METRO REGIONAL QUALITY COUNCIL Minutes
Friday, November 8th, 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: Robin, Mohamed, Chelsea, Christina, Cassie, Rod, Amelia S, Lynn, Judi Marie, Yue Wu, Amelia D

Staff Attendees: JoAnn, Sophie, Caption, Kerri

Meeting Overview

1. Introductions

2. Updates

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

  Last met in October, the workgroup had a guest speaker Sarah from ARRM who shared information about ARRM's legislative agenda. They also had Amy from ICI come and talk. They are busy educating themselves and brainstorming what actions to take leading into the next year. The workgroup have shifted their focus to educating legislators about various things that impact pwds. They have done some educating about CDCS as an option for pwds. The workgroup also focused on DSPs and how they don't have a standardized occupation code. This can affect the ability to gather data about DSPs and also laws relating to wages and benefits. These laws might not affect DSPs in the same way as with similar occupations such as PCAs. The workgroup wants to collaborate with other groups on mutual initiatives

  Their November and December meetings are going to be rescheduled. Look out for a Doodle Poll from Kerri asking for dates and times that work best for people.

- **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. One idea is getting a guest spot on one of the shows on WFNU Frogtown local community radio in Saint Paul.

3. Break Time

4. 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, December 5th, 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 announced when known.**

Other Things to Share & Reminders

- Next council meeting is on **Friday, December 13th from 9-11am.**

Employment Workgroup

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.

- Kaposia- employment services
  December 9th, 5:30-7pm

The November presentation was focused on Microenterprises presented by Jerry Mellum. Microenterprises supports pwds to help them launch their own small business. Check out the Employment Resources website to find out more.
We have had low turnout for the presentations. Ideas were shared on how to better advertise our presentations.

Some ideas shared were:

1. Perhaps target to more specific groups-
   Reach out to transition programs and coordinators. Teachers can use the presentations (or the recordings) as a way to teach families and students. We tried emailing teachers but many don't want to receive emails from us. Cassie can help with this by using her connections. She knows Cole Sorensen who works as an E1MN coordinator. He has direct contacts to schools staff who

work in transition services. We can also email Ben, our new school contact who works for Minneapolis schools with transition age students.

2. Create flyers-
   Containing the presentation information and direct links to the recordings using QR codes. We can email the flyers to school staff to give to students and families.
3. Reach out to families-
   From a family member's point of view, the presentations offer valuable, candid information especially for those who are first looking for resources. They present how resources work and don't work and have great discussion opportunities.
4. Change the time of the presentations-
   Change them to be within business hours. It is hard to attend after business hours especially when people have young children. It would work better if they were during the workday. Do them like a lunch and learn event during noon time.
5. Perhaps offer CEUs for attending.
6. Yue Wu can help promote and send info directly to families she works with.
7. Get connected with CTICs.
   https://www.isd917.org/about/community_transition_interagency_committee___c_t_i_c_

Employment Resources Website (JoAnn)

The **Employment Resources website** (click on the underlined blue link) is complete and Live! Thanks to everyone who contributed ideas and resources to the website.
The website received positive remarks! One idea shared was to add a dropdown for promoting small businesses by pwds. Many liked this idea. We might add it under the "employment Journey category" or "self-employment category".

Guest Presenter

Attendance: Judy Marie, Amelia S, Cassie,, Amelia S, Chelsea, Robin, Lynn, Mohamed,

We had a guest presenter, Gene Martinez, The Arc MN Legislative Advocacy Coordinator who shared information about The Arc MN legislative 2025 agenda. Since we had a big election last week, a lot is unknown because we aren't certain what the Republicans and Trump will do. The legislative session starts in early January of 2025.

- On the Federal level:
  - ✓ Republicans will likely control the house and senate.
  - ✓ There will probably new proposals that will impact Medicaid (similar to 2017).

- ✓ The Arc MN will plat defense for keeping Medicaid which has remained stable for the last couple years. Not certain what the proposals will be yet but they could impose work requirements, change benefit eligibility requirements, change states grants for funding benefits, etc.

