ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted By: The Arc Northland
Date: June 2021

Contact: Lori Moench, Arrowhead Regional Quality Council Program Manager
424 West Superior Street, Ste 500
Duluth, MN 55802
218-726-4746
lmoench@arcnorthland.org

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Introduction

This report includes information from the Arrowhead Regional Quality Councils (ARQC) work devoted efforts in fiscal year (FY) 2020/2021. Further information on the work of the RQC's since the start of the grant in 2016, can be found in previous submitted reports.

Quality improvement efforts this FY included a focus on initiatives and projects that help improve the quality of life for people with disabilities. The ARQC continued to engage with and learn from people with disabilities and their supports through virtual platforms by conducting focus groups, listening sessions, and informational interviews to gather information about best practices, barriers, and gaps in services related to person-centered planning and informed decision making. A breakdown of the activities and implementation plan can be found under the quality improvement projects section of this report.

Outreach efforts were challenging during the pandemic. Creative solutions were strategized to share information about what the ARQC was doing to improve quality of life, assist individuals with using virtual platforms, and to continue collaboration with the community, providers, and lead agencies. The details of our outreach efforts and activities can be found in our Communication Plan, Appendix A.

Two workgroups met throughout this fiscal year. The data workgroup met to review data related to quality of life and to assist with the implementation process for focus groups and other information gathering sessions. The quality improvement workgroup focused on action steps for quality improvement initiatives in the region. See workgroup descriptions and meeting minutes summaries in the next section of this report for further details.

Arrowhead RQC

Council Guidelines, Membership and Workgroups

> *Arrowhead Regional Quality Council*
> *Guidelines*

Project Name: Arrowhead Regional Quality Council
Prepared by: Lori Moench, Program Manager
Date: Updated December 2019; Updated June 2020; Updated June 2021

A   Purpose/Responsibilities of the Arrowhead 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.

Core VALUES:

A—Awareness: Our goal is to become aware of best practices and gaps in services in our region.

R—Representation: We will seek out and listen to the voices of people with disabilities.

Q—Quality: Our goal is to understand how to improve quality of life for people with disabilities.

C—Collaboration: We will work together to promote best practices and problem solve.

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 Arrowhead Regional Quality Council
- Collaborate and build relationships with people using services, agencies, and other stakeholders interested in quality improvement initiatives
- Analyze information collected from person-centered quality reviews, focus groups, listening sessions, and informational 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

Regional Quality Council Responsibilities

1. **Quality Monitoring System**:

    a. The ARQC will assist with outreach to people with disabilities, their families, service providers and other stake holders to inform them about the purpose of the Council and process of participating in a focus group, listening session, or informational interview.

    b. ARQC members will assist with the development and monitoring of quality improvements projects as needed in the Arrowhead Region.

2. **Reporting:**

    a. The ARQC will review the annual report and provide suggestions for changes and improvements to the ARQC Staff.

    b. The ARQC will request data and/additional reports from ARQC Staff as needed.

3. **Regional Priorities for Quality Improvement:**

    a. The ARQC will review existing findings from quality reviews and the on-going data collection in order to identify and prioritize potential quality improvement projects.

    b. The ARQC select 1-2 areas per year in which to develop local quality improvement efforts

    c. The ARQC will develop recommendations for systems changes, based on findings from quality reviews and information from existing data on quality of services for people with disabilities.

B   Membership

Membership Requirements

The Arrowhead Regional Quality Council will consist of at least one member in each role.

Role	Name	Agency	Contact
Self - Advocates	Michael Manning		crystal@drccinfo.org 218-481-7424
	Kate Wallin		katewallin282@gmail.com 218-786-0248
	Becky Jakubek		bjakubek@trilliumservice.com 218-722-5009
	Heath Maki		Heath.c.maki@gmail.com 715-817-3466
	Tara Wilson		Businesstw4078@gmail.com 218-348-6450

