METRO REGIONAL QUALITY COUNCIL Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 13th, 2026, from 9-11am

The Regional Quality Councils shall:

1. Support efforts and initiatives that drive overall systems and social change to promote inclusion of people who have disabilities in the state of Minnesota

2. Improve person-centered outcomes in disability services; and

3. Identify or enhance quality of life indicators for people who have disabilities.

Meeting Attendance

Attendees: Benjamin, Robin, Diane, Frank (9-10), Dr. Mohamed, Becky Rother (9-10), Amelia D, Judi Marie, Yue Wu (9-10), Rod (9-10), Kim (9-10), Cassie, Lynn (9-10),

Staff Attendees: JoAnn, Cortney, Kerri

Meeting Overview

1. Guest Presenters

Presenters from Minneapolis Public Works and Our Streets will present about what their agencies do in terms of keeping our streets and sidewalks safe to travel during wintertime.

- Ryan Ackerman (Minneapolis Public Works)
- Ethan Van Offelen (Minneapolis Public Works)
- Yasmin Hirsi (Our Streets)

Minneapolis Public Works Short Summary:

Minneapolis Public Works currently coordinates a snow removal pilot program. They contract and collaborate with different agencies, communities, neighborhood organizations, local businesses, etc. To try to increase awareness about the pilot program, they plan to send out mass emails and information packets to all parties involved. They also coordinate reach-out events. They would like to get more communities and neighborhoods participating in the program. Due to limited funding, they can't fulfill all requests for snow removal help. They can

fulfill maybe 8 out of 10 requests. Saint Paul doesn't have this pilot program yet, they have the Angel Program, but unfortunately it isn't big enough to cover the entire city.

How can the MRQC help with these efforts?

- Advocate and promote the pilot program
- Create short videos to help promote the program
- Help promote already existing promotional materials and share them on our Facebook and The Arc and RQC website
- Inform The Arc public policy team about the program so it can perhaps be added to the policy agenda
- Refer people's snow removal needs and questions to Ethan and Ryan so they can understand the issues people are having with snow removal (like accessing buses)
- Lobbying elected officials to increase funding for the program
- Educate officials about the positive impact of the program and the barriers it faces
- Some barriers have been identified: (ask Ethan and Ryan for the list of barriers)
    - Not enough funding causes Barriers
    - Competition for funding from other programs
    - Can't hire enough staff to do what they need to do, especially achieving ADA accessibility goals
    - Can't purchase equipment needed to do snow removal

Our Streets (OS) Short Summary:

Our Streets helped to get the pilot program passed. It started in 2018 with a study done to show the benefits and cost effectiveness of having municipal sidewalk clearing. Leaving snow removal responsibility to property owners isn't guaranteed. OS sent out postcards written by residents to the city council and mayor asking the city to take on snow removal duties. In 2022, OS worked with representative Wonsley to continue their efforts. Another study was done which estimated municipal sidewalk clearing would cost $40million/year which cover costs like equipment, staff, maintenance, storage, etc. The study included seniors and pwds. The city decided to experiment and implement a 600k pilot program which is currently in place. However, residents and others want to see the program become a permanent larger scale program. It would help many more people, including pwds because it takes the burden of clearing sidewalks off their shoulders. Municipal street clearing has been successful in other cities such as Montreal and Chicago, Rochester, Bloomington, etc.

How can the MRQC help?

- Share Our Streets toolkits which offers ways to:
    - Upload pictures and locations of where snow removal services are needed and where the gaps are in services. If we know where the gaps are, more resources can be allocated to those locations.
    - Upload pictures of locations and residents that have benefited from the pilot program

    - Sharing stories about why funding is important
- Collaborating with city staff, residents and others on snow removal efforts
- Lobbying reps and advocating for funding the program
- Collecting stories and testimonies from people impacted by pilot program
- Advocating for a municipal snow and ice removal program
- Testifying at city council meetings

Stay connected to Yasmin with next steps:

