Metro Regional Quality Council: FY2020 Annual Report

Submitted by Angie Guenther

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"To improve the quality of services and supports for people with disabilities"

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Council Counties: Dakota, Hennepin and Scott
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Introduction

The Metro Regional Quality Council (MRQC) was developed in July of 2016, with the contract being awarded to The Arc Greater Twin Cities (now The Arc Minnesota) as the fiscal host. The contract is held by the Department of Human Services (DHS). There are three participating counties involved in the work of the MRQC, consisting of Dakota, Hennepin, and Scott. The MRQC has a full time Project Manager and a full time Project Associate.

The MRQC is made up of various stakeholders, including: individuals with disabilities, family members, and representatives from Dakota, Hennepin, and Scott counties, a representative from the Office of the Ombudsman and a DHS Regional Resource Specialist.

The primary role of the MRQC is to work collaboratively with regional stakeholders and partners in order to monitor and improve the quality of services, person-centered outcomes, and overall quality of life for people with disabilities. The three primary ways the council accomplishes these goals are through:

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

The MRQC is one of three Regional Quality Councils (RQCs). Arrowhead Regional Quality Council is in Carlton, Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties and the Region 10 Quality Council is in Olmsted, Houston, and Wabasha counties. The three RQCs share overarching goals and work together as well as independently to achieve them. The three regional councils also work closely with the State Quality Council (SQC), which aims to improve the quality of services provided to people on a statewide level.

This report will cover the continued progress of the council, results from the implementation of the Regional Quality Council Person-Centered Quality Review and information gathered, lessons learned, and recommendations for improved services and support.

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RQC and SQC Collaboration

In the beginning of FY20, the Regional Quality Councils and State Quality Council (SQC) worked together to share and act on information gathered in the Person-Centered Quality Reviews. (You can read more about the Person-Centered Reviews on page 6). Each RQC provided bi-monthly reports to the SQC on the top five findings from different sections of the Quality Reviews. The goal of this process was to improve data sharing methods and to allow the SQC to respond to statewide needs in a timely manner.

The Regional Quality Council staff (Metro, Arrowhead, and Region 10) also participated in SQC workgroups. RQC staff divided themselves to have collaborative input from RQCs across all workgroups. The missions of each work group is described below:

- **Public Relations Workgroup:** to inform and broaden statewide support of SQC priorities, outcomes and scope of work through legislative advocacy, communications plan, and education of public. Support and engage with other SQC work groups where it fits this mission.
- **Quality Monitoring Workgroup:** to quantify the quality of services in Minnesota and monitor data to reflect improvement in people's lives.
- **Regional Support and Development Workgroup:** to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Minnesota through the development of statewide best practices and identification of opportunities.
- **Steering Committee Workgroup:** to provide the governing framework for the council via policies and processes so that council members can efficiently address our society's needs around quality disability supports, govern for the common good and sustain a just democracy.

The State Quality Council (SQC) and its workgroups have been on hiatus for the majority of the 2019-2020 fiscal year, ending RQC and SQC collaborative efforts.

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General Quality of Life Information

Person-Centered Quality Review Process

From August 2017 to March 2020, the Regional Quality Councils conducted Person-Centered Quality Reviews, which were interviews with people about their quality of life. The reviews asked about choice and control in different topic areas such as:

- housing
- daily routine
- community involvement
- employment
- relationships
- support staff

- safety
- transportation
- case management
- future life planning
- services and supports
- hopes, dreams and goals

To identify participants for the Person-Centered Quality Reviews, data scientists from Department of Human Services (DHS) randomly selected interview participants and their information was transferred into the secure database, Agile Apps. To qualify as a random sample, a person met the following qualifications:

- their County of Fiscal Responsibility (CFR) was within Hennepin, Scott, or Dakota counties;
- they were 14 years old or older;
- they received Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) but were not strictly on the Elderly Waiver (EW)

From Agile Apps, MRQC staff randomly sent participants a "Selected for Interview" letter. If necessary, a "Selected for Interview Guardian" letter was also sent to guardians. An example of the selection letter can be provided upon request. The MRQC sent between 50 and 100 Selected for Interview Letters each week and followed up the letter with one to two phone calls to each participant (if the contact information was accurate).

The purpose of these interviews were to be conversational and to record the thoughts and experiences of the interviewee while also gathering specific information within each topic area. During the quality review process, there were two Quality Reviewers: one to lead the interview and one to take notes. For each of the ten topics, interviewers asked one to two ranking questions (unless the interviewee chose not to answer) as well as various open-ended questions. As a result, the specific questions within each topic vary depending on the interviewee and the Quality Reviewer.

Person-Centered Quality Review Follow-Up Process

Once the interview was completed, both reviewers were responsible for revising and editing the notes for accuracy. After both reviewers reviewed and approved the notes, they were uploaded into Agile Apps and the full summary was sent to the interviewee, along with an

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interviewee feedback form. The feedback form aimed to gather information on how the experience was for the interviewee and to identify areas within the process that needed improvement. The feedback allowed MRQC staff to evaluate the Quality Review procedure. This evaluation eventually led to changes in the process as well as trainings for MRQC staff, interns, and/or volunteers on how to improve taking notes and in-person interview skills. The interviewee feedback form can be provided upon request.

Directly after the interview, the Quality Reviewers gave the interviewee a resource list. Reviewers highlighted any relevant resources based on what the interviewee shared during the interview. The resource list contained more information about the project, general resources, housing resources, crisis resources, information about the Office of the Ombudsman, and community advocacy and support resources. The MRQC Resource List can be made available upon request.

The Quality Reviewers encouraged the interviewee to reach out to the Project Manager if there were any mistakes or information missed in the full summary of their interview. This final review by the interviewee allowed for a third check for accuracy (the first two checks being from each Quality Reviewer).

The interviewee could choose to use their summary to advocate for themselves and direct changes in their services and supports. The interview summary could be sent to different members of the interviewee's support team, if requested. Additionally, multiple copies of the summary could have been sent to the interviewee if they would like to share it with others.

The MRQC staff completed the following number of Quality Reviews per fiscal year:
> FY18: 85
> FY29: 69
> FY20: 86
> **Total: 240**

Note: Fiscal years (FY) are June 30 through July 1

Person-Centered Quality Review Analysis

The Regional Quality Councils (RQCs) partnered with the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration (ICI) to analyze the results of the 240 Quality Reviews. The full data analysis from ICI can be found in the MRQC FY 19 Annual Report upon request.

A more user-friendly version of the data analysis can be found in this MRQC Quality Review Results Infographic on our website: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/MRQC-Quality-Review-Results-Infographic.pdf

For the safety of the reviewers and participants, the Person-Centered Quality Review process was put on hold March 2020 due to the onset of COVID-19.

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Quality Improvement Efforts

In addition to monitoring the quality of services through the Person-Centered Quality Reviews, the MRQC has started planning and implementing quality improvement efforts to directly impact the lives of people with disabilities in our region. The MRQC has used the findings from the Quality Reviews to direct and inform quality improvement efforts in the areas of employment, the support staff shortage, self-advocacy, equity and justice, and safety.

1. Employment

In December of 2018, the MRQC identified employment as an area of focus for a quality improvement project. This area was highlighted after considering the results of the MRQC FY18 Annual Report, additional quality reviews, and based on council member experiences/expertise. To organize this project, the council developed the MRQC Employment Quality Improvement Project Action Plan. This is a working document that outlines the action steps and sub-steps necessary to complete the quality improvement project within the area of employment. Each step has a goal timeline for completion and specified roles and responsibilities, though these are open to change. This action plan was created with input from MRQC members and staff and can be found in Appendix E.

In FY20, the MRQC planned and completed the following action steps from the Quality Improvement Project Action Plan:

- Continued to identify resources and best practices that promote a higher quality of life for people with disabilities in the Employment Resources and Best Practices document.
    - More information on this document can be found in the *Resources and Best Practices* section on page 37. The most updated version of this working document can be found on our website: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O8Mbiwqp1UM8iNeNwmiyHiNoZtRhGlKwhUzmdsyaGwU/edit

- Conducted an employment comparison across different states to identify best practices used outside of Minnesota: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/MRQC-State-Employment-Comparisson-Report-9.29.2020.pdf

- Analyzed the employment section of 240 Person-Centered Quality Reviews

- Held 7 employment focus groups with 60 people and analyzed results looking for best practices and barriers:
    - 3 with people with disabilities
    - 2 with family members of people with disabilities
    - 1 with employment support professionals
    - 1 with case managers
      (Focus group scripts for each stakeholder group can be provided upon request.)

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- Conducted 16 informational interviews with employers and analyzed the results.
  - Questions related to the business' history of employing people with disabilities, their application/interview processes, accommodations, workplace environment, and wages/career growth. The complete list of questions can be found in Appendix F.

- Developed and shared the following employment materials with employers and on our website:
  - Person Centered Practices in the Workplace: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/MRQC-Person-Centered-Practices-in-the-Workplace-Handout.pdf
  - Workplace Culture: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/MRQC-Workplace-Culture-Handout.pdf
  - Fact vs. Fiction: Challenging the perceptions surround employing people with disabilities: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/MRQC-Fact-vs-Fiction-Handout.pdf
  - People-First Language: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/MRQC-People-First-Language-Handout.pdf

- Developed and scheduled two focus group to evaluate DB101's Benefits and Work Estimator tool. Focus groups were cancelled due to COVID-19. Focus group plan is available upon request from project manager.

- Presented employment results and recommendations to:
  - Scott/Dakota/Carver county community of practice for social workers (20 participants)
  - Dakota County's Employment Innovations group (20 participants)
  - Business Employment Networks in partnership with DEED (51 participants)

- Outreach to 15 local Chambers of Commerce for collaboration and information sharing.

- Participating in Professional Input Panel for Employment (PIPEin) to provide feedback to DHS, DEED, and VRS on employment-related topics.

- Developed the We Work! Employment Campaign plan, outline, and outreach materials (found in Appendix G).

- MRQC staff compiled the results of the employment data collection into:
  - A formal MRQC Employment Report: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/Employment-Report-9.25.2020-4.pdf.
  - An executive summary of the MRQC Employment Report: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/MRQC-Employment-Report-Executive-Summary-9.29.2020.pdf

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o Employment report and executive summary were shared with:
- The Arc Minnesota's Capitol Connector (1,030 subscribers)
- The Arc Minnesota's Newsletter (11,700 subscribers)
- The Arc Minnesota's Public Policy Committee (broad stakeholder representation)
- The Regional Quality Council Quarterly Newsletter
- The MRQC website
- Various community partners such as DHS, DEED/VRS and provider agencies

The result section of MRQC Employment Report Executive Summary is below.

MRQC Employment Report Executive Summary

Person-Centered Quality Review – Employment Section Analysis

Person-Centered Quality Review Results

This section will focus on the data gathered from the employment section of the Person-Centered Quality Reviews, looking for best practices and barriers/challenges.

Table 1: Best Practices and Barriers to Working for People with Disabilities	
Best Practices	**Barriers**
• Supportive supervisors • Getting along with coworkers • Flexibility	• Physical disabilities or health challenges • Mental illness or challenges • Confusion or fear of losing benefits • Lack of accessible transportation • Staffing • Hiring process • Supervisors
Table 1.2: Best Practices and Barriers to Working with Job Coaches	
Best Practices	**Barriers**
• Being engaged on the job • Help develop skills • Assist with application process • Advocate for people receiving services • Helping find a job that meets wants and needs	• Poor communication skills • Unresponsive • Unfocused • Unreliable • Job coach turnover

Table 1: lists common best practices and barriers during job search, hiring process and practices
Table 1.2: lists common best practices and barriers to working with job coaches

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Table 2: Barriers working with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and Workforce Center
• Everything is done online • Lack of transportation • Need/lack of support staff to help navigate process • Long process with little success • Hard to find jobs • Staff do not know how to work with people with specific disabilities

Table 2 lists common barriers working with Vocational Rehabilitation (VRS) and Workforce Center

Employment Focus Groups and Employer Informational Interviews

The Metro Regional Quality Council gathered more specific employment information through focus groups and informational interviews.

Focus Group and Informational Interview Results

This section of the summary will focus on the data gathered from the employment focus groups and employer interviews, looking for best practices and barriers/challenges.

