

Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services (MCRS)



Quarterly Business Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 13, 2025

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), this was a virtual meeting. Attendees participated via Microsoft Teams.

Call to Order

Chairperson Carol Bergquist called the meeting to order at 9:32 am.

Member Roll Call.

Acting Secretary Kelsey Hockaday called the roll, which indicated that a quorum was present.

Attendance

Council Members Attending In-Person: None. This was a virtual meeting.

Council Members Attending Virtually or by Phone:

Carol Bergquist (Escanaba, MI), Kellie Blackwell (Holt, MI), Jonathan Bischoff, (Orion, MI), Yasmina Bouraoui (Lansing, MI), Jessica Brady (Holt, MI), Lisa Cook-Gordon (Melvin, MI), Todd Culver (East Lansing, MI), Kathy Flagstadt (Marquette, MI), Kelsey Hockaday (Midland, MI), Steve Locke, (Auburn, MI) Laurie Penfold (East Lansing, MI), and Karen Wang (Northville, MI).

Council Members Excused:

Trina Edmonson, Bill Ernzen, Elham Jahshan, Margi Williams, and Shana Washington (formerly Lewis)

Council Members Absent:

None

Ex-Officio Members:

Sigrid Adams – Michigan Rehabilitation Services. Excused absence. Did not attend.

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

DSU Liaisons Present:

Lisa Kisiel – Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (virtual – Lansing, MI)

Eric Bachmann – Michigan Rehabilitation Services (virtual – Traverse City, MI)

MCRS Support Present:

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

Lucas Cairns – Dept of Labor & Economic Opportunity, Employment & Training

Guests:

Steve Dalton – Michigan Rehabilitation Services (virtual – Lansing, MI)

Voni Booyinga – Michigan Rehabilitation Services (virtual – Eaton Rapids, MI)

James Hull – Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (virtual – Swartz Creek, MI)

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

John Sloat – Disability Rights Michigan (virtual – Ann Arbor, MI)

Marisa Spain – Disability Rights Michigan (virtual – Westland, MI)

Welcome new members and announce reappointments

Welcome to new council members Laurie Penfold and Jonathan Bischoff. The council is now fully seated.

Introductions of Members, DSU Representatives and Guests

Chairperson Carol Bergquist lead the attendees through introductions.

Approval of Proposed Agenda of February 13, 2025 Meeting (Attachment 1)

A discussion on the impact of federal Executive Orders was presented as an added agenda item by chairperson Carol Bergquist.

Todd Culver moved to approve the February 13, 2025 Proposed Agenda with discussed modifications. Motion supported by Karen Wang. Motion was put to a voice vote with Chair Carol Bergquist calling for council members in favor to say aye and those opposed to state nay. There being a unanimous vote, the motion was carried. The agenda was approved.

Approval of October 10, 2024 Business Meeting Minutes (Attachment 2)

A draft of the minutes of the October 10, 2024, meeting was provided to the council prior to the meeting. Chair Carol Bergquist called for any comments or suggested changes. There being no discussion, Kellie Blackwell moved to approve the Minutes of the October 10, 2024, MCRS Meeting. The motion was supported by Karen Wang. Motion was put to a voice vote with Chair Carol Bergquist calling for council members in favor to say aye and those opposed to state nay. There being a unanimous vote, the motion was carried. Minutes of the October 10, 2024, MCRS meeting were approved.

Resource Plan FY2025 (Attachment 3)

FY2025 Resource Plan report was presented by Steve Dalton, Fiscal Manager, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and James Hull, Acting State Division Administrator, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons. At this time there is not much to report. Travel requests from October meeting came in for processing in December, they were for the first quarter but processed in the second quarter, the expenses will catch up due to that. No other significant changes. No questions were raised.

Discussion: Impact of Federal Executive Orders – Todd Culver, Facilitator
Todd led a discussion on the federal executive orders (EOs).

- Beginning with a summary of the EOs, Todd also outlined any timely judicial actions surrounding several of the EOs and their potential repercussions on the disability community and vocational rehabilitation.

- Additionally, the *Texas vs Becerra* lawsuit concerning Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act was discussed.

Partner Reports

Michigan Developmental Disability Council (DD Council) – Yasmina Bouraoui delivered a report on recent activities by the DD Council.

- It was noted that the DD council is 100% federally funded.
- The council currently is still doing business as usual.
- They continue advocacy and educational activities and support public policy.

See Attachment 4 for full details.

Disability Rights Michigan Quarterly Report (no written report) – John Sloat provided the council with a report on the last quarter of activities for Disability Rights Michigan (DRM).