- Sharing toolkit
- How to engage with city processes and budget
- Collaborate with city staff and residents to promote the municipal snow removal program so interest in it can continue to grow

2. Workgroups Updates

- **Culture of Safety Workgroup**
  This workgroup meets separately outside of monthly council meetings. They meet on the second Thursday of each month from 1-3pm.
  The next meeting is Tuesday, February 24 from 9-11am.
  Join the meeting now
  Meeting ID: 295 169 440 389 99
  Passcode: c8Xq93Zj
- **Staffing Shortage Workgroup (Big Group)**
  This workgroup meets separately outside of monthly council meetings. They meet on the fourth Thursday of each month from 11am-12:30pm.
  The next meeting is Thursday, February 26th from 11am-12:30pm.
  Join Teams Meeting
  https://arcminnesota.zoom.us/j/87154192462?pwd=aDE2YnBUcVR1S2dvc0NzOUpFWCt5dz09
  Meeting ID: 871 5419 2462
  Passcode: 266371
  Completed one video and are working on another 3 videos. Taylor Guccione and Katie Craig are doing bulk of the video production.
- **Staffing (DSPs & PCAs) Shortage Workgroup (Small Group)**
  This workgroup meets separately outside of monthly council meetings. They meet every Thursday to make progress on short videos aimed at helping DSPs advocate for their needs. The videos will cover topics such as: What does advocacy mean? How to connect with your legislators? How to tell your story? etc.

If you wish to join, contact an MRQC staff member.
The next meeting is Thursday, February 12th from 9-10am
Join Teams Meeting
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/22794818291989?p=lyUviV3UMORm0TGNZo
Meeting ID: 227 948 182 919 89
Passcode: RK3d8o8X

Employment Workgroup

Human Resources Project

Goal: Collaborating with faculty from college and university to create learning opportunities for their students and staff so they can become more educated about people with disabilities and their potential as future employees ultimately expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

- **Updates**
  Waiting for further information from Inver Hills Community College and Metro State University.
  Metro State is thinking they would prefer we wait to present in Fall 2026.
  If you are interested in taking part, please let an MRQC staff know.

Employment Services Survey Project

Goal: Survey Employment Services providers and employees to find out what barriers they face when providing services to people with disabilities.

Now that we have a report with recommendations, what should we do next?

Ideas:

- Go to the legislator's offices to tell them about the recommendations
  Find out where legislator offices are and schedule meetings with them
- Cassie can help share the report with the employment policy team
- Attend Disability Advocacy Day- we can create 1-page flyers with a QR code linking to the report and a list recommendations that we can handout to legislators or leave at their office

Transportation Workgroup

Transportation Resources Flyers

- Created flyers and QR for transportation resources site

Ideas

- Connect with TCAPS to update transportation flyers
- Share our flyers and guides with disability advocacy and disability service groups.
- Also share collab with Claire from TCAP Hennepin on the flyers.

Collab with ICI and their "Ready to Ride" project

The MRQC maintains communication with Brian Abery from the UofM's ICI about how the MRQC can help ICI with their project. The project is a collaboration with other Universities. Besides the MRQC, Region 10 RQC is also partnering with ICI on this project along with ACT (Advocating Change Together).

How can the MRQC help?

Collect recommendations about transportation from people with disabilities to add to their training curriculum materials.

Method of collecting recommendations:

- Ask (email) referrals with lived experiences to offer recommendations
- Reach out to Transition Programs
  Goal: Coordinate listening sessions to ask recommendations from students
  School Districts interested:
  - School district 197 (West Saint Paul)
  - School district 622 (North Saint Paul)
  - Minneapolis Public School

  Next steps:

  - Brian is helping to come up with questions to ask students
  - Write a letter to parents
  - The questions and letter to parents need to be translated into different languages so it be accessible to non-English readers
  - Money is needed to translate documents
    We might have 3k to spend on projects that we can use in the next 6 months
  - Email the council asking if they are okay with spending money translating documents
- Created spreadsheet to record and track recommendations
  Shared spreadsheet with Brian Abery and others who wanted access