Table 3: Best Practices in Job Search and Hiring Process	
• Volunteering can build skills • Attending career and job fairs • Follow-up after interview • Job search classes • Networking • Employers - be prepared to communicate in different ways	• Invite applicant to check the job out ahead of time • Have a flexible application process • Relax the interview process • Get to know the applicant • Include their future supervisor on interview

Table 3 lists common best practices during job search, hiring process and practices

Table 4: Person-Centered Best Practices	

• Communicate often and clearly
• Get to know employee
  o How they learn
  o Career goals and aspirations
  o If they prefer flexibility vs consistency
	• Build on employee strengths
	• Offer opportunities to try different positions
	• Allow flexible hours/schedules
	• Provide mentor or buddy programs
	• Assist with transportation

Table 4 lists common person-centered best practices

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Table 5: Best Practices with Workplace Environment and Job Coaches	
Workplace	**Job Coaches**
• Zero-tolerance policy on discrimination • Inclusion and diversity training • Tailor job descriptions to strengths • Team communication • Foster positive work environment	• Be patient, flexible, open-minded • Communicate frequently with all parties • Same orientation and training • Get to know employer and employee

Table 5 lists common best practices in workplace and with job coaches from employer interviews

Table 6: Barriers/Challenges for Employees and Employers	
Employees	**Employers**

• Inaccessible/complicated applications
• Disclosing disability
• Lack of experience
• Job requirements
• Consistent attendance
   o Health
   o Staffing
   o Transportation
• Customer behavior
• Job coach turnover
• Lack of variability in duties
• Employer assumptions
• Balancing income and benefits
	• Workforce shortage
	• Payment with benefits
	• Financial risk
	• Limited job description
	• Communication barriers
	• Scheduling challenges
	• Inconsistent employee attendance
	• Emotions and attitudes
	• Customer behavior
	• Poor quality job coaches
	• Management vs micromanagement
	• Safety

Table 6 lists common challenges and barriers for employees and employers in employment

Employment Recommendations:

To improve the quality of employment experiences for people with disabilities, there needs to be immediate and sustained societal, systems, community, organizational, and individual change. The MRQC makes the following recommendations:

- Eliminate the Fair Labor Standards Act, Section 14©
- Do Away with Income and Asset Limits
- Person-Centeredness at All Stages
- Fund Education and Development
- Shift Focus to Careers

- Challenge Traditional Employment
- Simplify the System
- Customized Employment for All
- Foster a Positive Workplace Environment
- Universal Design as the Standard

A more detailed description of these recommendations can be found in the Recommendations section on page 20. The MRQC's work to gather employment information from people with disabilities will continue into FY21.

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2. Support Staff Shortage

The MRQC voted to devote time, energy, and resources to a second focus area, the support staff shortage. The MRQC refers to it is a "shortage" and not a "crisis" because we recognize that it is has been a systemic failure over the period of decades. To refer to it as a "crisis" would indicate that it is an acute problem and therefore does not do justice to the long-term impact that this shortage has had on people with disabilities.

During the April MRQC meeting, council members reviewed the ICI analysis of the Person-Centered Quality Reviews and voted to focus on the support staff shortage. The Support Staff Shortage Project Action Plan can be found in Appendix H.

During the May MRQC meeting, the MRQC Project Associate presented on the current status of the staffing shortage in Minnesota. The purpose of the presentation was to ground the council in the reality of the shortage and to inform future quality improvement work. The presentation can be provided upon request from the project manager.

To further support this work, MRQC staff and intern completed an in-depth qualitative analysis of the support staff section of the Quality Reviews. The full report can be found on the MRQC website: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/MRQC-Support-Staff-Analysis-Final-10.28.2020-1.pdf

The MRQC Support Staff Analysis Executive Summary is below and can be found on the MRQC website: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/MRQC-Support-Staff-Analysis-Executive-Summary-9.29.2020-2.pdf

MRQC Support Staff Analysis Executive Summary

Current Status on the Support Staff Shortage for Minnesotans with Disabilities
Minnesotans with disabilities and older persons in need of long-term services and supports rely on direct support workers (DSWs) to have a life based off their wants and needs. DSWs in Minnesota are primarily women (78 percent) with an average age of 43 years old.[3] Looking at Minnesota as a whole, the direct support workforce is more diverse than Minnesota's overall population. Support staff have many roles and are known by many job titles (e.g., Direct Support Professional (DSP), Personal Care Assistance (PCA), Job coach, etc.)[3] For the purpose of this summary, support staff will be the term used. The skills that support staff bring to their jobs are vital to people with disabilities being able to live and participate in their communities.

The direct care workforce is large and is one of the highest-demand and anticipated growth sectors in the U.S. and Minnesota.[3] One significant barrier that affects this workforce is direct support turnover and shortage. According to the Minnesota Direct Support Worker Survey

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(2019), the turnover rates in Minnesota for organizations that employ support staff is 39 percent compared to the national average of 51 percent.[4] Low wages, unaffordable benefits, limited training, and lack of career advancement opportunities make this work undesirable by some workers and unsustainable by existing workers.[3]

The challenges the direct support workforce faces impacts people with disabilities, their families, employers, and community providers who are finding it increasingly difficult to find and keep high quality support staff. Expansion of this workforce is impossible without significant improvements in worker recruitment, retention, and turnover prevention.

Person-Centered Quality Review – Support Staff Section
This section will focus on the data gathered from the support staff section of the 240 Person-Centered Quality Reviews, looking for best practices and barriers.

Support Staff Ranking Questions
All Quality Review participants were asked to rank, "To what degree do you feel your staff treat you with respect?"

The rankings options were as follows:
- None: Treat with respect 0% of the time
- Some: Treats with respect 50% of the time or less
- Most: Treats with respect 51% of the time or more
- Full: Treats with respect100% of the time
- Not Applicable (N/A) - Does not apply to the person

The results to the question, "To what degree do you feel your staff treat you with respect?":

Table 7: To what degree do you feel your staff treat you with respect?	
Ranking Choices	Percentages (%)
Full	58
Most	28
Some	10
None	1
Not Applicable (N/A)	3

Table 7: participant's responses to the question, "To what degree do you feel your staff treat you with respect?

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Support Staff Best Practices

Participants were also asked open-ended questions to better understand their experiences with their support staff. Their answers have been organized into two categories:

- Working with Support Staff for People with Disabilities, which discusses general best practices and barriers.
- Support Staff Treating People they Support with Respect, which looks into the specific best practices and barriers that go into being treated with respect by support staff.

Table 8: Working with Support Staff for People with Disabilities	
Best Practices	**Barriers**
- Treats person with respect - Helpful, friendly, caring - Long-term staff - Going on outings in the community - Listens to person - Flexible schedules - Good communication - Person has control over who staff are - Provides transportation - Well trained - Able to talk to supervisors	- Staff turnover/shortage - Disrespectful staff - Poor communication and lack of attentiveness - Lack of training and scheduling flexibility - Staff being late, cancelling or no showing - Lack of trust - Low-wages for support staff - Abuse, neglect, and theft (severe) - Falsifying hours

Table 8: list common best practices and barriers working with support staff for people with disabilities

Table 9: Support Staff Treating People they Support with Respect	
Best Practices	**Barriers**
- Treats person with respect - Helpful - Good relationships with staff - Listens, attentive, responsive - Good communication - Community outings	- Staff turnover/shortage - Disrespectful - Not proactive - Poor communication - Staff having limited time - Poorly trained - Abuse, neglect, and theft - Having to fire staff - Having to train staff

Table 9: list common best practices and barriers to support staff treating people who they support with respect

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Support Staff Shortage Recommendations

Support Staff Recruitment and Retention Efforts

Maintaining a quality workforce of care providers for people in Minnesota who have disabilities can be a challenge, especially during times of lower unemployment. Recently, The Department of Human Services published the *Recruitment and Retention in Supports for Minnesotans with Disabilities toolkit* to address the support staff shortage for providers and people who hire their own support.[1]

Strategies that can help improve recruitment, retention and cost of turnover for support staff include:

- Use a range of effective and non-traditional strategies to reach potential employees
- Use Behavior Trait Interviewing; Behavioral-trait interviewing uses interview questions that not only ask about work experience, but also about more general life experiences
- Supporting state and local legislation that increases wages and benefits for direct support staff
- Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) participate in person-centered planning/thinking training opportunities
- Track Direct Support Professional (DSP) turnover and tenure organization wide
- Track financial and non-financial cost of support staff turnover
- Have an effective onboarding and competency-based training system for new hires; onboarding includes getting to know people who receive supports, coworkers and the organization
- Have many ways to reward and recognize employees for excellent support and performance

Creative Thinking for Supports Staff

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. Dedication and follow through from case manager or other supports are also necessary to get the solution funded and put into practice. One promising way people are creatively filling their support staff needs is through natural supports.

Natural supports are supports and relationships that are developed in natural environments such as the family, school, work and community. These relationships and the support and assistance they offer, maintain and enhance the quality and security of life for people with disabilities.[2] By building a robust network of natural supports, people can receive support and care from people they know and trust in ways that work for them and that honor their wants and needs.

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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:

- 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.

Support Staff Shortage Next Steps:

Based on the results from the support staff section of the Person-Centered Quality Reviews, the MRQC is working to change the quality life for support staff and the people they support.

The council has started this work by:

- Completing a needs assessment to understand the current status of the support staff shortage within Minnesota.
- Reviewing all active legislation relating to support staff, followed through the legislative process, and provided support for various pieces of legislation.
- Further identifying the sub category to focus on: "Building Viable Careers."
- Developing a project to support provider agencies assess their current practices and give them actionable steps to improve to better recruit and retain staff.

Barriers to quality staffing has the potential to affect all aspects of life for people with disabilities. The Metro Regional Quality Council will continue to work towards improving access to, and reducing turnover of, high quality support staff for people with disabilities.

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3. Self-Advocacy

The MRQC staff have been closely involved in self-advocacy efforts at The Arc Minnesota by providing support, guidance, and technical assistance in the following areas:

- Support developing and implementing a self-advocate led Parent Panel that discussed topics such as school, employment, finances, relationships, and decision-making.

- Guidance and supervision to various self-advocacy meetings such as:
  - Weekly Self-Advocate Happy Hour meetings
  - Monthly Self-Advocate Advisory Committee Meeting
  - Bi-monthly Calling All Self-Advocates statewide meeting
  - Bi-monthly Arc at the Movies event
  - Community conversation around racism and police violence

- Developed Plain Language Voting Resources to help people with disabilities know their rights, understand accessibility requirements of voting, and how to seek help voting if needed. These materials were available on The Arc Minnesota's website and shared multiple on social media platforms and voting engagement events. Access the voting resources here: https://arcminnesota.org/self-advocacy-page/advocate/voting-resources/

- Worked closely with the self-advocacy initiative to create a dedicated space on The Arc Minnesota's website for resources to help keep people with disabilities advocating, engaged, and learning during COVID-19. Access the Self-Advocacy Page here: https://arcminnesota.org/self-advocacy-page/

- Presented "Connecting and Advocating during COVID-19" at a conference geared towards self-advocates and people with disabilities. The presentation discussed ways people with disabilities could stay connected and advocate for themselves during the pandemic through various events, The Arc MN website, and voting in ways that work for them. The recording of the presentation can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEKGSh9xIWU&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=LifeworksLearning

- Participated in the planning and development of the "Be a Self-Advocacy Superhero," a virtual conference geared towards youth and young adults with disabilities. This training covers topics such as identity, anti-bullying, kindness, confidence, and leadership.

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4. Equity and Justice

The MRQC is devoted to operating under an equity and justice framework. In support of this work, the MRQC staff developed and provided an equity glossary and cultural responsiveness trainings for council members and The Arc Minnesota staff, interns, and volunteers.
Note: these resources are not exhaustive and should only be viewed as a basic framework.

- Glossary: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_n3t0DM_tCbLn-RtKXTT_soIYeFgpG8c3py00opEBI0/edit

- Cultural Responsiveness Training Part 1:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXygnjXzuIc&t=2s

- Cultural Responsiveness Training Part 2:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16T5qh_AC98&t=2s

5. Safety

The MRQC staff have been involved in various efforts to change the systems around abuse and neglect for people with disabilities.

- Participated in a Sexual Violence Prevention Stakeholder Group. This group developed policy legislating robust abuse prevention training during orientation for direct care staff.

- Reviewed and provided comment on the Olmstead Abuse and Neglect Prevention Recommendations.

- Participated in the Vulnerable Adults Act redesign efforts by DHS:
  - Conducted 3 focus groups with community members to get feedback
  - Reviewed and provided public comment on the DHS report "Recommendations and Stakeholder Input for Redesigning the Vulnerable Adult Act"

- Reviewed the Comprehensive Plan for Prevention of Abuse and Neglect of People with disabilities and highlighted the three areas the state should direct funding and efforts.

- Publicly tracking monthly maltreatment reports in our region and across the state. Tracking documents can be found here:
  https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1H62nm_RydVybF-BEGIYQ44GOCMV89H43CR2RHtPLxWY/edit#gid=0

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Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by MRQC members and staff after reviewing the Quality Review data analysis provided by the University of Minnesota ICI, the employment information and analysis, and the support staff analysis.

The recommendations are organized to correlate with Quality Review topic area but the MRQC acknowledges that there are recommendations that overlap in multiple areas. These recommendations are reflective from the information the MRQC gathered in the Quality Reviews, focus groups, interviews, and other data collection methods. They are not intended to be fully exhaustive.

Employment

To improve the quality of employment experiences for people with disabilities, there needs to be immediate and sustained societal, systems, community, organizational, and individual change. The MRQC makes the following recommendations:

Eliminate the Fair Labor Standards Act, Section 14©

People with disabilities who are working should not be treated or paid differently than their peers or colleagues.

