



# **Metro Regional Quality Council: FY2019 Annual Report Executive Summary**

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**2/2020**



<b>Council: Metro Regional Quality Council (MRQC)</b>
<b>Council Counties: Dakota, Hennepin and Scott</b>
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## Introduction

The Metro Regional Quality Council (MRQC) was developed in July of 2016. The contract is held by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Arc Minnesota is the fiscal host.

The MRQC members are people with disabilities, family members, service providers, and community members. There are also members from Dakota, Hennepin and Scott counties, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the Department of Human Services.

The purpose of the MRQC 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 three primary ways the council accomplishes these goals are through:

- The implementation of a quality improvement system based on person-centered principals.
- Promoting best practices and addressing gaps in services.
- Making recommendations for statewide changes to improve the quality of services and supports.

There are three Regional Quality Councils:

1. Metro Regional Quality Council in Hennepin, Scott, and Dakota counties
2. Arrowhead Regional Quality Council in Carlton, Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties
3. Region 10 Quality Council in Olmsted, Houston, and Wabasha counties.

The three RQCs share overarching goals and work together and independently to achieve them.

This report will cover the progress of the council and the results from the Regional Quality Council Person-Centered Quality Reviews. The report will also include lessons learned and recommendations for improved services and support.



## Regional Quality Council

### MRQC Membership and Roles:

Current MRQC Members listed below, organized by stakeholder group:

#### Service Providers

- Rod Carlson - Living Well Disability Services
- Joe Cuoco - Supportive Living Solutions
- Mary Gaasch - Hammer Residences

#### Individuals Receiving Services

- Ann Cirelli
- Rebecca St. Martin
- Jeffrey Nurick

#### Family Member

- Diane Sjolander
- Judi Marie Ringe
- Rhonda Godfrey

#### County Representatives

- Katie Ellerras – Scott County
- Chelsea Lorenz – Dakota County
- Erin Paredes – Dakota County
- Tim Sullivan – Hennepin County

#### State Representatives

- Robert Morneau - MN Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities
- Felicia Thomsen - Department of Human Services

#### Advocacy

- Georgann Rumsey - The Arc Minnesota

### MRQC Meetings:

The MRQC met six times from November 2018 - June 2018. Meeting minutes are on the website or can be provided by the MRQC Project Manager. There was a transition in the MRQC Project Manager position, which was open July – October 2018. As a result, the MRQC did not meet during those months.

The MRQC met on the second Friday of the month from 9-11am at The Arc Minnesota office. The MRQC had both large and small workgroups during council meeting times, as was the desire of the council members. Council meetings dedicated time as needed to small workgroups in order to accomplish tasks for the council.

The MRQC staff worked with the MRQC on the following topic areas during FY19:

- updates from the SQC,
- updates from the Quality Reviews,
- membership requirements and details,
- council decision-making process,
- organizational MRQC Charter,
- MRQC Letter of Commitment,
- review of FY 18 MRQC Annual Report,
- communication plan,
- outreach materials, and
- quality improvement project.

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## Quality Monitoring System: Person-Centered Quality Reviews

The State Quality Council and Regional Quality Councils, in partnership with the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration (ICI), developed the quality monitoring tool and procedure in 2016-2017. This tool was used during the RQC's Person-Centered Quality Reviews, where the council interviewed people receiving Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)

From 7/2017 through 6/30/19, the tool covered ten topic areas in the following order: housing situation, daily routine, community involvement, relationships, support staff, safety, planning, employment, hopes dreams and goals, and services and supports.

After a year of implementing this quality-monitoring tool, the Regional Quality Council and State Quality Council worked together to revise the original quality monitoring tool. The order of the questions were changed to better follow the natural flow of the interviews and the topics of transportation and case management were added. The updated quality monitoring tool was used 7/1/19 – 12/2019. Additional small changes were made to two topic titles and various prompting questions within each topic. The new order of the quality monitoring tools is:

1. housing,
2. daily routine,
3. employment,
4. community,
5. relationships,
6. transportation,
7. support staff,
8. safety,
9. case management,
10. services and supports.