- On the State level
  - ✓ Trifecta we had will end soon.
  - ✓ The party that controls the Senate is still unknown due to many factors.
  - ✓ There will likely be a tie in the House and both parties will end up sharing power. This means any proposals we want passed in the House will have to be bipartisan.
  - ✓ Even though we have a 1 seat Democratic advantage in the Senate, similar with the House, proposals will have to have bipartisan appeal.
- Any legislative recommendations are sent to The Arc MN Board. They vote on them and decide what gets included into the legislative agenda.
  Down below is a link to the spreadsheet with the Legislative Agenda and Support Agenda for 2025:
  https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1WgWZKnvF9bXrOmyIl_qqZwy4j3gGIIZfR5DAzdSzClA/edit?usp=sharing
  Many of The Arc MN polices from 2024 will carry over to 2025.
  Here are some examples of policies:
  - ✓ Building Inclusive Playgrounds-
    Incorporate universal design to make playgrounds more accessible.
  - ✓ IEP Parent Accessibility Bill-
    It will enable non-English speaking parents, parents with disabilities, and parents from varying backgrounds to gain greater access and participation in their children's education and IEP process.
  - ✓ Subminimum Wage Phase-out Bill-
    Senator Hofffman stroke it down which made it fail to be included in the omnibus bill. Supporters of the bill like The ICI provide resources to providers so they can transition away from subminimum wage. There is also funding to train case managers to become more knowledgeable about competitive employment and funding to incentivize businesses to change how they do business like negotiating contracts and 14c certificates. Perhaps if the bill gets introduced as part of the labor committee or DHS committee, it has a chance to get passed.
  - ✓ Elimination of MA-EPD Premiums-
    Success was had earlier when the MA-EPD asset limit was eliminated. In addition to MA-EPD premiums, many pwds also pay for Medicaid premiums and or private insurance which adds up and becomes a financial burden. The governor and DHS both support this.
  - ✓ Our Future Starts at Home Constitutional Amendment-
    Add an amendment to the 2026 ballot initiative to raise 3/8 of 1% sales tax to provide $400 million in funding to go towards affordable and accessible housing.

- ✓ CDCS Budget Disparity-
  If pwds chose CDCS, they would receive a 30% "discount" in funding which seems more like a euphuism than an actual discount. They actually receive 30% less funding. The goal is to get rid of the 30% disparity so pwds have more funding to live independently in their homes instead of licensed facilities. It cost a lot than more than 30% to have pwds live in licensed facilities.

- Included in the Support Agenda:
  The Arc MN shows support for other coalitions on mutual proposals
  - ✓ Encourage **alternatives to guardianship** and promote supported decision making.
  - ✓ **Basic Income**-that gives people subsidies to pay for stuff so they have more success obtaining stable housing, employment, food and other essentials. Pilot programs that give people $500-$800 for 18 months have yielded success.
  - ✓ Private insurance covering **AAC communication devices**.
  - ✓ **Enhance accessibility codes** in buildings so medical and dental facilities can accommodate the needs of pwds by providing adaptive devices and other accommodations. Current basic ADA standard codes aren't enough.
  - ✓ **Mnchocies assessment** to allow people to be assessed every 3 years instead of yearly if there aren't any significant changes to the person.
  - ✓ **SMRT recertification** process made easier by creating a portal for pwds to upload documents directly to SMRT themselves and sign ROI forms.
  - ✓ **Waiver Reimage** budget methodology and determine if disparities exists and how they impact pwds choices on where and how they live. The Arc MN plans on meeting with the Disability Law Center to discuss this further.
  - ✓ The MRQC suggestion of supporting the **Free Fare Pilot Program**.
  - ✓ **Reimbursement for transportation** for driving oneself to medical appointments to be increased from 22cents to 65cents (IRS standard). This would be a cheaper alternative to using nonemergency medical transportation.

- **2026 Proposals:**
  - ✓ IEP Improvement package-
    Streamline IEP requirements. This is spearheaded by RQC's Katie Craig who is meeting with parents and senator Kupec in the Moorhead area.
  - ✓ Free transportation for students with disabilities-
    Match free transportation given to students without disabilities at the post-secondary level.
  - ✓ Prioritizing accessible units for pwds-
    Require landlords to advertise their accessible units to pwds and make an effort to reach out to the disability community.

To get more involved in The Arc MN policies, get connected to Capital Connectors.
https://arcminnesota.org/public-policy/capitol-connectors-teams/

And register for trainings that help build grassroots advocacy skills.
https://arcminnesota.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEvcumqrjkqG9O6p5MnpVbs-JHfKdkaenv1

Transportation Workgroup

Updates on Transportation ideas:

Information from Gerri Sutton (works for Metro Mobility): The Council doesn't have the authority to implement free fares without legislation allowing so. The current pilot expires at the end of 2024. We will report back to the legislature on results of the pilot but certainly support permanent adoption of this program and we anticipate the legislature will be receptive as well. We are concerned about bridging the gap between Dec 31, 2024, and when the legislature might adopt free fares on fixed route for Metro Mobility certified customers on a permanent basis. We are proposing a $.01 fare on fixed route (since we aren't authorized to offer "free") starting January 1, 2025. We are going through the technical and approval process at this point.

Possible actions to take:

- ✓ MRQC can 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.
- ✓ The council can help with providing testimonies, stories, writing support letters to law makers during active session.

More ideas and updates:

- Information from Gerri: We are expanding microtransit zones beyond North Minneapolis. The first two new zones will begin early January 2025 in the Woodbury and Roseville areas. We are planning to expand at a rate of two new zones over each of the next few years.

  Possible actions to take:

  - ✓ What can the MRQC to help expand and promote this program?
  - ✓ Are they covering both bus and trains?
- Workers from Transportation Coordination Assistant Project (TCAP) have offered to present information to the MRQC

  Possible actions to take:

  - ✓ Down below is the doodle poll asking when a good date and time works well with schedules for TCAP to present.

  Access the TCAP Doodle Poll: https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/aKmg5Yxd