- Employers and providers must not pay below minimum wage.
- Minimum wage should promote economic mobility for people with disabilities.
- End segregated employment and continue to promote integrated, competitive employment.
- Publicly funded employment programs must strive to build the infrastructure and supports needed to phase out the issuance of subminimum wage certificates.

Do Away with Income and Asset Limits

Income and asset limits perpetuate poverty for people with disabilities, negatively affecting access and overall quality of life.

- People with disabilities should be able to make and save money for their work without limits.
- People with disabilities should not be held in poverty to maintain their benefits.
- People with disabilities should not have to give up their benefits or earn less income if they choose to get married.

Education and Development

We must close the gaps in education and employment attainment for people with disabilities.

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- Educators should provide all information available to promote informed decision making to support and improve education/transition experiences and workforce options.
- Increase funding for schools and more specifically special education teachers, equipment, and facilities.
- Intentionally invest in non-traditional career paths.
- Invest in Minnesota's colleges and universities to ensure access and affordability for people with disabilities.

Shift Focus to Careers

People with disabilities should have the support, education, and resources to pursue a career that works for them.

- Case managers and employment support professionals must educate people with disabilities and their families about career opportunities and success stories so that they can make informed decisions about their employment
- People with disabilities should have the opportunities to build skills, experience, and understanding of different employment options through practices such as volunteering and job shadowing
- Employers must provide equal career advancement opportunities for people with disabilities such as trainings, skill development, and promotions

Challenge Traditional Employment

Providing flexibility and options for employees can improve their experiences, workplace environments, and employment outcomes.

- Provide opportunities for people with disabilities to volunteer in roles (if they desire).
- Offer flexible hours and remote work options for each employee.
- Work with employees to provide a tailored job description to emphasize their strengths and focus on their interests and career goals.

Simplify the System

The employment systems for people with disabilities are convoluted and confusing. The partnership between the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), State Services for the Blind (SSB), and the Department of Human Services (DHS) is a start but it cannot stop there.

- Partnership should include specific strategies for addressing the racism and ableism that permeate our service system.
- Messaging and instructions for accessing services needs to be written in plain language and must be direct, consistent, and straightforward. Paperwork and processes should not be a barrier that keeps people from accessing services.

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- Streamline administrative processes and increase communication across agencies to reduce unnecessary barriers faced by people with disabilities and family members.
- Messaging must be widely available in multiple languages and formats.
- All employment options must be clearly laid out to people with disabilities and their families from the beginning of the job search process, supporting informed-decision making.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) should have the funding, staffing, and resources so that people do not experience long waiting lists before they receive services.
- There must be an evaluation process to ensure high quality services and so that people are not receiving services for years without finding employment.

Customized Employment

Customized employment is the gold standard of employment support for people with disabilities. Customized employment utilizes tools and techniques within three stages - discovery, job development, and systematic instruction - to help people with disabilities gain competitive employment that works for them.

- All people with disabilities and their families should know what customized employment is and how to access it.
- All people who access employment services should receive the option of customized employment services.
- Customized employment training should be offered at a sliding scale to accommodate smaller provider organizations and make these services more widely available to people with disabilities.

Foster a Positive Workplace Environment

Workplace environment is one of the leading indicators of employment satisfaction. For Businesses, organizations, state agencies:

- All staff, including HR professionals, leadership, marketing staff, program staff, and other workers, should participate in people-first language training.
- All staff should participate in frequent and comprehensive diversity and inclusion training.
- All staff should be invited, welcomed, and part of organized events such as holiday parties, happy hours, and celebrations.
- Leadership should be leading inclusion efforts with all staff by example.
- Develop a creative plan for success that fits the unique needs of each employee.
- Options should be available for employees to process, talk about, and work through their emotions and mental health experiences as it relates to their position or workplace.
- Facilitate networking groups for businesses to share best practices and problem solve to overcome barriers and challenges that arise employing people with disabilities.

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Universal Design as the Standard

Universal design involves creating an environment that is welcoming and accessible to all.

- All businesses should implement universal design to improve the experiences of all employees.
- State funding should be available to support businesses in implementing universal design.

Direct Support Staff

Barriers to quality staffing has the potential to affect all aspects of life for people with disabilities.

- Legislation should support reimbursement rate increases for direct support providers to ensure the increase of competitive wages and benefits for support staff.
- Streamlined, consistent, and comprehensive training needs to be provided and required of direct care staff. Trainings should be developed and evaluated by people with disabilities and family members and should cover the following topics:
  - Comprehensive cultural sensitivity and responsiveness training
  - Person-centered thinking and practices
  - Professional boundaries and how to set and address them
  - Prevention of [physical, emotional, sexual] abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation
- People with disabilities who hold other historically oppressed identities need to be given support that takes into consideration the barriers they may face due to their intersecting identities.
- Person-centered practices will be contradictory if they are not also applied to staff and the environment that they are placed in, i.e. better pay, more support/resources/training, breaks during shifts, etc.
- Resources and technical assistance should be available to support the recruitment, retention, and turnover prevention of high quality staff for provider agencies as well as people and families who hire their own staff.
- People should be aware of, and encouraged to use, natural supports. Natural supports are supports and relationships that are developed in natural environments such as the family, school, work and community. Natural supports tend to reduce staff turnover and improve the quality of care and overall quality of life.

Safety

Too often, people with disabilities are segregated from their communities or discriminated against because of others' false perceptions that they are vulnerable or at risk. People with

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disabilities must have information and education to make their own decisions around their safety, whenever possible.

- People with disabilities have the right and must have the opportunity to receive educational trainings around cyber safety, comprehensive sex education, health and wellbeing, and interpersonal relationships. These trainings should be accessible, affordable and ongoing. Trainings should be developed and implemented by, and/or in partnership with, people with disabilities.
- People with disabilities must have dignity of risk. Family members, providers, case managers, and other members of their support team must promote informed decision making and respect their dignity of risk.
- People with disabilities have their right to privacy and that must be respected and withheld unless they are a direct threat to themselves or others.
- We must continue to expose and call out discriminatory practices that continue to restrict, restrain, and incarcerate people on the basis of disability.

Housing:

Affordable and accessible housing is a human right and a basic need. People with disabilities often need stable housing before they are able to fully participate in other areas of their life such as employment or community involvement.

- Housing providers and supports should provide (or partner with other organizations to provide) physical assistance for movers with disabilities.
- Housing providers, advocates, and partnering organizations must promote the right for people with disabilities to live among the community and not in segregated housing.
    - People with disabilities should be given the tools and resources to make informed choices about different housing options, such as location, type of residence, and whom they live with, regardless of their support needs.
- Legislation should support the ongoing development and upkeep of accessible and low-income housing in safe and desirable locations. People with disabilities and family members should be involved at all stages of this work.
- Funding should support the implementation of technology-enhanced supports to increase independence.

Transportation

Access to affordable and reliable transportation can impact a person's ability to build and sustain relationships, participate in their community, and find and maintain employment.

- Funding should be available so that transportation services can be provided to communities in rural areas.

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- Case managers must share alternative and creative transportation options that are covered by waivers to reduce the dependence on inconsistent, inconvenient, and timely methods.
- Redesign Metro Mobility and similar transportation services to allow for independence and self-determination in the community. Specifically, increase funding and staffing to:
  - Increase and expand hours of bus operations, including weekends
  - Create options for last second transportation
  - Streamline scheduling process by
    - Offering same-day scheduling for rides
    - Creating online and app capabilities .
  - People with disabilities should be included in all stages of redesign.
- Cities must ensure accessibility of public transportation stops and terminals all year around, with timely response to weather events such as snowstorms and extreme cold.

Person-Centeredness:

Person-centeredness is putting the person, their culture, and their wants and needs at the center of all planning and decisions. Cultural norms and traditions influence what it means to be person-centered. To be truly person-centered, one must also be culturally responsive.

- All systems, processes, and discussions about and for people with disabilities should center what is important to them.
- Service recipients and their families should be informed of and trained around person-centered plans and person-centered practices upon receiving waivered services or employment supports and frequently thereafter. This will support informed decision-making, encourage accurate promotion within their community, and reduce reliance on the system.
- Funding needs to reflect the actual time and work it takes to practice person-centered planning methods with intention and integrity. Currently, the flat rate does not cover true exploration, accountability, and targeted follow through.
- Person-centered practices must also be culturally responsive. People conducting person-centered planning must receive ongoing training and education relating to the culture of those they work with.
- Intentional, structured follow up needs to be included in all person-centered planning meetings. Roles, responsibilities, and timelines should be made clear during the meeting and a process for evaluation and follow-up should be set and mutually understood.
- There must be targeted outreach and training to ensure support staff, family members, case managers, and employers implement person-centered practices in the home and workplace.

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Case Management:

Case managers are integral for people with disabilities and their families to know about, understand, and access services that work for their unique needs.

- Case managers' roles and responsibilities should be clearly communicated to people receiving services and their families as soon as they start receiving case management services.
- Consistent and uniform on-boarding and ongoing training must be provided to both county and contracted case managers in order to increase the reliability and quality of their information and guidance.
  - o Case managers need a broad and comprehensive understanding of systems and available resources to disseminate relevant information to people in an efficient and timely manner.
  - o Case management must also be culturally responsive. Case managers must receive ongoing training and education relating to the culture of those they work with.
- Case managers should inform all persons they support about the Person-Centered Planning (PCP) process and how it may benefit them. After initial conversation, PCP options should be brought up on a regular basis.
- Meetings and communication between case managers and the people they support should be consistent and reflect the needs and desires of those they support.
  - o Timelines should be established and mutually agreed upon with a plan for evaluation and follow up as necessary.

Community

Participation in one's community can lead to increased confidence, a sense of belonging, and the building of a social network.

- Advocacy organizations should build networks that will support people with intersecting identities. They should offer opportunities and avenues for people with disabilities to connect and develop relationships with communities that share their other identities (i.e. Race, Ethnicity, Gender Identity, Sexuality, Religion). These spaces must be accessible and made with ongoing input from the populations it aims to serve.
- Natural supports in place of formal services should be promoted through community inclusion.

Lessons learned:

Quality Improvement Work

The region-specific quality improvement work is an effective way to improve 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, DEED, in addition to Hennepin, Scott, and Dakota counties.
- To continue to develop partnerships and working relationships with providers, advocacy organizations, and self-advocates/people with disabilities.

Connecting During COVID-19

The way the MRQC connects with people with disabilities has shifted as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Meeting in person became a health risk and, as a result, many outreach and educational efforts have shifted to a virtual platform. While this was successful for engaging with professionals and some people with disabilities, it is not accessible for many.

- Continued funding must be available for people with disabilities to have the training and materials necessary to utilize technology to engage with others during this time.
- Targeted education must support people with disabilities (as well as their family members and their staff) to support their use of virtual platforms.
- Professionals working with people with disabilities must be trained and proficient in all methods of virtual engagement. Professionals should modify the connecting platform based off of the wishes of the person with a disability that they are supporting.

Accessible and Comprehensive Resources

Though there are comprehensive resources available through various websites and resources 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 area accessing or not accessing the information, how they are accessing the information, and if the information is presented in plain language.
- Be available through multiple formats and languages.

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Systemic Ableism

It has been clear that disability services and supports are undervalued and, as a result, underfunded. Minnesotans with disabilities deserve access to services without feeling the burden of funding-related barriers in their service systems such as understaffing/high staffing turnovers, limited options, wait lists, and inaccessible systems. People with disabilities should not be held in poverty to obtain their services and should have equitable economic and political power.

Minnesota lawmakers need to acknowledge and confront how their ableism manifests in their decisions and policies. Programs and systems that are developed for people with disabilities should utilizes the 10 Principles of Disability Justice, which emphasizes leadership by the most impacted, intersectionality, collective access, and sustainability.[5]

Learn more about ableism, racism, and intersectionality with our MRQC trainings on cultural responsiveness:

Cultural Responsiveness Training Part 1:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXygnjXzuIc&t=2s

Cultural Responsiveness Training Part 2:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16T5qh_AC98&t=2s

MRQC Goals for 2021

During FY20, 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 follow 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**
   The MRQC will continue to gather and analyze information to inform and direct the quality improvement work and recommendations for systems change. Information will be collected through methods beyond the Quality Reviews such as:
   - Informational interviews, focus groups, and surveys,
   - Regular review of existing reports and data relating to the overall quality of services and life for people with disabilities, and
   - Completing meta-analyses of existing studies relating to specific quality improvement projects.

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2. **Continue to make progress on the employment quality improvement work**
Though the MRQC has made great strides towards the quality improvement project, there is still much work to do:
- Continue to identify resources and best practices that promote a higher quality of life for persons with disabilities. This will contain a list of current resources utilized by DHS and advocacy organizations to support employment for persons with disabilities, other employment support options such as Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), identified best practices, as well as concerns and challenges.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate the We Work! Campaign on empowered employment.
- Finish and share the MRQC Employment Report and Executive Summary.
- Present and share findings and best practices relating to the MRQC Employment Report.
- Have a strong response to the National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October 2020.
- Collaborate and partner with lead agencies, service providers, businesses, and other community partners.
- Advocate for a livable wage for all people.