If you would like more information on how the interviews are completed or how participants are selected, please contact the MRQC Project Manager.

## Data Analysis

During FY19, RQC staff worked with partners from DHS and the University of Minnesota ICI to determine how best to analyze the qualitative and quantitative data gathered from the interviews. The results of the ICI analysis reflect the data collected from all three RQCs between 11/2017 through 9/2019. The results and full Technical Report are available upon request.

## Quality Improvement Project

After considering the results of the MRQC FY18 Annual Report, additional quality reviews, and with council member input based on their experiences/expertise, the MRQC identified employment as the area of focus for a quality improvement project. To organize this project, the council developed the Quality Improvement Project Action Plan.

In FY19, the MRQC planned and completed the following action steps from the Quality Improvement Project Action Plan:

- Review results of the RQC interviews to determine focus area
- Brainstorm quality improvement projects
- Identify resources and best practices that promote a higher quality of life for people with disabilities
- Meet with others in the employment field for informational interviews or presentations at council meetings
- Conduct listening session with self-advocates and people with disabilities
- Develop scripts for focus groups to be held with each stakeholder group: people with disabilities, family members of people with disabilities, case managers, and employment support professionals.

The MRQC's work to gather information around employment for people with disabilities will continue into FY20. You can request access to the action plan or any of the above documents by contacting the MRQC Project Manager.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by MRQC members and staff after reviewing the data analysis provided by the University of Minnesota ICI. The recommendations are organized by Quality Review topic area but the MRQC acknowledges that there are recommendations that overlap into multiple areas.

### *Housing:*

- People with disabilities have the right to live among the community, not in segregated housing.
- People with disabilities need tools and resources to make informed choices about housing options, whatever their support needs.
- Legislation should support accessible and low-income housing in safe and desirable locations. Engage people with disabilities and family members in this process.
- People with disabilities should have a service that supports their move to a new home.

### *Employment:*

- People with disabilities should be able to keep and access their incomes freely and should not be kept in poverty.
- People with disabilities should earn a competitive wage and nothing less.

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- Employment support agencies should offer information on all employment options. This allows people to make informed choices.
- Employers should:
  - Know about the benefits of a diverse workplace that includes people with disabilities.
  - Have training and education to tap resource of people with disabilities.
  - Provide disability awareness training in the workplace.
  - Understand how accommodations are usually simple and low cost.

### *Transportation*

- People with disabilities are isolated due to lack of accessible and timely transportation.
- Redesign Metro Mobility and similar transportation services with people with disabilities to:
  - Increase and expand hours of operations on weekdays and weekends,
  - Create options for immediate transportation,
  - Streamline scheduling process to offer same-day scheduling and create online and app capabilities.
- All transit spaces should always be accessible even during snowstorms.
- Transportation options such as Uber and Lyft should be covered by waivers.

### *Person-Centered Plans:*

- People with disabilities and their families should receive education about person-centered practices and how this informs their services and supports.
- Funding for person centered plans should reflect plan development, follow up for accountability
- Person centered plans should be led by people with disabilities
- The plan should include roles, responsibilities, timeline, and evaluation to achieve the person's hopes and dreams.

### *Case Management:*

- People with disabilities should be informed about their case managers' roles and responsibilities.
- Case managers should get training and education to provide accessible and quality information about services and supports.
- Case managers should inform all persons they support about how person centered plans inform their services and supports.
- Meetings and communication between case managers and the people they support should be consistent, and reflect the needs and desires of the person.

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### *Community*

- People with disabilities should be supported to build relationships within the community.
- Community spaces should be accessible and welcoming.
- People with disabilities are valuable community members.