Families			
Department of Human Services	Sara Beauchene	Regional Resource Specialist	Sara.beauchene@state.mn.us 651-775-3820
Ombudsman Office	Michael Woods	Regional Ombudsman	michael.woods@state.mn.us 218-279-2526
Providers	Josh Howie	Trillium Services	jhowie@trilliumservice.com 218-722-5009
	Ann Dahl	Udac	adahl@udac.org 218-722-5867
	Patty Johnson	Residential Services	patty.johnson@residentialservices.org 218-740-7630
	Meghan Terella	Access North	meghan@accessnorth.net 218-625-1400
	Kristie Buchman	Choice Unlimited	kbuchman@choiceunlimited.org 218-724-5869 ext. 201
	Michelle McDonald	Lake County DAC	mmcdonald@lakeconnections.net (218) 834-5767
Lead agencies (at least one member from each lead agency)	Amy Patenaude	St. Louis County	patenaudea@stlouiscountymn.gov 218-726-2186
	Ruth Rowenhorst	Carlton County	ruth.rowenhorst@co.carlton.mn.us 218-878-2884
	Beth Swanson	Lake County	beth.swanson@co.lake.mn.us 218-834-8416
	Olivia Bonander	Cook County	olivia.bonander@co.cook.mn.us 218-387-3636
Advocacy	Laurie Berner	Arc Northland	lberner@arcnorthland.org 218-726-4860
	Lori Moench	Arc Northland	lmoench@arcnorthland.org 218-726-4746
	Becky Lambert	Arc Northland	rlambert@arcnorthland.org 218-726-4726

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 council Program Manager. 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 Program Manager.

- 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 Program Manager.

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

- 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.

- 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 Program Manager 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.

DATA WORK GROUP

Overall Purpose

The primary role of the Data Workgroup is to develop a process to review and collect data, create the outline for focus groups, and develop a recommendation process.

Primary Tasks

The Data Work Group will oversee the following tasks:

- Identify focus group topics and create the focus group scripts.
- Assist in identifying focus group participants from the Arrowhead region.
- Review and analyze data collected from focus groups such as trends, best practices, and gaps in services.
- Develop a process on how to share data collected from the focus groups and identify who to share it with.
- Develop a recommendation process to address identified areas of need from focus group data.
- Collaborate with council members, community and family members, and other key stakeholders

Members: Michelle Mcdonald, Kristie Buchman, Kate Wallin, Meghan Terella, Olivia Bonander, Ann Dahl, Michael Manning

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT WORK GROUP

Overall Purpose

The primary role of the Quality Improvement Work Group is to assist in the development and oversight of Quality Improvement projects that promote person-centered practices and quality services in the community.

Primary Tasks

The Quality Improvement Work Group will oversee the following tasks:

- Review data and trends from Person Centered Quality Reviews, focus groups, listening sessions, and informational interviews to establish a process in which the end goal is to improve the quality of services in the Arrowhead region. The group will share data results and recommendations with the Council on at least a quarterly basis for feedback and input.

  - Other sources to incorporate information on quality of regional services from existing data:
    - Maltreatment and behavioral incident reports,
    - Lead agency waiver reviews,
    - Gaps analysis study results,
    - National Core Indicators Survey results and
    - Olmstead Quality of Life Survey results

- Identify resources and best practices that promote higher quality of life for individuals with disabilities.
- Establish regional priorities for quality improvement projects.
- Develop a system to foster collaboration and address training needs for all stakeholders.
- Respond to barriers, issues, and service gaps.
- Bring ideas for systems level changes to be brought to the appropriate governing body.
- Review and approve grant applications to community organizations and/or individuals to support quality improvement training or projects that will assist in improving the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Members: Becky Jakubek, Meghan Terella, Kristie Buchman, Kate Wallin, Josh Howie, Heath Maki, Tara Wilson

Workgroup Meetings Summary

The Data Workgroup met four times during this fiscal year. Members worked together on developing our focus group scripts to collect data on person-centered planning and guardianship alternatives in the region. Increased efforts were spent building a connection with rural communities and ways we could share the data we had previously collected through person-centered quality reviews. In an effort to build and sustain meaningful relationships, workgroup members conducted additional outreach to their networks and offered opportunities for the ARQC to facilitate listening sessions to learn about their communities. In February, workgroup members reviewed the data collected from focus group participants and began drafting recommendations. A summary of best practices and barriers was drafted and shared with focus group participants and all council members. Additionally, this workgroup met to review data collected from a state-wide technology needs assessment. The workgroup highlighted areas of need in the state and drafted recommendations that were shared in the summer RQC newsletter. The link to the results of the technology needs assessment analysis and recommendations can be found under the RQC Collaboration Efforts section of this report.