3. **Continue to make progress on the support staff shortage quality improvement project**
- Finalize the project plan on improving recruitment and retention of direct support staff (DSP).
- Finalize survey materials and processes for getting feedback from service provider leadership and staff.
- Identify how to get input and feedback from service recipients.
- Identify pilot service providers on MRQC to participate in the project.
- Compile resource and best practice list.
- Implement quality improvement project – give targeted recommendations to service providers on how to improve their recruitment and retention of DSPs, provide individualized resources.
- Evaluate project, implement changes to increase success of all parties.
- Evaluate DSH Toolkit, provide feedback on ways to improve.

4. **Ground council work in the 10 Principles of Disability Justice**
The MRQC is dedicated to utilizing the 10 principles of Disability Justice within our work. To do this, MRQC will:
- Develop outcome model outlining each principle, its definition, and how the MRQC work will follow.
- Be dedicated to accessible materials and processes:
  o Evaluate and update outreach materials to ensure it is accessible to all
  o Create new materials to share with different stakeholder groups as the need arises
  o Translate materials into languages spoken in the region such as, but not limited to, Somali, Hmong, Spanish, and Vietnamese.
- Continue to share the RQC Quarterly Newsletter to keep interested parties updated with RQC work and to connect with the broader public.

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- Reach out to and partner with other non-traditional disability organizations to build our network across groups with intersecting identities. Will use connections within these groups to inform our work and larger systems change.
- Continue to participate in and share racial equity and justice training and learning opportunities.
- MRQC staff will participate in The Arc Minnesota's Justice Advisory Committee (JAC) and the Twin Cities Diversity and Inclusion Roundtable (TCDIR).

5. **Report and share information to the SQC, DHS, MN State Legislature, and broader public**
In order to have the largest impact on quality of life and systems, the MRQC will increase and improve communication efforts. To do so, the MRQC will:
- Continue the quarterly RQC newsletter to be sent to each RQC, other stakeholders, and in partnership with the Arc MN's newsletter.
- Make connections with local senators and representatives to share relevant findings from interviews and other data collection measures.
- Leverage MRQC members and their network to share and/or present information to relevant stakeholder groups.
- Participate in advocacy efforts through The Arc Minnesota's Public Policy Committee.

6. **Provide training opportunities to support person-centered organizations and staff**
The MRQC believes person-centered practices and thinking should be at the core of all services. In order to promote this, the MRQC will:
- Support small to mid-sized employment providers, people with disabilities, and families by subsidizing Customized Employment Training.
- Share and train on person-centered practices within direct support staff and employment supports.
- Improve person-centered practices through recommendations made in the support staff quality improvement project.
- Provide training to family members, staff, and other support personnel on connecting virtually.
- Participate in ongoing learning and collaborating through the Person-Centered Collaborative community of practice.

7. **Connect with people with disabilities and their families to build their knowledge, understanding, and advocacy/self-advocacy skills**
People with disabilities should be at the center of all conversations and decision-making processes in areas that influence their lives. The MRQC will promote advocacy and self-advocacy through:
- Continuing to support the work of The Arc Minnesota's Self-Advocate Advisory Committee.
- Conducting outreach to intersecting historically oppressed communities.
- Sharing knowledge and understanding of the system and how to push for systems change through grassroots efforts.

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- Share information about civil rights, voting, and the census.
- Conduct conversations and learning opportunities around race, systemic racism, and police violence.
- Supporting the ongoing development and growth of existing self-advocate groups.
- Engaging the with broader public through informational interviews, listening sessions, and focus groups. There will be special focus on making these events as accessible as possible and considering the specific needs of different populations.

Grantee Duties

An overview of the progress the MRQC made between 7/1/2019 and 6/30/2020 to satisfy specific grant requirements outlined in the contract between DHS and the Arc Minnesota. Each section below correlates with a section in the contract - the amended contract can be made available upon request.

Regional Quality Council:

MRQC Membership and Roles:
Current MRQC Members listed below:

Stakeholder Group: Service Providers
- Rod Carlson - Living Well Disability Services
- Joe Cuoco - Supportive Living Solutions
- Mary Gaasch - Hammer Residences

Stakeholder Group: Individuals Receiving Services
- Ann Cirelli (term ended 6/30/2020)
- Rebecca St. Martin
- Jeffrey Nurick
- Dr. Mohamed Mourssi-Alfash

Stakeholder Group: Family Member
- Diane Sjolander
- Judi Marie Ringe
- Rhonda Godfrey

Stakeholder Group: County Representatives
- Katie Ellerras – Scott County
- Chelsea Lorenz – Dakota County
- Erin Paredes – Dakota County
- Tim Sullivan – Hennepin County

Stakeholder Group: State Representatives
- Robert Morneau - MN Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities
- Felicia Thomsen / Kyle Dennis - Department of Human Services

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Stakeholder Group: Advocacy
- Angie Guenther – MRQC Project Manager, The Arc Minnesota
- Tayler Guccione – MRQC Project Associate, The Arc Minnesota
- Paris Gatlin - The Arc Minnesota

MRQC Meetings:
The MRQC met 12 times from July 2019 to June 2020. Meeting minutes can be found on the MRQC website: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/metro-regional-quality-council-meeting-minutes/
The MRQC met on the second Friday of the month from 9-11am at The Arc Minnesota office. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the MRQC met over Zoom starting in March 2020.

The MRQC had both large and small group work during council meeting times, as was the desire of the council members. Council members voted in April to establish two workgroups to focus on quality improvement work in the areas of employment and the support staff shortage. The MRQC staff worked with the MRQC on the following topic areas during FY20:

- Updates from the SQC
- Updates from the Quality Reviews
- Membership requirements and details
- Organizational MRQC Charter
- Review of FY 19 MRQC Annual Report
- Review of ICI's Person-Centered Quality Review analysis
- Outreach materials and efforts
- Support staff shortage quality improvement work
    - Support staff shortage data review
- Employment quality improvement project plan and implementation
    - Employment data review
    - Employment best practices and resources
    - Focus group analysis
    - Informational interview analysis
    - We Work! Campaign outline

The accomplishments, progress, and movement of the work of the MRQC is due to the dedication and commitment of each of the members of the council. The diverse perspectives and experiences of each stakeholder contribute to a council that is able to look at quality improvement of services and supports from every angle. It provides a platform for every members' voice to be heard and their unique perspective and skills to be utilized for the improvement of services and supports from an individual level to the systems level.

MRQC Charter and Letter of Commitment:
During FY20, the MRQC reviewed and made changes to the existing MRQC Charter. This charter was approved by council vote 7/2020 and outlined the roles/responsibilities of the council, membership details and expectations, council decision-making processes, working agreements, and meeting code of conduct. The MRQC Charter can be found in Appendix A.

RQC Staff Interns and Volunteers:
There was a transition in the MRQC Project Associate position, with the new project associate starting September 2019.

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If FY20, five MRQC Interns helped support the work of the MRQC: one full-time intern during summer 2019, two part-time interns during the 2019-20 school year, one part-time intern during the spring 2020 and one part-time intern during summer 2020.

There were seven active MRQC volunteers at the start of FY20. Four MRQC Volunteers were trained in October and started conducting Quality Reviews in November 2019.

All interns and volunteer reviewers participated in a two half-day trainings with topics including: brief history of the societal treatment of people with disabilities, disability etiquette, person-centered philosophy and practices, background and history of the SQC/RQCs, mandated reporting and supporting victim/survivors, interview skills, note taking, and data management. In addition to the in-person training, all RQC volunteers completed the online Vulnerable Adults Mandated Reporting Training and two modules of the Data Security Training.

After volunteer reviewers completed the online and in-person training, they underwent a mentorship process in which RQC staff or interns show them how interviews are conducted in practice. Once they felt comfortable and the RQC staff felt their skills were sufficient, the RQC volunteers were able to lead interviews or conduct interviews with other volunteers. Additionally, MRQC interns completed the online training for new staff and interns required by the Arc Minnesota.

Staff Training
The Arc Minnesota, the MRQC's fiscal host, oversaw the orientation for new MRQC staff. MRQC staff are thoroughly trained in the same topics as interns and volunteers during their on-boarding process (see above) as well as topics that relate to The Arc Minnesota such as the mission, values, goals, position statements, etc. Person-centeredness is a guiding principle at the core of the MRQC. Therefore, all MRQC staff attend the two-day Person-Centered Thinking Training to get a base understanding of person-centered practices and how they can be implemented in the interviews and every day work.

Additionally, the Arc Minnesota holds multiple meetings/trainings each month to support the ongoing learning of the MRQC staff and interns. There are both reoccurring and one-time trainings. Meetings consist of, but are not limited to Program Team Meetings, Brown Bag trainings, Ask the Advocate trainings, facilitation trainings, and Quarterly Program trainings on varying topics. The Arc MN supports and encourages the ongoing learning for MRQC staff outside of program meetings by discussing opportunities in monthly meetings with supervisors and including specific language in work plans and the larger agency strategic plan.

Quality Monitoring System:
The State Quality Council and Regional Quality Councils developed the quality monitoring tool and procedure in 2016-2017. This 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 volunteers, interns, and staff evaluated the tool to look at the quality of the responses. They found that there was redundancy in the answers of the planning and hopes, dreams, and goals sections. Using the State Quality Council's quality of life indicators and considering areas of need outlined in previous interviews, the SQC and RQCs 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. 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 housing, daily routine, employment, community, relationships, transportation, support staff, safety, case management, and services and supports. You can find the Interview Tool Cheat Sheet in Appendix D with the updated topics and order.

Implementation Plan:
The MRQC staff utilize an Implementation Plan to coordinate, organize, and track their work. An updated version of the Implementation plan can be found in Appendix B.

Communications Plan
The MRQC's Communications Plan is a working document that was developed in collaboration with the other RQCs and independently. The MRQC Communication Plan can be found in Appendix C. Materials developed by the MRQC were made in plain language to be accessible for people with a broad range of reading abilities. Specific outreach and communication materials are available upon request.

Quality of Life Indicators:
The Metro Regional Quality Council gathered additional quality of life information from a number of local and national sources outside of the Quality Reviews.

Until the SQC went on hiatus, the MRQC Project Manager sat on the SQC Quality Monitoring Workgroup, where they reviewed relevant data from various quality surveys such as the National Core Indicators and the Olmsted Survey. The goal of this group is to create a statewide data dashboard to track and measure various quality of life-related data points over time. Specifically, this workgroup intends to identify and later track 2-3 data points in each of the following categories: housing, employment, and community involvement.

The MRQC staff regularly review local, statewide, and federal publications and reports relating to the quality of life for people with disabilities. Staff frequently attend events and webinars to stay connected to existing quality improvement work and best practices.

Analyze Data:

During FY20, 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.

Trends across regions were identified in a bi-monthly report developed by each RQC called the "Top Five Findings." The goal of this process was to improve data sharing methods and to allow the SQC to respond to needs in a timely manner. See details on this project in the "Reporting" section below.

Reporting:

Each RQC writes an annual report and submits the report to the SQC and DHS. These reports are written in collaboration with the three RQCs but ultimately reflect the region's unique experiences, work, and findings.

In addition to the annual reports, the RQCs, SQC, and DHS decided on a method to share information on a bi-monthly basis. These "Top Five Findings" reports were developed to encourage a consistent and real-time method of sharing information from the RQCs to the SQC. Every two months, the RQCs developed a report with the top five findings (themes, best practices, recommendations, etc.) from the last 6 months of quality reviews. Each of the "Top Five Findings" reports corresponded with one of the 10 topic areas covered in the brief interviews.

The "Top Five Findings" reporting process was created because the RQCs gather large amounts of information, making it difficult to know what to share and how to share it in a meaningful way. Conversely, because of all of the information the RQCs gather, the SQC was experiencing challenges knowing what information they could request from the RQCs.

The Metro Regional Quality Council has developed topic-specific reports outlining findings, best practices, challenges, and recommendations within employment and the support staff shortage. Versions of these reports are on the MRQC website and are being shared with various stakeholder groups.

In March 2020, the Regional Quality Councils started sharing quarterly newsletter updates to keep interested stakeholders informed of the work being done in each region. You can find copies of the Newsletters on our website:
- March 2020: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/Regional-Quality-Councils-Year-in-Review.pdf
  - Supplemental update:
- June 2020: https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/RQC-Updates-June-2020.pdf

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Regional Response Action Plan:

The council uses project action plans to guide the work of the Employment Workgroup and the Support Staff workgroup. These action plans outline large goal steps and smaller sub-steps to complete each goal. These plans also include timelines and targeted roles/responsibilities for each of the sub-steps. The Employment Project Action Plan and the MRQC Support Staff Project action plan can be found in Appendix E and H respectively.