### *Support Staff*

- Legislation should increase wages of Direct Support Professionals.
- All direct care staff should get quality training informed by people with disabilities, including:
  - Comprehensive cultural training
  - Person-centered thinking and practices
  - Professional boundaries
  - Prevention of [physical, emotional, sexual] abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation
  - People with disabilities with overlapping identities (race, gender, LGBTQ+) need support staff who understand the additional barriers they may face.
  - Direct Support Professionals should be valued and compensated with better pay and quality training.

### *Safety*

People with disabilities have the right to have education and trainings about cyber safety, comprehensive sex education, healthy relationships, and health and wellbeing Education and training should be co-created with people with disabilities. It should be affordable and accessible.

### **Best Practices**

#### *Creative thinking and persistence for supports and staffing*

People report better outcomes and experience more success when they, a case manager, and/or family member finds creative solutions to the support/staffing crisis. To see the most success, creativity is needed to come up with solution. Dedication and follow through from case manager or other supports are also necessary to get the solution funded and put into practice.

#### *Person-centered practices as the expectation*

Person-centered practices indicate respect, foster positive relationships, and improve overall quality of life. Service recipients and family members should be informed about person-centered practices to give them the knowledge and language to advocate for themselves, understand their rights, and promote autonomy and self-determination. All staff should be trained in and practice person-centered principles and thinking. Specifically, staff and supports should:

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- Facilitate choice and participation in meal preparation and planning, with special emphasis placed on taste and cultural preferences.
- Foster an environment with clear and respected professional boundaries.
- Encourage independence and autonomy within relationships. This may look like, but is not limited to: welcoming visitors without time restrictions, allowing private phone calls/not screening communications, unrestricted access to technology that cultivates relationships, and increasing transportation options.
- Respect and follow one's personal life pace and routine. Activities, treatments, meals, etc. should be scheduled in ways that fit into their life pace rather than disrupting it.
- Respect one's personal space and privacy.

### *Ongoing evaluation and development of accessible resources*

Though there are comprehensive resources available through various websites such as Disability Hub, DB101, and the DHS website, service recipients and their families still experience widespread confusion, misunderstanding, and mistrust of the system. In order to improve the understanding and navigation of the service system, resources should:

- Be developed in partnership and with input from people with disabilities and their family members,
- Be evaluated on a regular basis, considering what groups are accessing or not accessing the information, how they are accessing the information, and if the information is presented in plain language, and
- Be available in multiple formats

### **MRQC Goals for 2020**

During FY19, the MRQC has made considerable progress in monitoring and improving the quality of services for people in Hennepin, Scott, and Dakota counties. The MRQC has identified the following goals necessary to continue to push this work forward and to further inform and challenge systems change.

1. Continue to collect and analyze information to make recommendations and identify best practices
2. Continue to make progress on the employment quality improvement project
3. Improve awareness and increase outreach among all stakeholder groups and across all intersectionalities
4. Report and share information to the SQC, DHS, MN State Legislature, and broader public
5. Provide training opportunities to support person-centered organizations
6. Connect with people with disabilities and their families to build their knowledge, understanding, and advocacy/self-advocacy skills

## Lessons learned

In order to be successful with the quality-monitoring process in the future, the MRQC needs:

- Updated and accurate contact information for contacting Quality Review participants
- Additional training, funding, and/or personnel, to properly review and analyze the results of the Quality Reviews on a regular basis.
- To share information, assistance, and support bi-directionally with the SQC.

The quality-improvement project is an effective way to better peoples' quality of life on a local level. In order to expand current quality-improvement efforts, the MRQC needs:

- To continue to inform projects by gathering information from a diverse and representative group of service recipients
- Ongoing guidance and support from DHS and the SQC
- Expanded collaboration and communication with state and lead agencies such as DHS, MDH, MDE, and DEED, in addition to Hennepin, Scott, and Dakota counties.
- To continue to develop partnerships and working relationships with providers, advocacy organizations, and self-advocate