- DRM continues to investigate and advocate on behalf of individuals contacting the agency.
- Last quarter, DRM gave feedback to MRS on the Rehabilitation Services Manual.
- They assisted two individuals in hearings, and another 4 individuals with technical assistance.

Incompass Michigan (no written report) – Todd Culver delivered a report to the council on recent activities of Incompass Michigan.

- He referenced some changes in the organizational structure, continued work relating to policy, including policy related to recent Executive Orders.
- Incompass has worked on a new strategic plan and plans to focus on increasing wages and continuing to advocate for the Direct Care Work crisis.

- Additionally, Incompass has partnered with the Small Business Associate of Michigan to promote the efficacy of Social Enterprises and encourage the growth and creation of social enterprises for people with disabilities in Michigan. The goal of this partnership is to not only create job opportunities for individuals with disabilities but also the establishment of a Center for Social Enterprise Development that can provide technical assistance to growing Social Enterprises.
- Incompass is currently hiring an Operations Director.
- He also mentioned that planning for the next re:con conference is happening with the 2025 conference taking place in Kalamazoo, as well as the Leadership Conference that will take place June 4th & 5th in Traverse City.

Michigan Alliance for Families – Karen Wang provided an update on Michigan Alliance for Families (MAF) and an overview of the agency for new council members.

- In the 2023-2024 program year MAF provided 5,788 information and referral related services to families and professionals.
- Regional parent mentors reported 5,510 interactions during the program year. MAF had 215 scheduled workshops during the program year with 5,769 attendees.
- On-demand workshops were viewed 17,517 times.
- In 2024 new workshops designed for youth were created. These include “My IEP” and “My Transition Plan” these workshops were launched in 6 high schools statewide more expansion anticipated.
- Applications for the Leaders in Policy Advocacy (LIPA) 2025 cohort are now open.
- Applications for the Youth Summit in May 2025 are now open.

Please reference Attachment 5 for full details.

Michigan Interagency Transition Team (MITT) – Karen Wang provided the following:

- September 2024 – Published MITT “A Guide to Transition from Special Education into Adulthood.”
- October 2024 - Strategic Planning process started with support from NTACTION-C, based upon the interagency agreement – training being created to be presented at regional conferences and local meetings. The MITT Guide to Transition is one of the materials for the training.
- MITT asks that the council members help to distribute and create awareness about the availability of the guidebook.
- www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/MITT-Transition-Guide-24.pdf

Assistive Technology Program (ATP), MI Disability Rights Coalition –

Kellie Blackwell shared the following information:

- ATP is entirely federal funded. Taking a cautious approach
- 428 device demonstrations with 517 participants.
- 18 training opportunities with 770 attendees.
- CCAT – Community Connections for Assistive Technology – running pilot program in thumb and Northern Lower region – funded 132 devices for 33 people. Under the AT act purchasing items directly for individuals is not allowed, but with the CCAT program purchasing is allowable.
- 28 short term loans with 142 devices.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) – Steve Locke provided that:

- This is the first year of the new Statewide Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). This three-year state plan is jointly created with Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and the Disability community in the state.

- Over the next three years the plan will focus on affordable and accessible housing, and transportation, and healthcare and will include a SILC lead statewide community education campaign.
- To view the current SPIL: <https://www.misilc.org/state-plan-for-independent-living>

For a full report on recent activities please see Attachment 8.

Questions and discussion on Partner Reports.

There were no additional questions or discussions.

DSU Updates

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) (Attachment 7a & 7b):

- Number of customers served has increased on a steady basis since the pandemic.
- There are still many vacancies and open positions. MRS continues to look at ways to increase staff retention and recruitment.
- New case management system is currently being developed. MRS is currently using AWARE, which is very outdated.
- Executive Order Updates: These orders may impact on the Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) grants, and at this time no updates or information has been provided from RSA. MRS continues to administer the DIF grants at this time.

For full report details see Attachment 7a & 7b

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) (Attachment 10):

- Executive Orders: No information regarding the Executive Orders at this time. BSBP has reached out to RSA but has not received information or updates back. At this time, they continue business as usual.

- The Field Services Division reported that in Quarter 1 of FY 2025 128 new VR applications were processed, the total number of active customers being served by BSBP is 1,380 which is a 16% increase from last FY during the same reporting period.
- During Quarter 1 BSBP provided services to 167 students.

For full report details see attachment 10.

Public Comment

Acting Secretary Kelsey Hockaday read the council guidelines for public comment. She called for public comments three times. There was no response. The public comment portion of the meeting was concluded.

