METRO REGIONAL QUALITY COUNCIL Minutes

Friday, December 12th, 2025, 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, Cassie, Mohamed. Becky Rother, Diane. Frank. Chrsitina, Lynn, Rod

Staff Attendees: JoAnn, Sophie, Kerri, Cortney, Diana Reyes

Meeting Overview

1. Guest Presenter

Ray McCoy (Employer Reasonable Accommodations Fund aka ERAF Coordinator) shared information about a new program called "Evolve Employment". Ray is the Business Relations and Accommodation Coordinator for this new program.

Information about the **Evolve Employment program:**

- Started with the Disability innovation Fund Grant in October and last for 5 years
- It started last year and continues till 2029
- New initiative to create new pathways to high quality employment within fields such as customer service and technology for folks with disabilities (mostly for those with visual impairments and or hard of hearing/deaf)
- Working closely with businesses and people with disabilities together to not only fill in critical talent gaps in the job market, but also increase employment for pwds

- It has a team of 7 staff and uses a rapid engagement model
- Offers toolkits and accommodations
- Offers benefits coaching services
- Offers tech training used to fulfill job duties such as software and devices

What demographics does it serve?

- People with visual impairments, deaf and hard of hearing and deaf/blind
- Cator more towards adults wanting a job, not so much for young people
- Cator towards new Americans (immigrant populations)
- Cator towards pwds that haven't worked in 6 months or more
- Hoping to serve 600 pwds and partner with 500 businesses

Using a 3-Tiered Goal system for service delivery

- Goal 1- rapid engagement:
  Includes- benefits coaching and other partners working together to quickly provide support so pwds can become successfully employed ASAP., making referrals and making investments in pwds
- Goal 2 – sector-based approach:
  Includes- customer service and IT, partnering directly with businesses, offering specific highly skilled training, customized employment, making sure pwds get a job they want and can do
- Goal 3- enhanced progress employment:
  Offers job shadowing, benefits planning, real world experiences, post job support, etc.
- Work with trusted organizations like The Arc MN to help establish rapport with pwds and help them be aware of employment opportunities such as this and promote them.

Capacity building:

- Staff specialized in offering specific services such as experts in retention, benefits and business engagement
- collaborations with business to align training with real world needs
- community partnerships to broaden support

Answers to Questions

- Federally funded guaranteed for 5 years, started last year so will be active until 2029.
- This program is very effective, works very closely with VRS and acts similar to ERAF
- Provides a hotline where pwds (employees) can call with questions for support without their employer knowing. It is confidential.

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.
  Their meeting will be conducted using Teams.
  MRQC staff will send out new meeting invitations for 2026 ASAP.
- **Staffing (DSPs & PCAs) Shortage Workgroup**
  This workgroup meets separately outside of monthly council meetings. They meet on the fourth Thursday of each month from 11am-12:30pm.
  Their next 2 meetings are cancelled.
  They will resume meetings starting January 2026. The MRQC staff will keep you updated on their schedule.
  The big workgroup has discontinued for the time being and is now replaced by the creation of a small workgroup that meet 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. They meet every other week.

Employment Workgroup

Human Resources Project

Goal: Collaborating with faculty from colleges and universities 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**
  Inver Hills Community College and Metro State University want to meet with us.
  If you are interested in taking part, please let an MRQC staff know.
  - 12/2/25, met with Jeremy from Inver Hills Community College.
  - 12/9/24, meeting with Loi Nguyen from Metro State.

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.

- **Actions taken:**
  Officially partnered with Hennepin County and Dakota County
  MRQC staff started emailing the surveys

Closing date of the surveys will be December 31st, 2025.

Help by sharing the links to the surveys and flyers posted on the MRQC employment workgroup page on the RQC website.

Transportation Workgroup

1. **Transportation Project Ideas:**

   How can the MRQC help?

   - Ben suggests we should help promote transportation programs and indicate who qualifies for them.
   - Connect with TCAPS to update transportation flyers
   - Create updated 1-page flyers or guides with links and QR codes to our transportation resources website (within the Employment Resources site)
   - Share our flyers and guides with disability advocacy and disability service groups.
   - Also share collab with Claire from TCAP Hennepin on the flyers.

     Updates:

     Transportation resources into its own resource category within the RQC Resources Library menu option

     Create QR for transportation resources site

2. **Potential collab with ICI and their "Ready to Ride" project**

   The MRQC maintains communication with Brian Abery from ICI about how the MRQC can help ICI with their project.

   How can the MRQC help?

   - MRQC can help recruit riders and program participants
   - MRQC can help make recommendations about what topics to train about
   - The project will highlight the importance of community involvement and the potential for policy changes to support public transportation for people with disabilities.

     Updates:

   - Created spreadsheet to record and track recommendations

     Shared spreadsheet with Brian Abery

3. **Making sidewalks and boarding buses easier in winter for everyone especially pwds?**

   Ideas so far

   - Invite Amanda Crosby from Arc Northland to our next council meeting.

Amanda is part of “Be Minnesnowta Nice” which helps remove snow from sidewalks so people can get around, it’s part of transportation. To find out more, visit: www.beminnesnowtanice.com

- Reach out to fellow The Arc MN co-worker Sarah Johnson who is passionate about making public transport and sidewalks easier to navigate and to become less reliant on cars.
- Also, advocacy group Our Streets does snow removal from sidewalks projects.