Resources and Best Practices:

The MRQC developed an Employment Resources and Best Practices document. This is an ongoing working document that can be added to and edited as council members see fit. This tool aims to help interested parties navigate the complicated and confusing world of employment. The goal of this document is to be accessible for all possible audiences ranging from people with disabilities to professionals such as case managers. Though this is an ongoing working document, the main topics covered in this list are employment waivered services; best practices for case managers, counties, and employment professionals; employment preparation and training; organizations that employ people with disabilities; working and maintaining benefits; job supports and accommodations; and employment policies and advocacy work. The Employment Resources and Best Practices document can be found on our website: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O8Mbiwqp1UM8iNeNwmiyHiNoZtRhGlKwhUzmdsyaGwU/edit

In response to the pandemic, the MRQC started a COVID-19 Employment Resources document. This resource highlights accommodations, state protections and guidelines, and informational hotlines. This can also be found on our website: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EhbeZkYRc8NayItjVehyL6zye35cprozBTp-CVedk9I/edit?ts=5f345b2b

The MRQC Support Staff Workgroup is developing a resource and best practice document that will cover person-centered practices, recruitment tools for employers, toolkits for current and future DSPs, and tracking direct support shortage and turnover. The document will be posted to our website when it is completed.

Training and Technical Assistance:

The MRQC has a valuable working relationship with The Arc MN's self-advocacy efforts. You can see a detailed description of this partnership in the Quality Improvement Work section on page 17. In this work, MRQC staff have provided training and assistance in facilitating meetings relating to identity, systemic racism, and intersectionality.

The Metro Regional Quality Council staff also developed a two-part Cultural Responsiveness training for MRQC and The Arc MN Staff, interns, and members. These trainings can help anyone who wants to learn more about the significance of culture within our work and the best practices for navigating cultural diversity. It is vital to note that this cultural responsive training provides tools and knowledge to help participants represent the values of the Metro Regional

Quality Council and The Arc Minnesota, but it is not an exhaustive resource and should only be viewed as a basic framework.

Cultural Responsiveness Training Part 1:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXygnjXzuIc&t=2s

Cultural Responsiveness Training Part 2:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16T5qh_AC98&t=2s

Communication and Collaboration:

The MRQC staff worked with staff from the Arrowhead Regional Quality Council and the Region 10 Quality Council in the primary areas of:

- Updating and maintaining the Agile Apps database,
- Updating and maintaining the shared website for the State and Regional Quality Councils,
- Developing and hosting training for volunteer reviewers,
- Developing and hosting focus groups with persons with disabilities and other stakeholder groups,
- Organizing and planning presentations, conferences, and other events,
- Developing and sharing the quarterly RQC Newsletter, and
- Sharing best practices and lessons learned in each of region.

Due to the different geographical locations of each council and the onset of COVID-19, most of the collaborative work of the three councils was conducted via conference calls, video conferencing calls and email exchange. The council staff attempted to have at least one in person workday, once a month.

The council staff will continue to work together in the coming year, as the cohesive work of the Regional Quality Council staff across the state is essential in continuing to build and grow the work of the councils in each region.

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Budget

2019 Metro RQC Status as of 1/31/2020
For contract year 7/1/19 to 6/30/2020

Budget Item	RQC Metro July '19 through June '20	FY 2020 Grant Funded	YTD Spend
a. Personnel			
Staff member and hours			
New -Project Manager 1 FTE			
	Salaries and wages	54,075.00	56,051.53
	FICA	4,136.74	4,274.69
	Health and dental insurance	8,250.00	2,648.38
	Retirement	2,163.00	1,754.77
	Other benefits	2,080.00	1,626.84
Admin Asst 1 FTE			
	Salaries and wages	28,800.00	36,020.00
	FICA	2,203.20	2,735.06
	Health and dental insurance	8,250.00	2,636.91
	Retirement	1,152.00	0.08
	Other benefits	950.00	-
Program and Services Director .05 FTE			
	Salaries and wages		
	FICA		
	Health and dental insurance		
	Retirement		
	Other benefits		
Chief Program Officer .025 FTE			
	Salaries and wages		
	FICA		
	Health and dental insurance		
	Retirement		
	Other benefits		
Interns -stipends		4,000.00	5,332.00
Stipends for evaluators		18,500.00	10,408.20
b. Rent			
Rent			
Utilities			
Building/maintenance			

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Budget Item	RQC Metro July '19 through June '20	FY 2020 Grant Funded	YTD Spend
c. Travel			
	Local mileage, parking, hotels	6,360.00	2,785.18
d. Supplies			
	Consumable supplies	400.00	193.04
	Equipment	400.00	-
	Website	300.00	119.40
e. Communications			
	Phone/fax	400.00	400.00
	Internet/email		
	Postage and mailing	900.00	946.84
	Copying	150.00	0.41
	Printing	600.00	-
	Converti Promotional Materials		
f. Other			
	Quality Improvement Projects	2,000.00	-
	Training	3,000.00	2,480.00
	Conferences		
	Recruiting costs		
	interpreter/translator costs		5,461.67
	Indirect costs		
	Audit costs	1,200.00	1,200.00
g. Administrative		15,026.00	15,024.00
h. Volunteer Hours			
	Grand Total	165,295.94	152,098.99

References

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2. Division of Special Education Services and Supports https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/default.aspx
3. Hewitt, A., Pettingell, S. & Kramme, J. (2019). Minnesota direct support worker survey: Final report. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, Research and Training Center on Community Living.
4. National Core Indicators. (2019). National Core Indicators 2018 Staff Stability Survey Report. https://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/resources/staffstability-survey/
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Appendix

Appendix A: Metro Regional Quality Council Charter

Project Name: **Metro Regional Quality Council**

Prepared by: **Georgann Rumsey & Angie Guenther**

Date: **Updated 8.9.19**

A   Purpose/Responsibilities of the Metro Regional Quality Council

Mission and Purpose

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.

Vision – People with disabilities will give input that will support best practices and find service gaps. This information will inform the council to identify creative ways to tackle service needs, gaps, and barriers.

Values –

We value diversity and inclusion
We value collaboration
We value curiosity and awareness
We value quality of life

Goals –

- Bring together persons with disabilities, family members, staff from providers, lead agencies, and state agencies
- Inform people with disabilities, family members, and advocates of the purpose and goals of the Metro Regional Quality Council
- Collaborate and build relationships with people using services, agencies, and other stakeholders interested in quality improvement initiatives
- Analyze information collected from interviews and identify best practices, recognize gaps in services, and make recommendations to improve quality of services
- Work together to provide training, share best practices, and address service needs, gaps, and problems
- Focus our outreach on cultural communities for membership on the council

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Regional Quality Council Responsibilities

The council members from the Metro Regional Quality Council agree to:

- Participate in at least 75 % all scheduled Regional Quality Council meetings
- Actively provide insights, expertise, and guidance throughout the process to ensure contract deliverables are met
- Work collaboratively within the council to achieve and implement contract deliverables
- Agree to complete all assigned tasks from council meetings within timelines set forth by the Project Manager and the council

The Metro Regional Quality Council will be led by co-chairs. Co-chairs will be the Project Manager and a member of the council. Their responsibilities will include:

- Facilitate meetings
- Provide support to council members as needed
- Facilitate conflict resolution between council and person members as needed

Project manager responsibilities will also include:

- Submit quarterly and annual reports
- Implement plan, data collection, and formal acceptance of deliverables

B   Membership

Membership Requirements

The Metro Regional Quality Council will consist of at least one member in each role. A majority of the members need to reside or work in the counties of Hennepin, Dakota and Scott.

Role	Name	Agency	Contact
Families			
	Diane Sjolander		tdsjolander@comcast.net

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	Rhonda Godfrey		rhondagodfrey1982@gmail.com
	Judi Marie Ringe		j.m.ringe@gmail.com
Advocates			
	Ann Cirelli		aecirelli@gmail.com
	Rebecca St. Martin		mailme@rebeccastmartin.com
	Jeffrey Nurick		jnadvocate@msn.com
Department of Human Services			
	Felicia Thomsen	Regional Resource Specialist-DHS	Felicia.Thomsen@state.mn.us
Ombudsman Office			
	Robert Morneau	Regional Ombudsman	robert.morneau@state.mn.us
Providers			
	Rod Carlson	Living Well Disability Services	rod.carlson@livingwell.org
	Joe Cuoco	Supportive Living Solutions	joec@gosupportive.com
	Mary Gaasch	Hammer	MaryG@hammer.org
Lead agencies (at least one member from each lead agency)			
	Katie Elleraas	Scott County	kelleraas@co.scott.mn.us
	Chelsea Lorenz	Dakota County	chelsea.lorenz@co.dakota.mn.us
	Erin Paredes	Dakota County	erin.paredes@co.dakota.mn.us
	Tim Sullivan	Hennepin County	tim.sullivan@hennepin.us
Advocacy			
	Angie Guenther	The Arc Minnesota	AngieGuenther@arcminnesota.org
	Administrative Assistant	The Arc Minnesota	

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	Georgann Rumsey	The Arc Minnesota	georgannrumsey@arcminnesota.org

Membership

Application and consideration for membership:

Persons interested in becoming a member of the council fill out the Regional Quality Council application and submit to the co-chairs of the council. The co-chairs will share the person's application for the council to consider at the next scheduled council meeting. The council will review the application of the person at a council meeting. The council will review if the person is able to meet all of the membership requirements and commitments. The council will also consider current members and gaps in member roles. The council members will vote on accepting new members to the council.

Size:

The council will consist of 12-20 members

The council will review membership once a year in May and make recommendations for adding new members

Terms:

Two-year term, with a yearly commitment check-in with the chair of the council

Staggered membership will be allowed upon review of the council in order to fill gaps in required membership categories

Time Commitment:

Members' time commitment is up to 4 hours a month. This includes Regional Quality Council meetings and two hours outside of meeting time

Members try to attend each council meetings in person. If a member is going on leave, they will discuss potential proxies with the Project Manager or co-chairs

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If a member is absent for 3 consecutive council meetings, the chair will contact to discuss continued membership on the council

One member needs to serve on the State Quality Council

Membership Stipends:

- Stipends of $50.00 per council meeting are available to family and self-advocate members of the council

Workgroups:

- Will be developed as needed

C   Meetings

Meeting Schedule and Process

- The council will meet once a month for a two-hour meeting
- The co-chairs will distribute the agenda and materials to council members by email no later than two days prior to the meeting
- Meeting minutes will be distributed to members by email within a week

D   Decision Making

Decision Making Process

- The council will attempt to reach agreement by all members.
- If the council is not able to reach an agreement, the council will use a 5-point scale to have more discussion:

1: No – Let's do something else	Can you tell us why you feel this way? What parts of it don't you like? Is there anything you do like?
2: Wait – Can we change it?	What further information do you need? What facts could make a difference?
3: Maybe – I have questions	What parts do you like? What parts don't you like?
4: Ok – It's good enough	What could make it better?
5: Yes – Let's do it	

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- If the council is not able to reach an agreement after using the 5-point scale, the co-chairs will recommend the final decision or next steps.
- Once a decision has been reached, members will accept the decision and move forward with the council's work.

E   Working Agreements

Working Agreements

- Council meetings will start and end on time
- Cell phones should be set to vibrate. Members are encouraged to limit their use of cell phones during meetings if at all possible
- Members agree to use plain language in both spoken and written materials
- Council meetings will be chemical and fragrance free
- Engage in respectful communication and be considerate of all members
- Any information discussed during council meetings will remain confidential
- Each member will fully participate and engage in council meetings and listen to understand not to contradict
- Members will work to ensure meetings are accessible to all members. Possible accommodations are, but are not limited to, providing a call-in option, using visual aids, and/or using plain language

G   Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

Council members, staff, and visitors or guests will:

- Be honest, respectful, kind, considerate, and open-minded.
- Treat members with courtesy. All members will have the chance to speak and be listened to.
- Refrain from negative statements about council members, staff, or guests. Disagreements will focus on issues, not persons.
- Avoid language that is threatening, offensive, insulting, culturally insensitive, abusive, or intended to be hurtful.

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- Refrain from misrepresenting the council by using its name for personal or organizational gain or influence.

If a council member, staff, or guest does not follow the Code of Conduct, the co-chairs may:

- Give the person a warning that the behavior needs to stop or they will be asked to leave the meeting/room.

- If the person continues with the behavior after the warning, request the person to leave the meeting/room.

- If the behavior continues, co-chairs will propose actions to the council. The council will reach agreement on proposed actions. If agreement cannot be reached the council will use the decision making process to work towards agreement.