Lunch break – 12pm – 12:45pm

Unfinished Business

Council member appointments, vacancies and term expirations: Carol Bergquist shared the following:

- There are two newly appointed members, Laurie Penfold and Jonathan Bischoff. MCRS is now a fully seated council.
- There are eight (8) council members that have terms expiring December 31, 2025.
- Carol Bergquist and Alicia Kirkey are in contact with the Governor's Appointments Office regarding the re-appointment process.
- Those eligible for reappointment with terms expiring should submit an application soon for processing. Notify Alicia Kirkey when the applications have been submitted. She will then notify the Appointments Office.

2024 Conferences – Carol Bergquist

- Incompass re:con Conf (Nov 6-8, 2024)

- Several council members attended, had a vendor booth and several members participated in a panel discussion presentation. The discussion covered the mandates of the council and then explained them in plain language and gave context to MCRS activities. Members received positive feedback from the audience attending the session.
- Some attendees suggested a similar presentation be given at the MRS statewide staff meeting via a Teams meeting. Invitation to include all VR counselors and staff to increase awareness of the council. BSBP suggested a similar presentation for their staff as well.
- Voni Booyinga mentioned that MRS holds monthly all-staff meetings with around 500 staff. T Council can reach out to Voni and Sigrid to get on the agenda for an upcoming meeting. We can pursue this with BSBP and other agencies as well to increase awareness of MCRS.
- Community Involvement Committee – Lisa Kisiel, of BSBP, has invited this committee to come to BSBP meetings.

New Business

2025 Conferences – Carol Bergquist

- CSAVR / NCSRC / NCSAB Spring Conference, April 5 - April 11, 2025
Bethesda, MD
- Executive team members will be attending this conference in the spring.
(Carol Bergquist, Kathy Flagstadt, and Kelsey Hockaday)
- Disability Seminar also happening in Washington, DC, during the week of CSAVR conferencing. Yasmina Bouraoui, and the DD council will be attending.
- Incompass Michigan Leadership Conference, June 4-5, 2025, Traverse City, MI

2024 Annual Report – Carol Bergquist

- Each year the council is required to complete an annual report in conjunction with MRS and BSBP. This is submitted to the Governor and RSA. It's a team effort from the DSU's and the council.
- This report serves as a record of activities of the council for the year. It also explains how the MCRS council met the required mandates.
- RSA response after this year's submission included positive feedback regarding the success stories included and the key highlights portion.
- The executive team plans to continue streamlining the report and will meet with the DSU's to work on reporting format.

Executive Team Election: Carol Bergquist

- Kelsey Hockaday is currently acting Secretary
- Kathy Flagstadt is currently acting Vice Chair
- Election will happen in August with new terms starting October 1, 2025.
- Open positions will be sent out for the council to review.
- As part of the election process the council is required to have a nominating committee. If anyone is interested in being on the nominating committee, they are to let Carol know.

Ad Hoc Bylaws Committee: Carol Bergquist

- Carol mentioned that the Bylaws of the council do not give much guidance on activities, and there has not been a review of the Bylaws in some time.
- An ad-hoc committee will be formed to look at updating the Bylaws and introducing more clarity. If council members are interested in joining this ad-hoc committee, they should contact Carol.

Work Session – Carol Bergquist

1. Customer Satisfaction Data Gathering DSU Process, Outcomes and Effectiveness

- **MRS Current Customer Satisfaction Effort**
 - Megan Lingris and Claudia Pettit joined the call to report on MRS customer satisfaction efforts.
 - They have utilized Project Excellence through a contract with MSU since 2003 to assist with customer satisfaction survey process.
 - MRS offers the satisfaction survey to a statewide sampling of customers served on an annual basis.
 - There are two survey types, one is administered after IPE plan (Plan) development and one after customer exits of program.
 - Customer satisfaction questions are targeted to customer choice, participation in planning their VR services, informed choice, and overall satisfaction.
 - The council was presented with an overview of the satisfaction instrument and the questions asked to persons served.
 - Response Rate between 20-25% response rate. In 2022 a pilot of sending satisfaction for 6-months to see if response rate would improve, there wasn't a statistically significant increase.
 - Rapid Response/ Immediate Customer Satisfaction feedback will be available via links and QR codes in MRS staff email signatures. This will be district specific. Individuals can scan the QR code or click the link in the email signatures. Vendors and partners will also be able to submit feedback through this link.

For a full reference, please see attachment 11a.

