



# MSRC-DORS 2023 Public Meetings Notes

October 11<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 PM

&

October 12<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 AM

(Virtual, via Zoom)

The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC) and the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) continually assess the rehabilitation and career needs of Maryland citizens with disabilities. As part of this assessment, DORS and the MSRC hold annual public meetings.

**Facilitator:** Kimberlee Schultz, Director, DORS Office of Public Affairs

**Presenters:**

- Jody Boone, DORS Senior Executive Director, Planning, Operations, and Field Services
- Toni March, DORS Office for Blindness & Vision Services (OBVS) Director
- Patrick Peto, DORS Program Manager, Quality Assurance, Policy & Planning
- Jessica Markum, DORS Staff Specialist for Students and Transition-aged Youth
- Katherine L. Jones, MSRC Chair and Executive Director, Bay Area Center for Independent Living

**Introducing:**

- Tom Liniak, Director of Community-Based and Workforce Services
- Marla Friedman, the new Director of the Client Assistance Program (CAP)

## Division Updates

### Leadership Updates – Jody Boone

- Dr. Carey Wright will begin on October 23<sup>rd</sup> as the Maryland State Department of Education Interim State Superintendent.
- The DORS Workforce and Technology Center is celebrating it's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!
- DORS staff are currently serving approximately 13,240 individuals with disabilities throughout the state, plus an additional 6,417 students with disabilities who are receiving only Pre-Employment Transition Services.
- In program year 2022, which ended 6/30/23, staff successfully assisted 994 consumers with obtaining competitive integrated employment.

- Over the past year, DORS staff worked diligently to fill many vacant positions. Thanks to the efforts of our HR recruitment staff and hiring managers we now have only 15 vacant PINS.
- Our Eligibility Determination Unit (EDU), which began in February 2022, has continued to grow and take on more referrals. EDU staff and managers are steadily working their way up to processing 100% of all incoming referrals. Field staff are reporting positive outcomes resulting from the work of the EDU, such as having more time to provide thorough counseling and guidance to consumers while developing Individualized Plans for Employment.
- This past summer, DORS created a new Deaf and Hard of Hearing Unit (DHHU) which is based in Frederick District within Region I. Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RCD) are still located in offices throughout the state, but they now all report to the same supervisor, Dr. Ju-Lee Wolsey who began with DORS in August. Special thanks to Sharon Plump, Stacey Watts, Carol Long, Noe Turcios, and Dr. Ju-Lee Wolsey for their work in establishing the new unit.
- This past summer, with the approval of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, DORS made significant policy changes to our post-secondary education and required financial contribution policies. These changes were effective 7/1/23.
- The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) completed required monitoring during the fall of 2022. DORS staff are currently working on the corrective action plan, as assigned by RSA.
- The HB 660 Commission completed its review of DORS and submitted 10 recommendations which DORS staff are actively addressing; 3 of the recommendations require no action.
- Lease Renewals/Office Moves: Elkton office moved to a new location; space has been located for our new Salisbury office; plans to move our Hagerstown office to be co-located with the American Job Center in downtown Hagerstown are underway; new locations are being sought for our Germantown and Bel Air offices.

### **OBVS Updates** – Toni March

OBVS encompasses four programs:

- Field Services (VR)
- ILOB
- BEP
- Services for the Blind at WTC

For Program year 2022 we served

- 1154 people the VR program, this includes over 200 persons who are aged 22 or less, with 76 successfully employed closures.
- 200 of the people served in the VR program were between the ages of 14 and 22.
- 1180 persons in the ILOB program with 134 persons with successful outcomes

Highlights from the VR and Pre-Employment Transitioning Services programs

- Two very successful summer programs for youth
  - Blind Industries and Services of Maryland STAR program
  - Maryland School for the Blind MISLE program
- Established new vendors for
  - Pre ETS: Vanward (virtual program)
  - World Services for the Blind for vocational skill training
  - NSite for vocational skill training
  - Several Independent Employment Specialists
  - Clusiv for technology training
- Updated Vendor Fees for blind services such as Orientation and Mobility and Teaching services
- Updated and clarified the ILOB and BEP brochures.

OBVS will be fulling staffed as of 11/1/23.

BEP

- Currently BEP has 39 retail operating facilities.
- 15 displaced vendors
- 3 new Micro Markets at Centers for Medicaid/ Medicare, Dept of Energy, and USPS
- Currently working on the establishment of Vending Route training for Blind Vendors
- Awarded the very large troop dining contract at Andrews Airforce Base this year.

