METRO REGIONAL QUALITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Friday April 10th, 2020
9 am – 12pm
The Arc Minnesota
2446 University Ave West, Suite 110
St. Paul, Minnesota
Hennepin/Ramsey Conference Room

Purpose Statement: The purpose of the Regional Quality Council is to connect with and promote all communities of people with disabilities so that services and supports help them to live a life based on their hopes and dreams. The council will work together to continually monitor and improve the quality of services and supports for people with disabilities. The council seeks to improve person-centered outcomes, quality of life indicators, and to drive overall systems change.

In Attendance: Angie Guenther, Tayler Guccione, Robert Morneau, Diane Sjolander, Rebecca St. Martin, Erin Paredes, Katie Elleraas, Rod Carlson, Chelsea Lorenz, Mary Gaasch, Joe Cuoco, Judy Marie Ringe, Paris Gatlin, Jeffery Nurick, Tim Sullivan

Interns: Emily Van Krevelen, Josh Smith

Guest Speaker: Joe Lehman, Arc MN Policy Intern

1. Introductions/What's Happening?

- Your name and your answer to last meeting's challenge:
    - Reflect on and tell us about a DEPENDENCY you didn't realize you had in order to get to your job or for you to do your work. Who or what do you rely on that makes things go relatively smoothly? - or-
    - People with disabilities are ALREADY stepping into ownership and employer roles. Do a little research to find a business or non-profit operated by a person with disabilities in Minnesota -- where they are the owner or leader of that entity. And then tell us about them and what they are doing!
        - Gracie's Doggie Delights - is operated by an enterprising young woman with Down Syndrome who loves dogs. Her Doggie Delights are made with just one ingredient. Freeze dried USDA inspected meat. No additives. No chemicals. https://graciesdoggiedelights.com/pages/about-us
        - Lance Hegland does consulting work https://www.linkedin.com/in/lancehegland/

2. Census Overview - Joe Lehman, Arc MN Policy Intern

- The Census is important for funding, representation, and government programs
    - $675 billion of federal funds distributed to states
    - Funds new roads, bridges, and new government services
    - Drawing of legislative districts, how many members of Congress each state receives
- Many programs affected by Census data
    - SNAP
    - Medicaid

    - Public housing funding
    - Urban and rural land use planning
    - Hospitals, EMS, medical institutions
- People with disabilities are considered a “hard to count” population
    - Ineffective outreach efforts
    - Concerns with use of personal info
- Data is protected by law and is always anonymous
- Misconceptions about the Census
    - Children DO count (afterschool programs, playground locations, etc.)
    - Not a count of citizenship or legal status
    - College students should be counted where they would be living regardless of COVID-19
- Can be filled out in-person, online, or over the phone

3. New Member Application Review

- **Catherine Konakowitze**
    - Advocate
    - Dakota County
    - **Interested:** “To get involved with the council. Discuss ideas and to give ideas to all members of the Council. I would like to share what it is like to live with my disability in everyday life”
    - **Experience:** “I have never been a member of a council. It sounds very interesting to me and I would like to be a part of the council.” NAMI
    - **Approved by the MRQC (Vote: 12 Yes, 0 No)**
- **Mohamed (Mourssi) Alfash**
    - Advocate
    - Washington County
    - **Interested:**
        - I am enthusiastic about contributing to improving the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities
        - I have strong research and management skills, sound knowledge about and first-hand experience with the employment, education, healthcare, accessibility, equity, and quality of life initiatives for people with disabilities
        - I am familiar with the procedures used in analyzing the employment, health, accessibility, and education needs of people with disabilities, and in developing equity strategies for those individuals
        - I also possess excellent knowledge and experience in applying federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding accessibility and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.
    - **Experience:**
        - I served the State Job Vacancy Survey Coordinator and the Disability Employment Subject Matter Expert with DEED for five years
        - I participate regularly in state and federal conferences and events focusing on disability employment and other people with disabilities affairs.
        - I currently serve as the Vice President of the Board of Directors of Access Press and I am a member of a cross agency Direct Care/Support Workforce Working Group.
        - Other council/committee experience:
            - MN Commission of Deaf, Blind, and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH)MN Statewide Independent Living Council (MNSILC)
            - MN Olmstead Plan Community Engagement Workgroup
            - Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) - Steward/Associate

        - State Cross-agency for Implementation of Olmstead Plan and Direct Care/Support Workforce Working Group
    - **Approved by the MRQC (Vote: 11 Yes, 1 No)**

