System – new division of workforce development</b>	<b>Central Michigan University-Medical Education</b>
<b>Pfizer (Kalamazoo &amp; Rochester locations)</b>	<b>ExamsWorks</b>
<b>U.S. National Parks System</b>	<b>Enriched Living AFC Home</b>
<b>PSI Repair Services</b>	<b>Meijer - Standale</b>
<b>Cabinet Works Group (HQ)</b>	<b>Tiberina Detroit, Inc.</b>
<b>Spalding DeDecker (HQ)</b>	<b>Detroit Pizza Bar</b>
<b>Iwen Tool Supply</b>	<b>KLA-Tencor Corp.</b>
<b>Fanuc America</b>	<b>Spark Access</b>
<b>Thyssen Krupp</b>	<b>Prestige Group</b>

- Strategic Initiatives Division (SID) Updates:  
Innovation Unit:

- MRS and BSBP are finalizing a Customized Employment (CE) implementation plan. It will improve upon the current CE pilot by expanding its availability and revising the current process. This implementation plan is being supported by Public Consulting Group (PCG) and involved significant internal and external stakeholder input. Increasing the availability of CE will allow more individuals with the most significant disabilities to obtain employment.
- The Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) Specialist continues to lead MRS' 15.8-million-dollar multi-year DIF grant. FY24 marks the beginning of the grant's third year and over 140 customers have been referred. Programming focuses on science, technology, engineering, math and medicine (STEMM) careers focusing on individuals from underserved populations. This partnership involves Michigan State University, and the delivery of evidence-based programming, in conjunction with job shadowing, informational interviews, and internships. Part of MRS' focus for 2024 will involve creating additional opportunities to have customers connect with businesses in STEMM fields.
- MRS began receiving technical assistance in 2023 to increase the quality and quantity of Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) students with disabilities (SWD) receive. Additionally, a focus of this work is to improve engagement and have SWDs receive additional vocational rehabilitation services from MRS beyond Pre-ETS. Several listening opportunities with staff have occurred, as well as data reviews. The MRS Innovation Pre-ETS/transition consultant is working with PCG to develop Pre-ETS outreach materials. Technical assistance and PCG are supporting their work related to process mapping, service offerings, and an implementation plan.

- MRS is using an interagency agreement it has with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to provide vocational rehabilitation services to adjudicated youth. For 2024, the goal is to serve more SWDs who are adjudicated youth. Currently, MRS and its MDHHS partners are providing Pre-ETS at both state-run facilities. Both facilities are serving more youth now than they were a year ago thanks to increased engagement and leveraging partnerships. MRS also began providing services at MDHHS contracted facility in October 2023. Currently, MRS is in talks to provide services at two additional MDHHS contracted facilities with programming expected to begin in either February or March of 2024. One of these facilities is the largest MDHHS contracted residential facility in the state so it's an exciting partnership opportunity.