METRO REGIONAL QUALITY COUNCIL Minutes
Friday, October 11th, 2024 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: Amelia D, Robin, Chelsea, Amelia S, Christina, Lynn, Dr. Mohamed, Chris, Judi Marie, Cassie,

Staff Attendees: JoAnn, Sophie, Caption,

Meeting Overview

1. Introductions

The MQRC welcomed the new The Arc MN CEO, Naveh Eldar, along with other new attendees.

2. Updates

- **Staffing Shortage Workgroup Update (Sophie)**

  The workgroup hosted a guest speaker Amy Hewitt who works at the Institute on Community Integration (ICI) at the U of M. They discussed ways to collaborate with ICI on the staffing shortage. The ICI is mostly a research institute and doesn't promote any particular political agenda. However, they do share their research with policy makers and legislators.

- **Housing Workgroup Update (JoAnn)**

  They made a series of videos focused on housing and posted them on the MRQC Housing Workgroup page on the RQC website and MRQC YouTube page. They are now trying to promote their housing videos and also facilitate housing discussions.

  They worked or are working on:

  1. Published a commentary essay about accessible housing in the October issue of *Access Press.* Read the MRQC Accessible Housing Access Press commentary. Facilitated a discussion about accessible and affordable housing aired on local radio station KFAI on July 25th, 2024. Listen to **KFAI Disability and Progress July 25th show.**
  2. Continue to reach out to various media platforms and organizations to facilitate discussions centered on accessible and affordable housing.

3. **Guest Presenters @ 9:30am (Tayler Guccione)**

   Taylor works at The Arc as the Region 10 Quality Assurance Manager. She wanted to gather some information to improve her **employment toolkit** which is specifically designed to help job seekers with disabilities. The funding for the toolkit comes from a grant. The toolkit will include short videos, 1 pagers and worksheets which all relate to employment. The content of the toolkit will address a variety of employment focused topics, such as ADA laws, knowing your skills, gaining experiences and much more. A survey will be available at the end of the toolkit so people can give feedback. Attendees shared their suggestions on what to change or add as Tayler went through the various content of the toolkit. Suggestions included; adding long-term services such as waiver services, benefits counseling, transferrable skills, job coaching, what to expect and how the process works, and transportation. The toolkit will be translated into different languages as well as plain language. Tayler wants to promote the toolkit at The Arc MN gala which is employment themed. Perhaps the MRQC and Tayler can collaborate on the toolkit since the MRQC already created an Employment Resources website which contains similar content as the toolkit.

4. **Break Time 10:15am**

5. **Workgroups**

   - **Culture of Safety Workgroup**

     This workgroup meets separately outside of monthly council meetings. They meet the first Thursday of each month from 9-11am. To find out more about Culture of Safety and its purpose, go to the Culture of Safety website on DHS.
     The next meeting will be on **Thursday, November 7th, 2024 from 9am-11am.**
     Join Zoom Meeting
     https://arcminnesota.zoom.us/j/81121977247?pwd=SDBmVW1RQWFlVHBHKy96a1JESElEUT09
     Meeting ID: 811 2197 7247
     Passcode: 678410

   - **Staffing (DSPs & PCAs) Shortage Workgroup (Kerri)**
     This workgroup meets separately outside of monthly council meetings. They meet the fourth Thursday of each month from 11am-12:30pm.
     The next meeting will be on **Thursday, October 24th, 2024 from 11am-12:30pm**.
     Join Zoom Meeting
     https://arcminnesota.zoom.us/j/87154192462?pwd=aDE2YnBUcVR1S2dvc0NzOUpFWCt5dz09
     Meeting ID: 871 5419 2462
     Passcode: 266371

6. **Other Things to Share & Reminders**

   - Next council meeting is on **Friday, November 11th from 9-11am.**

Employment Workgroup

Attendance:

Employment Resources Presentation Events

These events started in June 2024 and will end in December 2024. Since attendance is very low, we are reevaluating to determine if we want to continue next year or not. Most events are recorded and are available to watch on the MRQC YouTube page.

- Jerry Mellum, Microenterprises
  November 4th, 5:30-7pm
- Kaposia- employment services
  December 9th, 5:30-7pm

Suggestions were made on how to advertise these events better since we have low attendance. Robin suggested sharing this information with county case managers. Another suggestion was to share the recordings and events with meeting attendees so they can share them with their networks. We can perhaps create a flyer advertising them and emailing the flyer to everyone.

Employment Resources Website (JoAnn)

JoAnn is still working on this. Please share any ideas and resources you have or want added to the website.

NEW Transportation Workgroup

Attendance: Amelia D, Robin, Chelsea, Amelia S, Christina, Lynn, Dr. Mohamed, Chris, Judi Marie, Cassie

- Robin mentioned something called the Metro Transit micro project. It is being tested in North Minneapolis. According to the website, its goal is to improve connections to existing transit services. Customers request rides and drop offs within the service area by using an app or by phone. Based on how successful it has been, Robin is wondering if there are ways the Met Council could implement something like this or expand it.
- Robin suggested connecting with the Transportation Coordination Assistant Project (TCAP) to ask them to present information to the MRQC about what they do and how we can perhaps collaborate. TCAP is a grant from MNDOT by the federal government to coordinate transportation for pwds, seniors and those with low-income. Various counties, such as Scott, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Anoka and Washington are in charge of administrating the grant. The grant can be used in a variety of ways, such as providing accessible vehicles, collaborating with ride apps like Lyft to provide more ride options, and testing driverless vehicles.
- Robin shared information about the collaboration between DHS, Connectability and Lyft. Monthly meetings are held to discuss services and changes that might happen. One of the attendees shared they have experienced some of these changes and are wondering what's going on. It seems changes made at the higher level of DHS don't always trickle down smoothly and might cause issues directly to service recipients. The biggest change seems to be Lyft wanting to be enrolled with DHS directly as a provider and not go through Connectability (pass through) to provide rides, basically cutting out the middleman. Right now Lyft is

contracted with Connectability who is contracted with DHS to manage reimbursements for riders.

- Robin suggested maybe connecting with disabilities services divisions because they work a lot on policy stuff.

Suggestions for next steps and how we can help?

Ideas from Andy:

- Simplifying Metro Mobility rider's manual into 1 pagers. Figure out what people actually need to know to help them navigate transportation. Metro Mobility Tips For New Riders (metrocouncil.org)
- Actions to be taken to help continue the Transit Fare Elimination Pilot Program which was approved for implementation back in July 2023 and will end December 2024. It was part of a much bigger bill passed in February 2023 called the Local Bus and Transit Improvement Act. This Act allocated a percentage of sales taxes to be directed to fund, as the name suggests, improvements for bus shelters, hybrid electric buses, expanding services to marginalized and low-income community, and much more. The Pilot Program made it possible for fare free bus routes for 2 rapid bus routes, the 62 and 32. It also made it possible for Metro Mobility certified riders to use Metro Transit bus and light rail services for FREE. A report is schedule to be published around February 15, 2025 that gives an overview of the program and to evaluate its impact, such as cost and ridership effectiveness. The report will layout the pros and cons based on analyzed data gathered during the run of the program.
  Possible actions to take:
  - ✓ Perhaps The Arc MN could add this to their Public Policy Legislative.
  - ✓ MRQC can maybe help by contacting legislators and urging them to support this. MRQC can also recruit people to share their transportation stories to legislators.
  - ✓ Create tools to make it easier for advocates to communicate with their legislators about the transportation policies they desire passed.