**Quality Assurance Updates and Waiting List Updates – Patrick Peto**

**Waitlist**

Current Wait List: Category 2, Significant= <b>2386</b> (21 & under <b>803</b> )	2021 Application dates= <b>541</b> (21 & under 213)
2019 Application dates= <b>201</b> (21 & under 27)	2022 Application dates= <b>605</b> (21 & under 210)
2020 Application dates= <b>422</b> (21 & under 110)	2023 Application dates= <b>617</b> (21 & under 243)

Since January 2023, we're rolled off **778** individuals.

- 472 with 2018 Application dates
- 306 with 2019 Application dates (final 200 to roll off Friday 10/13)

- We plan to continue at the same pace, approx. 200 each Cohort (takes 4-6 weeks to track responses/close cases).

From September-December 2022- we rolled out

- **194** individuals with 2017 Application dates

Overall we have been averaging approximately a 25% response rate to the roll outs.

### **Quality Assurance Reviews**

Since January- June 2023, conducted **22** QA reviews:

- **15** Office of Field Services
- **3** Office for Blindness and Vision Service

Quality Assurance Reviews:

- Evaluate measurable and achievable standards
- Monitor policy compliance
- Ensure consumers receive information
- Identify training needs and policy issues.
- Identify exemplary rehabilitation practices and outcomes.

Process:

- 2 Teams of 2 reviewers each
- Team reviews the same cases and meet to validate/ develop unified response
- Unit meeting following review to discuss results, answer questions, provide guidance
- Corrective Action Plan developed following each District review
- Regional Corrective Action Plan addressing District findings throughout Region

2023 QA Case Reviews

- **440** total cases
- **143** Service Status
- **90** Employed
- **102** Closed Successfully
- **105** Closed Unsuccessfully

QA Wrap-Up Meeting held 9/9/23

- Included Senior leadership and review team
- Reviewed QA instrument and discussed findings
- Discussed Intake, Plan Development checklists
- Next QA Case review will begin January 18<sup>th</sup>- June 15<sup>th</sup> 2024

Upcoming Targeted reviews

- Pre-ETS
- ILOB
- Post-Secondary Education

Delegated Authority Reviews

- 2023 reviewed **105** cases

- 28 Individual Plans for Employment
- 77 Authorizations issued

## **Student Services Updates** – Jessica Markum

- CTCI Intake unit
  - The Center for Transition and Career Innovation from the University of Maryland was awarded a grant to establish an Intake Unit to process Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) in 2022.
  - They began processing Pre-ETS referrals as of 9/2022 and since then they have been sent 4,073 referrals to contact, complete intakes, gather documentation and provide DORS Eligibility Determination Unit a recommendation to proceed with qualification for each referral or to close if appropriate.
  - To date there have been 3,735 recommendations returned to DORS.
  - CTCI Is now in year 2 of the grant and along with completing the intakes for current referrals, they will also be gathering information and data that will inform an initiative to sustain an intake unit to complete Pre-ETS referrals going forward.
- Public Information
  - Public information for students and families have been updated and expanded to include:
    - A new brochure: DORS Services for Students  
<https://dors.maryland.gov/resources/Pages/default.aspx>
    - Updated website pages for:
      - General Information  
<https://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/specialized/transition/Pages/default.aspx>
      - Pre-Employment Transition Services  
<https://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/specialized/transition/Pages/Pre-ETS.aspx>
      - Student Employment Services  
<https://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/specialized/transition/Pages/services.aspx>
      - Information for School System Personnel  
<https://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/specialized/transition/Pages/Schools.aspx>
    - New informational videos produced by Maryland Public Television:
      - Pre-Employment Transition Services  
<https://youtu.be/5DrYZGzoSIA>
      - Student Employment Services <https://youtu.be/pVMj6USpXhA>

## **MSRC Updates** – Dr. Katherine L.R. Jones

- The MSRC is made up of individuals who are interested in the success of public vocational problem for individuals with disabilities.
- Council members are appointed by the Governor. At this time, we have one vacancy. Individuals who are interested may contact Jody Boone, [jody.boone@maryland.gov](mailto:jody.boone@maryland.gov), or myself, [kjones@bayareacil.org](mailto:kjones@bayareacil.org)
- The MSRC is composed of representatives from education, rehabilitation, employment, industry, and consumer advocacy groups.
- The MSRC takes an active role in reviewing, analyzing, and advising DORS on its performance and responsibilities in services.
- Over the past year, the MSRC has taken a active role in reviewing the suggestions from Commission's findings submitted to the state in March of 2023, remaining updated on the Priority 2 waiting list, advising on the creation of the Eligibility and Determination Unit, and staying abreast on the outreach efforts through PPMD and through listening sessions with community providers.