Updated and agreed upon: 8/9/2019

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Appendix B: MRQC Implementation Plan

Activities/ Implementation Planning				Target Dates for Project Activities								
Deliverables	Key Action Steps/Activities	Person/ Area Responsible	Required Resources	FY18Q3	FY18Q4	FY19Q1	FY19Q2	FY19Q3	FY19Q4	FY20Q1	FY20Q2	Comments
1. Recruit and engage a team of leaders for the Regional Quality Council	• Confirm participation of partners who have previously expressed interest; review make-up of council to ensure it meets grant requirements; invite additional participants as needed • Conduct monthly RQC meetings. Develop agenda and facilitate meetings of the RQC	Arc Chief Advocacy & Program Officer, Project Director, Metro Region Project Manager	Staff time, basic office equipment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	All partners of the RQC have been established. 3 new members have were recruited and on-boarded in 2019– a person with a disability, family member advocate, and provider. One provider stepped down from the council. Two additional members were recruited and on boarded in Q1 of FY2020 – two people with disabilities
a. Develop Regional Quality Council	• Review and update roles and responsibilities for council members, coordinators, and volunteers	Metro Region Project Manager RQC	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours	X	X	X	X	X	X			This has been completed for the time being, but will change and adapt as we learn more of what the needs and strengths of our council are. Process supported by yearly review of Charter and Letter of Commitment
b. Memoranda of understanding Or letter of commitment	• Review MOU or letter of commitment, collect signed MOU or letter of commitment from partners and individual council members	Metro Region Project Manager	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Letter of Commitment developed and approved by MRQC. Staggered membership agreed upon. Members have indicated their membership through 2021 and 2022

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Task	Activities	Responsible	Resources									Status
c. Develop Regional Quality Council Collaborative Charter	• Review and update council framework including shared mission, vision, values, shared assumptions, and defined outcomes/results • Review and update council structure for shared commitments, roles, and responsibilities • Review and update council decision-making and conflict resolution process • Define council confidentiality agreements • Update system to track volunteer hours	Metro Region Project Manager (MRPM) RQC	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours		X	X	X	X	X	X	x	Completed RQC charter, with space left for workgroups, quality review process and data privacy process to be developed as the RQC has need for and has the essential information needed. Updated system for tracking volunteers with new software. Scheduled to be reviewed and updated at the beginning of the new contract year
2. State Quality Council meetings and/or sub-committees of the council	• Attend State Quality Council Meetings as needed. Attend sub-committees of the council	MRPM	Staff Time	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	RQC staff will determine which SQC committees to attend. MRQC staff sit on Quality Monitoring workgroup and often attend the Regional Support and Development workgroup. SQC was put on hold 11/2019 – all council and workgroup engagement has halted.
a. Secure Project Manager (1 FTE) and (1FTE) administrative support	• Review and update Job Announcement and Description; recruit, hire and on-board. Hire Project Manager by Oct. 1. Hire Admin Asst. by Nov. 1 • On board MRPM, Admin Asst.	Arc MN HR Dept., Project Director, MRPM	Staff time, basic office equipment	X	X							New project manager hired 11/2018. New project associate hired 4/2019 and replacement hired 9/2019
b. Recruit and train interns and volunteers	• Develop intern/volunteer work plan, recruit and on-board	MRPM SQC	Staff time, basic office equipment		X	X	x	x	x	x	x	On-going recruitment MRPM to receive support from Arc HR staff and volunteer. Total of 9 volunteers when Quality Reviews completed. Held two new reviewer trainings in 2019 and two refresher trainings.

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													School year 2018/19 2 interns, summer 2019 1 full-time intern, school year 2019/20 3 interns
3. **Develop Quality Monitoring System** a. Determine Quality Review Process	• Review best practices for person-centered services; conduct research to identify materials/tools.	SQC ICI MRPM	Staff time, basic office equipment	X	X	X	X	X					Quality-monitoring system was put into practice 11/2017. RQCs and SQC reviewed the results and evaluated, and updated the tool. Updated Quality-monitoring system put into place 7/2019. Ended 1/2020
b. Implement Review Process	• Implement quality review process and procedures, including training requirements for review team • Identify review recipients and inform about request for review • Develop and utilize accessible communication materials for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) review recipients • Determine how results of individual reviews will be shared with the HCBS review recipient, county, providers, families, individuals, other interested parties.	SQC DHS RQC MRPM	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		RQC staff and partners have developed quality review training for reviewers. Communication materials that are written in plain language are sent to participants. RQC has developed the "leave behind" material (resource list and feedback document) for interview participants. Will report to SQC/DHS annually and on a smaller scale every other month (Top Five Findings report). Data from 3 RQCs was analyzed by ICI. Data included in annual report and shared with council and broader public
4. Develop Communications Plan	• Develop accessible information and presentation materials to goals and objectives of Regional Quality Council to: • the community: individuals receiving services, advocates, families, and caregivers • counties participating in the council (to help them communicate to social workers) • providers and their staff	MRPM Admin Assistant Interns RQC SQC PR sub-committee	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours, communications expertise	X	X	X	X	X	X				RQC project staff have developed accessible communication materials to reach all parties in the bulleted list. We have identified the appropriate parties and stakeholders to send out messaging around the RQC work and will continue to adapt materials as needed.

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	• key organizational stakeholders												
a. Implement communications plan	• Develop a timeline and strategies • Distribute materials and offer presentations	MRPM Admin Assistant Interns	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours, communications expertise	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	See answer above. Employment-specific communication plan is being developed Q2 2020	
5. Establish a system to conduct 240 interviews/year	• Review and update training materials for interview teams. Deliver training on brief reviews. Determine training need for comprehensive interviews. • Facilitate person-centered quality reviews and brief interviews; create written protocol; establish accessible communication templates	SQC MRPM RQC interviewers	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours, stipends for interviewers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Brief reviews have been implemented since 11/2017. Long reviews implementation has not yet been determined. Ongoing conversation with RQCs, SQC, and ICI on developing process. Quality Reviews put on hold Q1 2020 as result of COVID-19	
a. Conduct 240 interviews/year	• Conduct person-centered quality reviews and brief interviews; create written protocol; establish accessible communication templates	MRPM Admin Assistant RQC Interns Volunteers	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	RQC staff , interns, volunteers will continue to conduct short reviews. Ongoing process evaluation to improve numbers and experience for both reviewers and interviewees. Quality Reviews put on hold Q1 2020 as result of COVID-19	

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b. Create follow-up protocol	• Review and update process/system where individual concerns can be expressed and addressed • Review and update communication protocol for follow up and/or sharing overall results with interview participants	MRPM RQC	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	RQC staff have developed leave-behind piece for the short interview. RQC staff will review and make changes and updates based on lessons learned. After ICI analysis, RQC staff developed a follow up letter containing an overview of the council and the recommendations made to DHS
6. Develop and implement a plan to obtain and review other sources of information/ reports relating to quality of life.	• Develop data collection procedure • Determine Key Contacts for providing information (summary of maltreatment reports, lead agency waiver reviews, licensing review results and actions, gaps analysis study reports, National Core Indicators and Olmstead Quality of Life survey results, etc.) • Provide training for Regional Quality Council regarding other reports related to HCBS service recipients	MRPM Interns RQC	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours			X	X	X	X	X	X	RQC staff have reviewed current data available that is relevant to our work and provided a summary of that data in our 2016 annual report. RQC staff will continue to track. Maltreatment Reports with 2018 – 2020 contract and make recommendations to the SQC for systems improvement in that area. The Metro RQC has hosted several trainings in 2017 around the area of abuse and neglect prevention. Tracking data and providing needed trainings will be on-going with the work of the council. Project Manager sits on SQC Quality Monitoring Workgroup and tracks statewide and local data trends over time such as the NCI and Olmsted Survey.
a. Analyze Data	• Analyze interview data to discern trends in the quality of services received across the region by persons with disabilities. • Analyze other data to discern trends in the quality of services received across the region by persons with disabilities.	SQC MRPM Interns RQC	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Data of interviews for 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 are in their respective annual reports. Quantitative data included in these reports. Qualitative Data is challenging to analyze – partnered with ICI for high-level qualitative data analysis included in the FY19

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#	Task	Activities	Responsible	Resources												Progress
																report. Unable to make assumptions or draw conclusions based on the # of reviews conducted to date. In this next contract year as reviews increase MRQC will work to identify trends in gaps and best practices. Worked with DHS, ICI and RQC staff to develop a system of how to best track and report on the data we will have in the future.
7.	Reporting	• Develop plan for annual written reporting to SQC. Develop plan for quarterly written reports to RQC • Draft quarterly and annual reports	SQC MRPM	Staff time, basic office equipment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				Annual report for 2017-2018 was written and submitted to DHS and SQC. Annual report for 2018-2019 is in development process and was submitted to DHS 12/30/19.
a.	Reporting, continued	• Review and approve quarterly and annual reports to RQC and/or SQC • Provide annual written report to the State Quality Council; report findings, activities, and recommendations for system-wide changes to improve quality of services.	MRPM Admin Assistant MRPM RQC	Staff time, basic office equipment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				See answer above. All RQC annual reports were reviewed 12/2019. A process for bi-monthly reports was developed by the RQCs, SQC, and DHS. These Top Five Findings reports help share important information, best practices, and recommendations, consistent, frequent, and timely basis.
8.	Develop and coordinate a regional response action plan	• Written Action plan to address recommendations for system wide changes to improve HCBS services • Establish regional priorities for quality improvement based on regional strengths and needs.	MRPM RQC	Staff time, basic office equipment									X	X	X	Data from RQC interviews analyzed by council. Identified employment as area of focus. Completed basic assessment of resources and best practices. Developed an action plan for employment quality improvement project. Determined we needed more information – held a listening session with self-advocates to inform our employment focus group scripts. Have held 7 focus groups with 4

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											stakeholder groups and engaged with employers in informational interviews in FY 20. Held 16 employer informational interviews. Also identified staffing shortage as a priority. Conducted a needs assessment and legislation review during Q1/Q2 of FY2020.
9. Identify resources and best practices that promote a higher quality of life for persons with disabilities.	• Identify and address common training needs, including training needs for program participants and families. • Develop strategies to implement action plan recommendations • Identify Regional Quality Council members to champion specific strategies	MRPM RQC Interns	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours		X	X	X	X	X	X	The Metro RQC has provided a few trainings this year through guest speakers at meetings. We will continue to develop more trainings and recommendations as we learn more from the interview process. Completed basic assessment of resources and best practices that support getting and maintaining employment. Completed a state best practices comparison. Plan to continue to add to this document and share it FY20
10. Identify a regional team to participate in training and technical assistance activities related to the development of person-centered organizations	• Identify team members • team members to participate in training and other activities as requested	MRPM RQC	Staff time, basic office equipment, volunteer hours		X	X	X	X	X	X	Volunteer team members may be recruited from outside the regional quality council.

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Appendix C: Communications Plan

MRQC
Communications Plan

Double click on the icon above to view the MRQC Communications Plan.

Also available upon request from the MRQC Project Manager.

Appendix D: Interview Tool Cheat Sheet

Housing

1a. How much control do you have over your living situation?

1b. How much control would you like to have over your living situation?

> *Where do you live?*
> *What do you like best about where you live?*
> *Do you live with other people? If so, with how many?*
> *Did anyone ask you who you'd like to live with?*
> *Do you like the people you live with?*
> *Would you rather live with someone else?*
> *Can you make changes in who you live with?*

Daily Routine

2a. How much control do you have over your daily routine?

2b. How much control would you like to have over your daily routine?

> *When do you usually have your meals?*
> *What do you usually do on a weekday?*
> *When do you have meals? Who decides when and what you eat?*
> *Who decides when you go to sleep?*
> *Who decides when you go shopping?*
> *How much time do you have your daily routine for fun?*
> *Can you change your daily routine?*

Employment

3a. How much choice do you have over whether or not you are working?

3b. To what extent do you feel your job meets your needs?

> *Do you have a job? If yes, what do you do?*
> *Do you like your job? What do you or don't you like about your job?*
> *How would you describe your ideal job?*
> *Do you know of any other job you really want?*
> *Does anyone talk to you about your job and other jobs you would be good at?*

Community

4a. How much control do you have over things you enjoy doing outside of your home?

4b. How much control would you like to have over things you enjoy doing outside of your home?

> *Do you do things for fun outside your home?*
> *Are the things you do for fun outside your home what you enjoy?*
> *Would you like to do things for fun outside your home more often?*
> *When do you usually do things for fun outside of your home?*
> *With whom do you usually do things outside of your home?*
> *Who chooses the things you do fun outside of your home?*

Relationships

5a. How much control do you have over the amount of time you spend with people you care about (family and/or friends)?

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5b. How much control would you like to have over the amount of time you spend with people you care about (family and/or friends)?