The Quality Improvement Workgroup met three times during this fiscal year. Members worked together to define quality improvement initiatives in the region, develop action steps, and carry out tasks related to improving services and supports for people with disabilities. Three main quality improvement initiatives were worked on this fiscal year: sharing resources and information related to disability services, making connections in rural communities, and promoting person-centered strategies. Workgroup members also reviewed best practices and barriers to person-centered planning – the following list was developed as recommendations / action steps to consider:

- Individuals would benefit from more check-ins virtually; maybe every two months to include case managers, keep them shorter (30 minutes) to see how goals are going
- Have check-ins every week or every other week w/o case managers
- Send paperwork out ahead of the meeting to get it out of the way so more time can be focused on the individual's goals and plan
- Collaborate with other disability organizations for resources and innovative ideas
- CDCS- Consumer Directed Community Supports
    - Contact families and guardians to get some feedback to find out if it is really working. Find out what is covered.
    - Reach out to people and start having conversations
- A benefit analysis should be conducted before the meeting is performed by a third party who is not biased
- Lack of training appears to be a theme in the barriers
- Training is often rushed due to staffing shortage
- Invest time in staff for longevity, like investing in a bank, create quality staff to perform quality services
- See what the Metro RQC is working on regarding staff: policy, training, mentoring

Additionally, this workgroup expressed interest in further work related to service recipient rights, technology, and supported decision-making.

Quality Improvement Projects

Connections in Rural Communities

Goal 1 Data review, presentations, and outreach
Main action steps:

- Compile data from ICI analysis.
- Look at themes in interview results.
- Update presentation materials for outreach.
- Record Zoom presentation and send to lead agency representatives.

Goal 2 Host listening sessions to gather information about needs and wants in the community.
Main action steps:

- Identify staff and/or council members to assist with listening sessions.
- Focus topic and develop questions.
- Schedule listening sessions and identify concerns / challenges and best practices.
- Write-up Summary of Themes.

Goal 3 Quality improvement initiative
Main action steps:

- Assist with development and support of tenant councils in four apartment living communities.
- Host DETS and conflict resolution training for tenants.
- Build and sustain communication with management teams.
- Provide training opportunities for management / apartment staff.

Through a review of ICI's data analysis, discussion began surrounding barriers for people who live in more rural communities. The council saw a need to focus efforts this fiscal year on sustaining connection and engagement to build positive relationships and share resources and information. A recorded Zoom presentation was sent to Lead Agencies to promote the councils' efforts with quality improvement initiatives this fiscal year. Due to a prior request from Cook County, efforts were focused in this area. The Program Manager and Coordinator began preparing to facilitate listening sessions in the community to learn about strengths and identify needs. Two listening sessions were completed with the case management team (see meeting notes) that guided the focus as well. In March 2021, ARQC staff focused on making connections with tenants of four apartment living communities. In summary, tenants expressed frustration with management, concerns about their rights, and fear of retaliation. A connection with HOME Line MN was made that same month. This organization helps support tenants with concerns and provides legal advice and education opportunities. Our contact from HOME Line MN shared a tenant hotline number as well as a resource packet on tenant rights, information on retaliation, and how/why to form a tenant council. ARQC staff shared resources and information with tenants, case managers, and management companies, and a plan for formal council meetings is being organized with each of the four apartment buildings. During tenant council meetings, there will be discussion surrounding self-advocacy and conflict resolution trainings, that can be delivered through Arc Northland.

Promoting Person-Centered Strategies, Community Inclusion, and Self-Advocacy

Goal 1 Facilitate focus groups with individuals and stakeholders to gather information and learn about the effectiveness of person-centered strategies
Main action steps:

- Develop focus group scripts.
- Connect with stakeholder groups for scheduling.
- Write-up Summary of Themes.

Goal 2 Facilitate informational interviews with self-advocates to gather stories on successful experiences
Main action steps

- Develop story script.
- Making connections and schedule informational interviews (obtain consent).
- Create finished stories.

Goal 3 Share results and recommendations through social media, newsletters website, and virtual presentations

The ARQC wanted to give people an opportunity to continue sharing their voice. This fiscal year, the self-advocate leaders collaborated through workgroup meetings to develop a plan to help people share their personal stories/experiences. A story script was developed, and council members assisted with outreach to seek interest from people who wanted to share their personal story. The stories highlighted person-centered strategies that were used and successful, why community was important to people and what things do they enjoy most about their community, the power of self-advocacy and advice to others who want to become stronger self-advocates. The ARQC self-advocate leaders shared their stories during a virtual presentation to council members on 5/27/2021. Additional copies of their personal story were created and provided so that they could continue sharing their stories on their own. ARQC staff are currently looking for other opportunities for the self-advocate leaders to share their stories with the community. Once established, Arc Northland will share stories through a blog post, if the individual requests and consent has been obtained.