- BSBP Current Customer Satisfaction Effort
 - MCRS & BSBP Work Team Plan
 - Customer Satisfaction Survey Project
 - BSBP will be seeking a work team to look at current progress surrounding customer satisfaction, narrow down a sampling of questions, and present to auditors to pilot and start using.
 - Juan Ortiz provided information on satisfaction collection at the BSBP training center.
 - Response rate currently fluctuates between 20-25%.
 - Questions are specific to the training center, regarding programming, challenges, staffing, improvements, activities, after hours help.
 - Survey is distributed to everyone leaving the training center, ask for preferred format for survey, give with postage paid stamp to fill out.
 - Emailed directly from Juan with a congratulatory letter after training center graduation. Anonymous survey. Juan reviews all of them.

2. **Quarterly DSU Report Format Discussion**

- MCRS and DSU expectations
- The council engaged in a discussion with the DSUs on quarterly report formats. This was a brainstorming session to identify areas of interest that the council has related to what should be presented with quarterly reports. Included below are the topics discussed at the quarterly meeting.
- The council will have additional meetings and/or an ad-hoc committee to work with the DSUs to identify future reporting guidelines.

- Topics discussed by the council:
 - Both DSUs report on the WIOA performance indicators. MRS looks at 6- & 12-month post-exit on wages.
 - From Provider community – outcomes providers have had a hand in helping, employment, services provided. Utilizing the Occupational code in AWARE – tying this to wages – is the person making typical wages for labor market? Success of individuals with disabilities – comparable wages to folks without disabilities in same field, Median wages for outcomes.
 - Number of exit employed – What kinds of occupations, industry, and jobs folks have secured employment outcomes in?
 - Case Study – provide one quarterly, perhaps folks that have exited – successfully met goals and unsuccessfully met goals – look at trends. Capture success stories in an ongoing manner to assist with year-end reporting.
 - Professional development report – for DSU's (what staff is doing for professional development)
 - Follow up after exit reports – 90 day follow up currently. Expand this to look at the 6- & 12-month post exit.
 - Information about any hearings – summary to review.
 - Council updates on policy and administrative rules/updates. Consulting council with policy changes.
 - Policy Cadre MCRS reps – MRS Kathy Flagstadt & Kelsey Hockaday, BSBP Carol Bergquist and Trina Edmondson.
 - Stages of process (chart) – as we're gauging effectiveness, time lapse between processes, condense timeframe. Time from application to plan

- Combined State Plan – Quarterly updates and discussion
- Executive Order impact updates as applicable
- Budget – currently very high-level overview for year – breaking out a little more – what is an ICTA, what comes from match, interagency, state budget, how many dollars unspent, returning funds, drawing down full federal award?
- Which services lead to employment outcomes, who provided those services, cost/effectiveness?
- Credential attainment and reporting of post-secondary education. Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) – related to WIOA performance measures.
- MRS chart (previously from 2.8.24 MCRS report) - the top 20 businesses that hired MRS customers (interesting and informative)
- Formatting quarterly report to mirror/work with annual report – as the year goes the quarterly report (helps build the annual report).

3. **Increasing Awareness of MCRS Role and Functions to Michigan's VR and Disability Communities**

- Discuss and Create a Work Team to Update MCRS Mission, Vision, and Values
- Mission, vision, values not updated in a long time. The more brochures and information to disseminate but need to update these things first.
- Discuss and Create a Work Team to Explore Increasing Awareness of MCRS and Access for Providing Information and Suggestions
 - MCRS Logo, Brochure, use of social media and ideas for Marketing

Due to time constraints this discussion will be revisited at a future meeting.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Member Engagement - Carol Bergquist

Due to time constraints opportunities for member engagement will be discussed at a future meeting.

Wrap Up – Council Member Share, Announcements:

No further announcements

Business Meeting Adjournment

There being no further business, Todd Culver moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Kellie Blackwell. Motion was put to a voice vote with Chair Carol Bergquist calling for council members in favor to say aye and those opposed to state nay. There being a unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 3:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kelsey Hockaday, MCRS Acting Secretary

FY2025 Quarterly Meeting Schedule

Thursday, October 10, 2024, Anderson House Office Building, Mackinac Room, 5th Floor, 124 N Capitol Ave, Lansing, MI 48933 (MCRS business meeting in morning and MRS Champion Awards in afternoon)

Thursday, February 13, 2025, Disability Network Capital Area, 901 E. Mt. Hope Lansing MI 48910

Thursday, May 8, 2025, Michigan Career & Technical Institute, 11611 Pine Lake Rd, Plainwell, MI 49080

Thursday, August 14, 2025, Disability Network Capital Area, 901 E. Mt. Hope Lansing MI 48910

Thursday, September 11, 2025, Disability Network Capital Area, 901 E. Mt. Hope Lansing MI 48910