  ➢ *Do you have family? Do you spend time with your family? If so, how much/often?*
  ➢ *Do you have any friends? Who are your friends?*
  ➢ *Do you spend time with your friends? If so, how much/often?*
  ➢ *Do you get to spend the time you want with your friends and/or family? Would you like to have more time?*
  ➢ *Are there family or friends you would like to see that you currently do not?*

Transportation

6. To what degree is transportation available when you want to go somewhere?

  ➢ *How do you get to places you need or want to go?*
  ➢ *Can you usually get to places when you need to and want to?*
  ➢ *Is there anything you would like to change about your transportation?*
  ➢ *Does your transportation come on time?*
  ➢ *Are there any places you want to go, but don't have transportation?*
  ➢ *If you decide to go somewhere at the last minute to go somewhere important to you, can you get there?*

Support Staff

7. To what degree do staff treat you with respect?

  ➢ *Do staff listen and talk to you?*
  ➢ *Do staff pay attention when you want to say something to them?*
  ➢ *Do staff take action if you have a request?*
  ➢ *Do staff treat you with respect? Describe.*
  ➢ *Do staff ignore you?*
  ➢ *Do staff raise their voice at you?*

Safety

8. To what degree do you feel safe?

  ➢ *Do you feel safe with the people in your life?*
  ➢ *Is your home, workplace, and/or neighborhood safe?*
  ➢ *Have you ever been afraid in your neighborhood? If so, why?*
  ➢ *Have you ever been afraid in your house/apartment? If so, why?*
  ➢ *Have you ever been afraid at work/day program?*
  ➢ *Do you know your rights? Do you feel you are being respected?*

Case Management

9. To what degree does your case manager explain your services is a way that you can understand?

  ➢ *Do you have a case manager?*
  ➢ *How often do you talk to your case manager?*
  ➢ *Has your case manager explained services to you?*
  ➢ *If yes, did you understand your services when they were explained to you?*
  ➢ *What could your case manager have done differently for you to understand your services better?*

Services and Supports

10a. To what degree are your services helping you meet your wants?
10b. To what degree are your services helping you meet your needs?

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- *What services/supports do you receive?*
- *Do the services/supports help you in the house and in the community? How?*
- *What service/supports help you the most?*
- *What services/supports you wish you had?*
- *Are there any changes you would like make to your services to make your life better?*

Appendix E: MRQC Employment Project Action Plan
Updated 6/30/2020

Objective:
Develop and coordinate a regional response action plan focused on employment

Note:
PM = MRQC Project Manager
PA = MRQC Project Associate
DHS = Department of Human Services

Goal 1: Identify problem

Main Action Steps	Sub-Steps	Timeline	Roles/Responsibilities/Progress
Review results of RQC Interviews	• Schedule and complete interviews • Look at themes in interview results	Completed 12/2018	• PM analyzed interview data and presented to the council
Brainstorm topic focus area (consider personal and professional experiences)	• Bring results of the interviews to MRQC meeting • Discuss results and personal/professional experiences • Identify focus area for project • Outline scope of the project (who, what, where, why, how)	Completed 12/2018	• PM presented information to council • Council voted on topic • Council outlined scope of project

Goal 2: Inform and Narrow Scope of Project

Main Action Steps	Sub-Steps	Timeline	Roles/Responsibilities/Progress

Identify resources and best practices that promote a higher quality of life for persons with disabilities	• Create list of current resources utilized by DHS to support employment for persons with disabilities
	• Create list of resources from advocacy organizations
	• Include other employment support options such as Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)
		Ongoing	• Council collaborated and suggested resources to add to working document
			    o PM included best practices heard at the Odyssey Conference
			    o PM included best practices from focus groups

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	• Identify best practices across the nation, compare to MN • Identify community, provider, and individual best practices • Identify concerns and challenges • Identify stakeholders impacted • Determine the impact of recommended changes to Tool kit and the systemic impact		• RQC intern compared best practices between MN and other states o Developed brochure • Posted to MRQC website 7/2020
Meet with others in the employment field – DHS Informed Choice Toolkit	• Review Informed Choice Toolkit • Invite DHS representatives to speak about toolkit use, training, and evaluation • Identify best practice • Identify concerns and challenges • Evaluation – follow up with counties	Completed 4/2019	• Erin Paredes connected PM to DHS representatives • Council reviewed and discussed toolkit • PM invited representatives to MRQC meeting. Spoke about toolkit use, training, and evaluation
Meet with others in employment field – Disability Hub/DB 101	• Look at website to determine existing materials and information • Meet with Disability Hub to understand material development, marketing, and evaluation • Determine impact of recommended changes to Disability Hub and systemic impact • Brainstorm how to connect and collaborate moving forward • Evaluate employment tools published on website • Provide feedback to DH/DB101	Part 1: Completed 5/7/2020 Part 2: In progress	• Council reviewed and discussed materials on website • Felicia Thomsen connected PM to Disability Hub/DHS representatives • PM and PA met with DHS and Disability Hub representatives and reported findings back to the council • MRQC Intern developed focus group to evaluate the DB101 Work and Benefits Estimator tool
Listening Session(s)	• Connect with group of self-advocates (SAAC) • Develop questions • Organize Findings • Use findings to inform focus groups	Completed 3/2019	• Council identified employment as focus area • PM contacted SAAC to speak and conduct listening session

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			• PM developed script and conducted listening session • PM reported results to the council • Council used results to inform the script of future focus groups
Focus Group(s) – People Utilizing Services	• Outreach (8-12 participants) • Develop Process • Develop Script • Schedule focus group (time, date, location) • Hold 1-2 focus groups	Completed 2/2020	• Held 8/14/19 with 13 participants supported by Katie and Diane • Held 2/18/20 with 5 participants • Held 2/24/20 with 5 participants
Focus Group(s) – Family Members/Supports	• Outreach (8-12 participants) • Develop Process • Develop Script • Schedule focus group (time, date, location) • Hold 1-2 focus groups	Completed 1/2020	• Held 10/8/19 with 15 supported by Judi Marie and Diane • Held 1/1/20 with 4 participants
Focus Group(s) – Case Managers	• Outreach (8-12 participants) • Develop Process • Develop Script • Schedule focus group (time, date, location) • Hold 1-2 focus groups	Completed 8/2019	• Held 8/29/19 with 4 participants
Focus Group(s) – Employment Support Providers	• Outreach (8-12 participants) • Develop Process • Develop Script • Schedule focus group (time, date, location) • Hold 1-2 focus groups	Completed 9/2019	• Held 9/26/19 with 14 participants supported by Erin
Informational Interviews – Employers	• Get list of employers who work with people with disabilities (From DEED, Lifeworks, interviews, focus groups) • Develop process • Develop script • Outreach/schedule interviews • Schedule focus group (time, date, location)	Completed 3/2020	Completed by RQC staff and interns: • Hy-Vee (Apple Valley) on 1/7/20 • Culvers (Egan) on 1/8/20 • Walgreens (Edina) on 1/16/20 • Hy-Vee (Egan) on 1/21/20 • Curbside Landing (Savage) on 1/22/20

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	• Hold multiple interviews in all service counties • Determine follow-up procedure • Develop and disseminate materials to support person-centered practices in the workforce, people-first language, and dispelling myths about employing people with disabilities		• Pizza Ranch (Shakopee) on 1/22/20 • Children's Museum (St. Paul) on 2/24/19 • Fresh Thyme/Cub (St. Louis Park) on 1/27/20 • San Mar (Shakopee) on 1/30/20 • Pizza Ranch • Burger Moe's (St. Paul) on 2/12/20 • Walgreens (France Ave.) on 2/20/20 • Dunn Brothers (Arden Hills) on 2/25/20 • Scott County on 3/2/20 • University of MN Recycling Center on 3/9/20 • Walgreens (Southdale) on 3/9/20 • Special Olympics on 3/12/20
Analyze Results of Listening Sessions/Focus groups/Informational interviews	• Type notes from focus groups • Consider: context, frequency/extensiveness, intensity, specificity, and themes/big picture • Keep person-centeredness as the focus of the analysis. Recognize and honor different experiences and goals.	Completed 4/2020	• Council analyzed results of focus groups on 11/8/19 • Focus group notes combined for report 4/2020 • Council analyzed informational interviews 4/10/2020 • Informational interviews combined for report 4/2020
Goal 3: Resource Plan and Review			
Main Action Steps	**Sub-Steps**	**Timeline**	**Roles/Responsibilities/Progress**

Determine Resource Content	• Content based off of feedback from:
	  ○ Focus groups
	  ○ Listening Sessions
	  ○ Informational interviews
	  ○ MRQC experience/expertise
		Completed 4/2020	• Council discussed at 4/2020 MRQC meeting and identified general resource: Educational outreach to employers and general public

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	• Determine specific messaging for each target audience
	   ○ Employers
	   ○ General public		

Determine Resource Formatting	• Based off of feedback from:
	   ○ Focus groups
	   ○ Listening Sessions
	   ○ MRQC experience/expertise
	• Consult with marketing team (Arc)
		Completed: 5/2020	• We Work Campaign outline and format discussed and agreed upon by MRQC 5/2020

Develop Employment Communications Plans (within larger MRQC Communications Plan)	• Identify target audiences:
	   ○ Employers: Chamber of Commerce
	   ○ General public
	• Outline dissemination methods – events, collaborations, etc.
	• Identify and design materials for each target audience
		Goal: 7/2020	• PM and PA developed list of local Chambers of Commerce
			• PM contacted 15 Chambers of Commerce for informational meeting

We Work Employment Campaign Outline	• Develop general outline with various stakeholder groups • Identify stakeholder groups to reach out to • Get input from council • Get final approval from Arc leadership	Completed: 6/2020	• PM and PA developed We Work employment campaign outline 5/2020 • MRQC discussed We Work outline provided feedback to scripts 6/2020 •

Goal 4: Resource Development

Main Action Steps	Sub-Steps	Timeline	Roles/Responsibilities/Progress
We Work Video 1 – "Protections against Employment Discrimination for People with Disabilities"	• Draft script • Have council review script, provide feedback • Compile feedback, make edits • Send updated script to council • Get final review	Goal: 7/2020	• Script drafted • Script sent to MRQC 6/23 • MRQC submitted comments and suggestions 6/26 • MRQC PM and PA compiled the comments/suggestions, made updates, sent script for final MRQC review 6/30

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	Send final script to participant with outreach letter • Have participant film, provide technical support as needed • Send video to Arc's Marketing team to review and edit as needed		
We Work Video 2 – "The Transition after High School"	• Draft script • Have council review script, provide feedback • Compile feedback, make edits • Send updated script to council • Get final review • Send final script to participant with outreach letter • Have participant film, provide technical support as needed • Send video to Arc's Marketing team to review and edit as needed	Goal: 7/2020	• Script drafted • Script sent to MRQC 6/23 • MRQC submitted comments and suggestions 6/26 • MRQC PM and PA compiled the comments/suggestions, made updates, sent scripts for final MRQC review 6/30
We Work Video 3 – "Job I love"	• Draft script • Have council review script, provide feedback • Compile feedback, make edits • Send updated script to council • Get final review • Send final script to participant with outreach letter • Have participant film, provide technical support as needed • Send video to Arc's Marketing team to review and edit as needed	Goal: 7/2020	• Script drafted • Script sent to MRQC 6/23 • MRQC submitted comments and suggestions 6/26 • MRQC PM and PA compiled the comments/suggestions, made updates, sent scripts for final MRQC review 6/30
Goal 4: Distribute Resource			
Main Action Steps	**Sub-Steps**	**Timeline**	**Roles/Responsibilities/Progress**

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Establish modes of distribution	• Re-vamp MRQC Facebook page, increase reach/following • Create MRQC YouTube Page for videos • Prepare MRQC website for section for We Work Campaign	Goal: 7/2020	• PM and PA re-established Facebook, created plan for posts 2x/week and as needed • PA manages Facebook page • PA created MRQC YouTube page • PM will work with website developer to created section to house the We Work Campaign
Disseminate We Work Campaign Videos			
Outreach and education of MRQC and resource to stakeholders - People utilizing services	• Utilize social media • Leverage MRQC connections – personal and professional – via word of mouth, email, etc.	Goal:	
Outreach and education of MRQC and resource to stakeholders – Family Members/Supports	• Utilize social media • Leverage MRQC connections – personal and professional – via word of mouth, email, etc.	Goal:	
Outreach and education of MRQC and resource to stakeholders – Providers/Professional Supports	• Utilize social media • Leverage MRQC connections – personal and professional – via word of mouth, email, etc.	Goal:	

Appendix F: MRQC Informational Interview Script – Employers

Welcome/Introduction (employers):

Hello. My name is [NAME] and my partners are [NAME(S)]. We are from the Metro Regional Quality Council. The council has people with disabilities, family members, service providers, lead agencies, and representatives from the Department of Human Services. The purpose of the council is to promote and connect communities. We want people to have services and supports that help them live a life based on their hopes and dreams. Our members work together to track 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 large systems change.

We asked you to participate in this informational interview because we have heard that you have had success employing people with disabilities. Today, we want to hear about your experiences employing people with disabilities. Your feedback will help us improve employment experiences for people with disabilities and employers.