General Quality of Life Information

Person-Centered Strategies and Informed Decision-Making

The Arrowhead RQC devoted several months to engaging with people with disabilities to learn from them about their experiences with planning and decision-making. Several self-advocates reached out to share their own personal story to help others and to educate the community. Here are the highlights:

- Arrowhead RQC staff completed focus groups with a total of 45 participants. Individuals described the focus groups as something they looked forward to, a positive experience, and a way to connect with others who have shared experiences.

- A Summary of Themes that highlights best practices, barriers, and trends were developed as result of the focus groups. This document included a list of resources for individuals who were interested in learning more about person-centered planning and supported decision-making. A copy of the summary is provided here.

Summary of
Themes.docx

- An ARQC focus group handout was created to share with stakeholder groups in the Arrowhead region; this document will support efforts to raise awareness in the region on best practices and barriers from the individual's perspective and helps to give them a voice when advocating for changes to their services and supports. A copy of the handout is provided here and linked the Arc Northland website.

Focus Group Data
Handout.pub

- Three Self-Advocate Leaders of the ARQC developed and began sharing their personal story. Their stories include best practices to person-centered planning, why being engaged in the community is important to them, how they contribute to community, and what is most important to them about being a strong self-advocate. A few of their powerful statements are shared here:

"I started attending my IEP meetings in High School so that I knew what was going on with my education. I graduated from my High School and wanted to make a difference for the people who cannot talk for themselves, so I became more involved in the community."

"If I were explaining person-centered planning to someone, I would say everyone does it differently. It helps to find a good pattern or rhythm to work with the people you work with. If someone were scared or nervous, I would say talk to your family or your social worker. You can use the Disability Law Center as a resource if you aren't comfortable advocating for yourself."

"When I think about community, I think of interacting with people, by listening/helping them when possible & giving your time to them when it's needed the most that's why I thought by joining the ARQC that I can do so much more in someone else's life instead of my own. I feel like there is a huge part of me that wants to reach out more & that I need to do more also for people with Abilities to help them have a voice & to get what they want."

"If someone were scared or nervous about being a self-advocate & speaking out for what they believe in, I would tell them all you need is courage. It is what is inside all of us within ourselves to have the power & the encouragement for us to keep moving forward with life instead of always being afraid of it."

"Self-advocacy is important because it helps me to be more confident and communicate better for my needs. It helps me speak up for what I believe in and make a difference in the community."

RQC Collaboration Efforts

Statewide Technology Needs Assessment

The Regional Quality Councils and The Arc Minnesota developed and implemented a technology needs assessment in February and March 2020 to identify barriers to accessing and navigating technology for people with disabilities in Minnesota. The information we collected helped us identify and develop resources and trainings related to technology rights and access for Minnesotans with disabilities and those who support them. Our full analysis and report with recommendations along with an executive summary can be found on our website at Technology Needs Report - Minnesota State Quality Council (qualitycouncilmn.org).

RQC Legislative Outreach and Awareness

In January 2021, Governor Walz shared his proposed budget for 2022. As a cost-savings measure, Governor Walz proposed that the appropriation for the State Quality Council be permanently eliminated, which includes funding for the Regional Quality Councils (RQCs). In response to this proposal, RQC statewide staff and supervisors have engaged in legislative outreach and grassroots advocacy efforts by meeting and communicating with legislators, the governor's office, and staff at the Department of Human Services (DHS). You can find the RQC 1-Pager resource used in our outreach efforts on our website: Engaging with Legislators: RQC 1-Page Resource - Minnesota State Quality Council (qualitycouncilmn.org).

Collaborative Safety

In November of 2020, Regional Quality Council Staff were excited to complete training offered by DHS around the movement of Culture of Safety with the intent that the Regional Quality Councils would become the first Data Action Groups for this Pilot. The Arrowhead Regional Quality Council began meeting in January 2021 to review information pertaining to critical safety incidents that had been reported in St. Louis County. The purpose of the Data Action Group is to review systemic themes and illustrative examples and make considerations and/or recommendations to the Culture of Safety Steering Committee to:

- Inform the future of the project

- Systemic changes to reduce critical incidents

The Regional Quality Councils look forward to continuing this work with the Department of Human Services in the future.