4. **Tayler National Employment Update**

- National Trends in Disability Employment (nTide) does monthly employment surveys
- Uses data from the "jobs report" released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Data from March 2020
    - The employment-to-population ratio for working-age people with disabilities increased from 31.1 percent in March 2019 to 31.7 percent in March 2020 (up 1.9 %)
    - For working-age people without disabilities, the employment-to-population ratio decreased from 74.2 percent in March 2019 to 73.5 percent in March 2020 (down 0.9 %)
    - The labor force participation rate for working-age people with disabilities increased from 34.2 percent in March 2019 to 34.9 percent in March 2020 (up 2%)
    - For working-age people without disabilities, the labor force participation rate decreased slightly from 77.2 percent in March 2019 to 76.9 percent in March 2020 (down 0.4%)
    - Data was collected before major effects of COVID-19 so they may not be representative of the current workforce
- Guest speaker: Valentina Morales from The Women's Project
    - Aims to reduce the number of women being held pretrial, supporting them as they return to court and participate in their own defense. The Women's Project focuses on high-needs women detained on Rikers Island in New York City, helping them manage the complexities of the justice system, re-enter their communities and join or rejoin the workplace. The Women's Project provides holistic, person-centered, trauma-informed and culturally competent care from detention through release. Coordinate comprehensive advocacy. Push clinical support into non-traditional settings including the jails and courtroom. Build strong community. Support through stability.

Break 10:00 – 10:10am

5. **Employer Interview Data Analysis Small Group Discussion**
    - Biggest takeaways / things that stood out
        - Employers are open to supporting employment of people with disabilities
        - Introduce job coach to employer, set expectations
        - Lack of knowledge of person-centered practices
        - Not surprised about lack of responses, COVID-19 responses more accelerated than general public, may have impacted numbers
        - Comparing different locations of the same company (Walgreens)– different practices
        - HIPPA privacy
        - Lack of formal inclusivity trainings
            - Employers didn't see it as a "need"
        - Some people in management had organic, natural connections to people with disabilities where others who worked with the larger (contracted) groups didn't have the same feel
        - Lack of resources / knowledge of resources
        - Use of mock interviews
        - Discrimination responses – there was no standard procedure, just "we talk about it"
            - When dealing with customers – different avenue to look into
    - Best practices / successes
        - Patience and effective communication
        - Trained supervisors, matching employee to the right manager

    - Schedule and transportation accommodation
        - Flexible schedules, shorter shifts
    - Help with the application process
    - Frequency check-ins with employee, job coach, and employer to address employee needs and encourage communication
    - Tailored job description
    - Integrating job coach onto team
        - Included in interview and orientation process
    - Equal payment
- Challenges / barriers
    - Trauma from previous employment experiences
    - Not treating people with disabilities like adults
    - Struggle with limited hours to prevent loss of benefits
    - Limited job tasks and duties
    - Limited leadership roles
    - Limited access to transportation
    - Inaccessible application process
        - Online applications
        - Long/confusing assessments
- Employer needs
    - Inclusivity training
    - Discrimination policies and procedures, customers included
    - Job coach relationships, communication, stability
    - Education on how to treat people with disabilities and use job coaches effectively
    - Network of support to see what other employers are doing to employ people with disabilities and their successes
        - Placement Partnerships led by DEED
- Employee needs
    - Direct hiring
    - Supportive managers/supervisors
    - Awareness of disclosing disability
- Other?
    - Educate the public on the jobs people with disabilities are currently doing and reducing stigma around employing people with disabilities

Break 11:05 – 11:11am

6. **Employer Interview Data Large Group Share Back and Discussion**
    - Small groups share back
    - Next steps?
        - Meet with Chamber of Commerce or another body to start a movement educating employers on how to employ people with disabilities
        - Communication and education with general public
        - Make connections and partner with agencies doing this work
            - MN Dept. of Labor
            - Career Force
        - After COVID-19 is no longer a threat, there is an opportunity for change
            - Working from home may be the new normal
            - Employers hiring more people with disabilities

- Can we identify a product / outcome?
    - Information session / focus group / partner with employers and agencies working to find employment for people with disabilities

7. Discuss Next Meeting and New Focus Area – Support Staff Shortage

- The MRQC has outlined two areas to focus future work:
    1. Employment Project
        - Make connections and partnerships with agencies actively working to find employment for people with disabilities
        - Address these employment gaps when the COVID-19 outbreak is over
    2. Support Staff Crisis
        - Do more research on the staffing crisis in Minnesota, current legislation, etc.
        - Advocate for legislation to address the staffing crisis
- Events in the coming weeks regarding COVID-19 may govern what direction our work goes
- The council will review these options again at the May MRQC meeting and decide where to focus future work

8. What's Working/What's Not Working

Working:

- Zoom breakout rooms for small group discussion (3)
- Could hear everyone really well
- People stating their names when speaking
- People showing their videos helped follow conversation
- Technology easy to navigate
- Everyone reviewing material beforehand and coming prepared
- Good facilitator
- Great attendance

Not Working:

- Meetings from 9am-Noon, too long and exhausting (7)
- Breaks too short
- CART captioning started late

Next Meeting: May 8th, 2020 from 9:00 – 11:00am