Before we start, I'd like to thank you for taking time to participate today. We'll be here for about an hour. My partner, [Name], will be taking notes to make sure we don't miss anything. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Questions

1. Can you tell us a little about your role and how you support the employment of people with disabilities?

2. Can you tell us a little about how your business employs people with disabilities?
   - How many people with disabilities are employed here?
   - What types of jobs or positions do they hold?
   - How long has your business employed people with disabilities?
   - Why did your business start employee people with disabilities? *(Possible prompting: does your business know about the incentives to employing people with disabilities? Does your business receive those incentives?)*

3. What accommodations have been made to ensure that employee(s) with a disability will be successful in their position?

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- *(Possible prompts: Working remotely? Flexible work schedules?)*
- Does your business use an inclusion and diversity liaisons?
  If so, how does the liaison support people with disabilities in your business?
  If not, is this a position your business is looking to develop? Why/why not?
- What resources has your business used to support people with disabilities?

4. Does your business work with anyone who has a job coach?
   - If so, how do you navigate the relationships with the companies providing your employee(s) with job coach services?
     - ➢ What suggestions or advice would you give to an employer who is going to work with someone who has a job coach for the first time?
   - If not, is there a reason your business doesn't work with people who have job coaches?

5. Our next few questions are about the hiring process. What success has your business had with the practices it uses in the hiring process? What are those practices? *(Possible prompts: Do you provide options for accessible interviews and materials? Accessible applications?)*
   - Are people with disabilities hired directly or through a contract with an organization (such as Lifeworks)?
   - How do you include the supervisor(s) of employees of persons with disabilities in the hiring process?
   - How does your business create public awareness about inclusive hiring practices?

6. Once the person is hired, does your business offer any trainings to your employees to help make the work environment inclusive and accepting of people with disabilities?
   - If so, what does this training look like?
     - ➢ Do you offer disability education in the workplace to help reduce barriers to employment for people with disabilities?
     - ➢ Are people with disabilities included vs integrated in the workforce?
       (Invited to holiday parties, included to happy hour?)
     - ➢ How do you help eliminate workplace discrimination?
   - If not, is this something your business would be interested in implementing? Would you like us to support these efforts in the future?

7. What challenges has your business faced around employing people with disabilities?
   - What solutions did you find to work through the challenges?

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- Are there resources or support you have not gotten that would be helpful in overcoming challenges when employing people with disabilities?

8. How does your business determine wages for their employees?
   - How do they compare to their colleagues in similar positions? How do they ensure that the wages you offer employees with disabilities are fair and non-discriminatory?
   - *(For organizations)* Do you pay below minimum wage?
   - Do people with disabilities hold supervisor or managerial positions in your organization?

9. Our final question has to do with a term called person-centered practices. Do you know what person centered practices are? *(If answer is no, explain: Person-centered practices are based on the principle that we must listen to people about what is important to them to create or maintain a life they enjoy in the community. Person-centered practices are flexible and adaptable. They encourage informed choice and creativity. They put that person in the driver's seat of their life.)*
   - Does your business use any Person-centered practices? If so, what do person-centered practices look like at work?
   - Would you like more information on person-centered practices and how you can promote person-centeredness in your business?

Appendix G: We Work – Media Campaign Outline

The goal of this campaign is to educate the general public and employers on the benefits of employing people with disabilities. This will be a progression through employment experiences, emphasizing capability and power while bringing to light current exploitative, yet legal, practices.

This campaign will be a series of short videos from different stakeholder groups: self-advocates/people with disabilities, family members of people with disabilities, employers, providers, and council members.

The following are video ideas and specific talking points organized by stakeholder group.

Introduction:
1. Introduce campaign
   - Metro Regional Quality Council
   - Purpose/goal of this campaign
   - Basic overview of the ADA – relate back to employment laws
   - "Tease" future video examples

Self-Advocates / People with Disabilities
2. Someone who has accomplished their employment goals (has a job they love)
   - Where they work
   - How they got their job
   - What do you love about your job?
   - How has this job impacted your life?

3. Choice in employment
   - What it looks like / means to have choice
      - What it feels like to have choice
   - What it looks like / means to not have choice
      - What it feel like to not have choice
      - Impact on them when they don't have choice

4. Accessibility throughout the employment process *(employee perspective)*
   - What it looks like:
      - Job preparation/skills (resumes, job assistance programs)
      - Job search (job boards, networking, etc.)
      - Job application process
      - Interview process

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- ➢ Training and onboarding
- ➢ Working
- What are the benefits of accessibility throughout the employment process?

5. Activism within employment for people with disabilities
   - Segregated employment
     - ➢ What it is
     - ➢ Impact on person/people
     - ➢ Efforts to change
   - Sub-minimum wage
     - ➢ What it is
     - ➢ Impact on person/people
     - ➢ Efforts to change

6. Looking Towards the Future
   - What goals do you have for your future employment?
   - What kind of future do you want for people with disabilities working?
     - ➢ What changes do you want to see from lawmakers or the government?
   - Where do you want to see our community or society change?

Family Members
7. Talk about a loved one currently working a job that they love
   - Where they work
   - How they got their job
   - What do they love about their jobs
   - What impact it has on their life to be working at their dream job
   - What it means for you to have your loved one working at a job they love

8. Looking Towards the Future
   - What goals does your loved one have for their future employment?
   - What kind of future do you want for people with disabilities working?
     - ➢ What changes do you want to see from lawmakers or the government?
   - Where do you want to see our community or society change?

Employers
9. Highlight a unique feature of the employment process that the employers we interviewed do that none of the others did
   - Pizza Ranch – transportation
   - Minnesota Children's Museum – volunteering beforehand, creating diversity group
   - Dunn Brothers – tailored job description

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- Special Olympics – changing their "norm" – surveying interest and making a position for them
  - ➢ Communication efforts
  - ➢ Getting to know the employee personally – emotional support
- Walgreens (Southdale) – pharmacy
- Culvers – workplace environment, interview process
- University of Minnesota Recycling Center – Special PPE equipment, communicating/preparing for change
- Curbside – integration, teamwork,
- Hy-Vee (Egan) – interview process (using boogie board)

10. Accessibility throughout the employment process *(employer perspective)*
   - What it looks like:
     - ➢ Job preparation (mock interviews, shadowing, etc.)
     - ➢ Job search (job boards, networking, etc.)
     - ➢ Job application process
     - ➢ Interview process
     - ➢ Training and onboarding
     - ➢ Working
   - What are the benefits of ensuring accessibility through the employment process
   - Accommodation resources: Job Accommodation Network, etc.

11. Looking Towards the Future
   - What do you want to see change/grow within your company?
   - What do you want to see for other companies?
   - What changes do you want to see from lawmakers or the government?

All

12. What is one thing you want the public to know about employing people with disabilities
   - Can be whatever you make it! Share a story, experience, what the employee brings to the team, benefits of working together, etc.

13. Highlight each week a different best practice, tip or trick people have used for success
   - Communication
   - People-first language
   - Flexibility
   - Getting to know employee on a personal level
   - Job description based on strengths

14. Talk about fact vs fiction when working with people with disabilities

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- Accommodations – easy, cost effective *(San Mar?)*
- People with disabilities are lazy or ineffective at their jobs *(employer)*
- People with disabilities like to learn new skills and may want career advancement opportunities *(self-advocate/person with a disability*

Appendix F: MRQC Support Staff Shortage Project Action Plan
Updated 6/30/2020

Objective:
Develop and coordinate a regional response action plan focused on the support staff shortage

Note:
PM = MRQC Project Manager
PA = MRQC Project Associate
DHS = Department of Human Services

Goal 1: Identify problem			
Main Action Steps	**Sub-Steps**	**Timeline**	**Progress**
Review results of RQC Interviews	• Look at themes in interview results	Completed 12/2019	• PM analyzed and presented information to council
Brainstorm topic focus area (consider personal and professional experiences)	• Bring results of the interviews to MRQC meeting • Discuss results and personal/professional experiences	Completed 5/2020	• PM presented information to council • Council voted on topic: Support Staff Shortage

Goal 2: Inform and Narrow Scope of Project			
Main Action Steps	**Sub-Steps**	**Timeline**	**Progress**
Support Staff Scope Survey	• Bring results of the survey to MRQC support staff workgroup • Discuss results • Outline scope of the project (who, what, where, why, how)	In Progress 8/2020	• PA presented current support staff shortage data to council • PA created survey based on MRQC staffing shortage presentation, legislative research and quality review data • RQC intern analyzed and presented support staff-specific interview data to the council • Council voted on specific topic area

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			• Council outlined scope of project

Project Proposal	• Outline Category and subcategory for project
	   o Category: Building Viable Careers
	   o Subcategory: Direct Support Staff Recruitment, Retention and Cost of Turnover
	• Outline key materials
	   o The Department of Human Services, Recruitment and Retention in Supports for Minnesotans with Disabilities toolkit
	• Outline project idea
	   o Provide technical assistance to service providers to evaluate current practices in the area of staff recruitment, retention, and cost of turnover.
	• Identify Best Practices and turnover reasons from DHS toolkit
		In Progress
		
		8/2020
			• PA reviewed and identified best practices and turnover reasons in Recruitment and Retention in Supports for Minnesotans with Disabilities toolkit
			• PA and PM created project proposal based off best off research and best practices/turnover reasons identified in toolkit
			• PA sent project proposal to support staff workgroup to review and vote on
			• Workgroup unanimous voted for moving forward with project.
			• Waiting for service provider approval

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	• Outline potential next steps	*Ongoing*	
Identify resources and best practices that promote a higher quality of life for persons with disabilities	• Identify and review best practices and barriers from quality reviews support staff section • Identify and review best practices from Recruitment and Retention in Supports for Minnesotans with Disabilities toolkit • Connect with ARRM, care providers, and DSD: US Bureau of Labor and Statistics Occupational groups to share Support Staff Shortage findings and open door for potential collaboration/partnerships • Connect with authors of the Recruitment and Retention in Supports for Minnesotans with Disabilities toolkit to see if there is any potential of collaboration and resource	*Ongoing*	• RQC intern created a report based off the support staff section of quality reviews identifying best practices and barriers. • All workgroup members will look over best practices and turnover reasons outlined in Recruitment and Retention in Supports for Minnesotans with Disabilities: An assessment guide and toolkit • Kyle Dennis connected with the authors of the toolkit. Potential for the workgroup to have early access to a website that compliments toolkit (waiting to hear back)
Survey 1- Provider Agency	• Review assessment questions in Recruitment and Retention in Supports for Minnesotans with Disabilities: An assessment guide and toolkit • Outreach (how many agencies?) • Determine incentives for provider agencies • Develop Process • Develop Survey Questions (10-15)	In progress Goal: 10/2020	• MRQC staff will create (and workgroup will review and finalize) survey for organizations about recruitment and retention based off question suggestions from Recruitment and Retention in Supports for Minnesotans with Disabilities: An assessment guide and toolkit
Survey 2- Direct Support Staff, Supervisors, etc.	• Review assessment questions in Recruitment and Retention in Supports for Minnesotans with Disabilities: An assessment guide and toolkit	In progress Goal: 10/2020	• MRQC staff will create (and workgroup will review and finalize) survey for direct support staff, supervisors etc. about recruitment and retention based off question

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	Sub-Steps	Timeline	Progress
	• Outreach (how many agencies?) • Determine incentives for support staff • Develop Process • Develop Survey Questions (10-15)		suggestions from Recruitment and Retention in Supports for Minnesotans with Disabilities: An assessment guide and toolkit
Determine method for engaging with service recipients	• Determine method: interviews, focus groups, or surveys • Determine incentives for service recipients	In progress Goal 10/2020	• Discussion with Support Staff Workgroup
Determine Provider Agencies	• Pilot with MRQC representatives • Offer to other provider agencies after pilot	In progress Goal 10/2020 – 12/2020	• Offered to service providers on MRQC (pilot) • Plan to evaluate after pilot
Goal 3: Data Collection			
Collect data from provider agencies	• Disseminate survey via Google Survey o Coordinate with provider for support • Allow 3 weeks for completion • Reminder emails weekly, before due date	Goal: 12/2020	• *To be updated after council planning*
Collect data from support staff	• Disseminate survey via Google Survey o Coordinate with provider for support • Allow 3 weeks for completion • Reminder emails weekly, before due date	Goal: 12/2020	• *To be updated after council planning*
Collect data from service recipients	• Collect data from service recipients in the method decided upon in Goal 2	Goal: 12/2020	• *To be updated after council planning*
Goal 4: Data Analysis			
Main Action Steps	**Sub-Steps**	**Timeline**	**Progress**

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Review/analyze data collected from providers	• Collect survey results through Survey Monkey • Compare results with other survey results from within same company • Compare results with best practices outlined in DHS toolkit	Goal: 12/2020	• *To be updated after council planning*
Review/analyze data collected from staff	• Collect survey results through Survey Monkey	Goal: 12/2020	• *To be updated after council planning*
Review/analyze data collected from service recipients	• Compare results with other survey results from within same company	Goal: 12/ 2020	• *To be updated after council planning*
Goal 5: Distribution and Evaluation			
Main Action Steps	**Sub-Steps**	**Timeline**	**Roles/Responsibilities/Progress**

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