Lunch and Learns

In May of 2021, the Regional Quality Councils (RQC) collaborated to organize and fund statewide weekly 90-minute Lunch and Learn trainings related to disability and racial equity. The RQC's contracted with the Diversity Council in Rochester, Minnesota to facilitate conversations around the following topics:

1. **Gracious Hosting**

   A workshop about developing cultural inclusivity by exploring the tenets of gracious hosting as they apply to organizations and communities.

   Objectives:

   • Participants will draw parallels between their own heritage and culture and those of others.

   • Participants will explore universal tenets of hosting and their application to workplace and public policy.

   • Participants will discuss potential policy and practice shifts that increase inclusivity.

2. **Equity Level Set - Shared Language around Race and Racism**

   A workshop providing preparatory team building around shared language, definitions and knowledge of equity and inclusion and the unique attributes and challenges of your market.

   Objectives:

   • Participants will gain shared language and definitions about diversity, equity, and race.

   • Participants will explore barriers to talking about race and racism and the importance of such discussions.

   • Participants will develop practical techniques for discussing race at individual and organizational levels.

3. **Bystander to Upstander**

   Bystander to Upstander is interactive scenario-based sessions that prepare participants for real life encounters. Unlike traditional diversity training, these activity-based workshops focus on tactical interventions. Bystander to Upstander trainings include general instruction in bias interruption; courageous listening exercises; and culturally specific insights and role-playing with tips and real tools for effective de-escalation, respectful intervention, and social accountability.

4. **EquityLogic**

   A tactical approach to building cultural agility and diversifying organizational strategies in workgroups of all sizes. These trainings are designed to impact: workgroup and individual productivity, inter-workgroup cooperation, organizational innovation and adaptability, problem solving and crisis management, talent pool diversification, employee retention, customer/client satisfaction, cross-organizational collaboration, and market penetration.

Recommendations

Person-Centered Planning, Informed Decision-Making, and Technology

The following recommendations are a result of information gathering and workgroup discussion around person-centered planning, informed decision-making, and technology needs for people with disabilities:

1. People with disabilities, their families, and their supports should receive quality training on:
   - Person-centered strategies and the options available to them
   - Informed decision-making and alternatives to guardianship
   - Case manager roles/responsibilities and options for services

2. Training should be provided that is accessible and culturally relative to the audience receiving it.

3. Strategies and tools developed with person-centered approaches should guide meetings and planning sessions.

4. Tools to measure effectiveness and satisfaction are needed to ensure the person is being provided services in a manner that best supports them in achieving their goals and living their best life.

5. Virtual and in person meetings should be set up to accommodate individual needs and preferences.

6. Regular and frequent check-ins help a person feel more connected to their team and helps keep everyone on the same page with planning and decision-making.

7. Visual aids should be used for meetings and planning whenever possible.

8. 245D training should incorporate the Safety Science framework to reduce critical incidents in Home and Community Based Settings

9. Related to technology, support and funding is needed to:
   - Increase and improve access to technology
   - Provide training and resources for individuals on their rights, safety, and security
   - Connect Disability and Informational Technology (IT) Organizations to meet individuals specific needs

10. Rural communities feel disconnected and report little access to service options and information. Strategic efforts are needed to build and sustain relationships in these areas as well as to share information and resources.

Fiscal Year Budget Reflection

Line Item	Budget	Balance (Remaining Year 5)
Personnel	$ 125,291.00	$
Rent	$ 1,560.00	$
Travel	$ 8,990.00	$
Supplies	$ 6,600.00	$
Communications	$ 3,600.00	$
Technology	$ 700.00	$
Administrative	$ 12,259.00	$
Liability Ins, Interpreter, Trainings	$ 6,500.00	$
Total	$ 165,500.00	$

Due to the timing of this year's annual report, the updated budget spreadsheet was not available to be included. For those interested, please contact Arc Northland @ (218) 726-4725 for updated information.

Priorities for Fiscal Year 2022

While advocating for the work of the RQC's across the state, the three RQC's drafted statute language to continue building on the work that has been accomplished since the start of the grant in 2016. The RQC's are currently waiting for the Governor to approve the state budget and will need to respond to a new RFP with specific deliverables from the State. The next few months will be devoted to applying for the grant and working with the State on new deliverables provided in the contract.

Regional Quality Council's work must be informed and directed by the needs and desires of persons who have disabilities in the region in which they operate.

In summary, the RQC's focus will include:

- o identify issues and barriers that impede Minnesotans who have disabilities from optimizing choice of home and community-based services
- o promote informed decision-making, autonomy, and self-direction
- o analyze and review quality outcomes and critical incident data
- o inform a comprehensive system for effective incident reporting, investigation, analysis, and follow-up
- o collaborate on projects and initiatives to advance priorities shared with state agencies, lead agencies, educational institutions, advocacy organizations, community partners, and other entities engaged in disability service improvements
- o Establish partnerships and working relationships with individuals and groups in the regions
- o identify and implement quality improvement projects regionally and statewide
- o transform systems and drive social change in alignment with the disability rights and disability justice movements as identified by leaders who have disabilities
- o provide information and training programs for persons who have disabilities and their families and legal representatives on formal and informal support options and quality expectations
- o make recommendations to state agencies and other key decision-makers regarding disability services and supports
- o submit an annual report to committees with jurisdiction over disability services on the status, outcomes, improvement priorities, and activities in the region
- o support people by advocating to resolve complaints between the counties, providers, persons receiving services, their families, and legal representatives
- o recruit, train, and assign duties to regional quality council teams, including council members, interns, and volunteers, taking into account the skills necessary for the team members to be successful in this work

Appendix A - Communication Plan

Audience	Action/Activity	Message	Schedule	Owner	Medium	Results
Arrowhead Quality Council Members						
ARQC Members	Council meetings	Agenda	Bi-monthly	PM and ARQC Members	Zoom and handouts	Meeting minutes
ARQC Members	Liberty Plan	Goal setting and direction for next fiscal year of the Councils work	Jul-20	PM, PC and ARQC Members	Zoom and handouts	Plan is created and can be presented at each meeting, used to direct workgroups, focus groups, and outreach
ARQC Members	Workgroup 1: Data	See Workgroup Description	Bi-monthly	PM, PC and ARQC Members	Zoom and handouts	Meeting minutes
ARQC Members	Workgroup 2: Quality Improvement	See Workgroup Description	Bi-monthly	PM, PC and ARQC Members	Zoom, data review, summary of themes, focus group scripts, google docs	Meeting minutes
ARQC Members	Workgroup 3: Culture of Safety Data Action	See Workgroup Description	2 - 4 hours every 6 months	PM, PC and ARQC Members	Zoom and data review	
RQC Staff						
ARQC, MRQC, R10 RQC	Arrowhead, Metro, and Rochester RQC staff meetings	Updates, check-in, collaboration on projects	Monthly virtual meetings and collaboration via email as needed	Arrowhead, Metro, Region 10 staff	Email & Zoom	Monthly meeting minutes

Audience	Action/Activity	Message	Schedule	Owner	Medium	Results
Accessible Presentation and Marketing Materials						
Stakeholder, community members, self-advocates, professionals	Newsletter	Updates on each RQC, progress, and projects	Quarterly	Arrowhead, Metro, Region 10 RQC's	Email, website link, mailings if needed	
Stakeholder, community members, self-advocates, professionals	Brochures	What do RQC's do, how to get involved, and each RQC location	Ongoing distribution	Arrowhead, Metro, Region 10 RQC's	Available in multiple languages. Available via mail and PDF as requested.	Brail documents mailed to State Services for the Blind and Life House Center for Vital Living on 4/28/21
Stakeholder, community members, self-advocates, professionals	Website	In-depth look at the RQC/SQC partnership, access to event information and meeting minutes, overview of each RQC, how to get involved	Ongoing updates, website access available and updated as needed	Arrowhead, Metro, Region 10 RQC's	Virtual and translation available in multiple languages	
DHS, Council Members, stakeholders, community and family members, self-advocates	Presentation Power-point	Overview of RQC history, work, and how to get involved moving forward; way to share data	Ongoing	Arrowhead, Metro, Region 10 RQC's	Power-point, brochures, newsletters, other handouts	
Stakeholders, community and family members, professionals, self-advocates	Arc Guide	Who we are, goals, quality improvement efforts	Ongoing distribution	Arrowhead, Metro, Region 10 RQC's	Hard copy, linked to website, available in multiple languages	

Audience	Action/Activity	Message	Schedule	Owner	Medium	Results
Data						
DHS, Council Members, stakeholders, community and family members, self-advocates	Annual Report	In-depth look at the last fiscal year, data review, goals going forward, and how the RQC budget was used	Dec-20	ARQC Members, PM and PC	PDF, word document, and linked to website	
Council Members, stakeholders, community and family members, self-advocates	ICI Data Handout	Plain language handout of analyzed ICI data on trends, best practices, and gaps in services	Ongoing distribution	PM and PC	Linked to website, can be mailed, emailed, and accompany presentations	
Arrowhead Region	Recorded Zoom presentation	Overview of RQC history, work, and how to get involved moving forward; way to share data	Sent to Lead Agency Rep's on ARQC	PM	Power-point, Zoom recording	
Stakeholders in the Arrowhead Region	Focus Group Data Handout	Data collected from focus group participants on person-centered planning and informed decision making	October 2020 - March 2021 data sent May 2021; posted to website 6/15/2021	PM led with ARQC Members input	Hard copy, email, mail, link on website, and accompany presentations	
Capitol Connector Team (Eighth Congressional District)	ICI data presentation and report	November 2017 - November 2019 data analyzed person-centered quality reviews	May 4th, 2021	PM	Power-point presentation and ICI report	Reviewed with Capitol Connector Team during virtual meeting to address barriers and determine legislative focus

Audience	Key Message	Schedule	Training or Event	Owner	Medium	Results
ARQC Staff (Staff Development)						
ARQC Staff	Future Planning	June 9th, 16th, 23rd 2020	Arc US Future Planning Series	PM and PC	Webinar	Training certificate
ARQC Staff	Professional Development; Person-Centered Practices	October 14th-15th 2020	Minnesota Gathering	PM and PC	Virtual, break-out rooms, world café focus group	Power-point and handouts shared with attendees
ARQC Staff	Professional Development	October 7th-8th 2020	St. Louis County Health and Human Service Conference	PM and PC	Virtual	
ARQC Program Manager	Decision Making: Guardianship and Options Webinar	September 17th, 2021	Options for supporting people with disabilities in making decision	The Arc Minnesota	Zoom	
ARQC Staff	Person-Centered Planning Facilitation	Jan-21	Star Services Training	PM	Three-day interactive training	Training Certificate and follow-up coaching calls for 6 months
ARQC Staff	Motivational Interviewing Skills	Aug-20	Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change	PM	Zoom and participant packet; Level One - 16 hours; Level Two - 8 hours	Three additional skill practice sessions with coaching and taping
ARQC Facilitators	Group facilitation and best practices	31-Jul-20	Focus group and informational interview training	PM and PC	Zoom, Power-point, handouts	Feedback forms

Audience	Key Message	Schedule	Training or Event	Owner	Medium	Results
ARQC staff and council members	Program that assists people with needs to have transportation available to them	May 27th 2021	ConnectAbility of MN Lyft program presentation	PM	Zoom presentation, website, information, and forms	
Focus Groups						
Stakeholders, Self-Advocates, Providers, and family/community members	Focus group 1: Informed Decision Making/Guardianship Alternatives	See Implementation and Activities Plan	Focus Groups	PM, PC and ARQC Facilitators	Zoom, scripts and Summary of Themes	
Stakeholders, Self-Advocates, Providers, and family/community members	Focus group 2: Community Connections	See Implementation and Activities Plan	Focus Groups/Listening Sessions	PM, PC and ARQC Facilitators	Zoom, scripts and Summary of Themes	
Stakeholders, Self-Advocates, Providers, and family/community members	Focus group 3: Person-Centered Planning	See Implementation and Activities Plan	Focus Groups/Informational Interviews	PM, PC and ARQC Facilitators	Zoom, scripts and Summary of Themes	

Activity	Audience	Schedule	Message	Owner	Medium	Results
Quality Improvement Projects						
Accessible Ely	Rural businesses, Chamber of Commerce, professionals	Monthly	Supports a rural Minnesotan community more accessible and accommodating to people with disabilities	PC	In-person and virtual meetings	
Cook County Tenant Councils	Tenants in rural Minnesota subsidized housing	Ongoing	To improve tenant/landlord relationships, advocacy, and communication	PC	In-person and virtual meetings	

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

Activity	Audience	Schedule	Message	Owner	Medium	Results
ARQC Technology Grant	Self-advocates/people with disabilities	June 29th 2020	To help enhance and establish connections and relationships on a virtual platform during Covid for people with disabilities	PM and PC	Brief, plain language application submitted to PM, no-contact laptop drop off	Thank you letters/cards, completed applications, follow-up with technology assistance
Community Resource Binder	Community members, professionals, people with disabilities	Ongoing	Guide to access community resources	PC with support from Arc Northland team and ARQC	Binder and virtual documents	
Community Connections in rural areas: QI Project 1	Rural businesses, community members, providers, stakeholders, people with disabilities and families	See Activities and Implementation Plan for schedule and timeline	Improving connections and resource accessibility in rural communities	PM, PC and ARQC	Listening sessions, summary of themes, ICI data analysis	Follow-up post project (Q4)
Promoting Person-Centered Strategies: QI Project 2	Stakeholders, providers, people with disabilities, families, and community members	See Activities and Implementation Plan for schedule and timeline	To create and promote a community with a strong person-centered strategy understanding and skills to use	PM and ARQC	Focus groups, informational interviews, personal success stories, marketing strategies (FB, newsletter, website, virtual presentations)	
Technology Needs Assessment Survey	People with disabilities	Survey open February - March 2021	Assess needs and challenges to getting and using technology (state-wide)	RQC Staff	Survey Monkey	Data analysis, workgroup, full technical report linked to website

Activity	Audience	Schedule	Message	Owner	Medium	Results
Voter Education	Community members and people with disabilities/self-advocates		Basic voting education, rights, and awareness	PM and PC	Mailings and social media posts to share information and resources	
Community Involvement						
Culture of Safety	The Data Action Group will share results and recommendations with the Safety Action Group members of the pilot project	1. Project presentation with DHS September 2020 2. Data Action Group December 2020	Review systematic scores from incidents and attempt to determine which parts of the system may require attention and/or reform to decrease critical incidents in the future	PM, PC and ARQC Partnership with DHS pilot project managers	ARQC workgroup data review Virtual meetings (2 -4 hours every 6 months)	
ICI Cohort: Communities of Practice	Stakeholders	Monthly meetings	Creating a person-centered community, sharing best practices and resources	PM	Virtual meetings, world café focus group, sharing data and resources	
Community Conversations	Community members, people with disabilities, and family members	Monthly meetings	Building natural relationships and supports, community engagement	PM and PC	Virtual meetings, data review, asset mapping, St. Louis County connections	This group was inactive during pandemic
Capitol Connector Team (Eighth Congressional District)	People with disabilities, families, community members, providers	Monthly meetings	Inform, advocate, and connect people elected officials Educate on public policy	PM with support from The Arc MN	Virtual toolkit w/ resources; RQC data analyzed by ICI to inform legislative focus	

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

Activity	Audience	Schedule	Message	Owner	Medium	Results
Local Solutions to End Poverty	Impoverished communities, professionals, elected officials	TBD	Advocate for and empower impoverished communities Hold elected officials accountable for change	PM and PC		This group was inactive during pandemic
Outreach						
Presentation	Case Manager/County Human Services	Q2 of F2020-2021	Who we are, what we are doing and why; what will we be asking of them	PM and PC	Brochures, website, presentations	Program Manager recorded Zoom outreach presentation and sent to lead agency Council representatives on 10/9.
Presentation	Service Providers	Q2 of F2020-2021	Who we are, what we are doing and why; what will we be asking of them	PM and PC	Brochures, website, presentations, listening sessions	Virtual presentation with RSI on 11/6/20; Virtual presentation during regional provider meeting on 11/16/20; Virtual/recorded presentation w/ CHOICE, unlimited on 12/4/20
Presentation	Community and family members	Q2 of F2020-2021	Who we are, what we are doing and why How to apply to be a council member	PM and PC	Brochures, website, presentations, listening sessions	

Activity	Audience	Schedule	Message	Owner	Medium	Results
Presentation	Self-advocates/people with disabilities	Q1 & Q2 of F2020-2021	Who we are, what we are doing and why How to apply to be a council member	PM and PC	Brochures, website, presentations, listening sessions	Virtual presentation with People First Self-Advocacy Group 8/10/20
Booth at SLC Conference	Stakeholders, professionals, self-advocates	Oct-20	Who we are, what we do, why, and how to get involved	PM	Virtual booth; live Q & A	