

**MA Department of Mental Health
State Mental Health Planning Council (SMHPC)
Employment Subcommittee**

MISSION

Advocate for the full and equitable integration of employment and career services into the full array of DMH supports for the purpose of enabling individuals to work towards full recovery in the communities of their choice.

VISION

All public and private agencies and partnerships serving people whose lives have been disrupted by trauma and serious mental health challenges value the importance of employment as a critical element of the recovery process and work collaboratively to create opportunities and reduce barriers to employment.

PHILOSOPHY

Employment is one of the essential elements of life in our society. All members of society should be given the opportunity to participate in employment without discrimination. This includes people whose lives have been disrupted by trauma and serious mental health challenges.

While gainful employment improves the long-term recovery for adults with serious mental health challenges, research suggests that young adults of color face significant systemic barriers that impede their vocational success. These barriers include a history of poverty, unstable housing, poor quality schools, disproportionate involvement with the criminal justice system, and common and everyday discrimination. Working to lessen the impact of these systemic barriers to employment for adults of color with serious mental health challenges is incumbent upon DMH, its providers, and this Subcommittee.

STRATEGIES

- Advocate for DMH to focus on employment of individuals served as a critical and necessary component of recovery; and to ensure that funding is aligned with that priority.
- Determine and meet the specific vocational and educational needs and preferences of disenfranchised groups who experience mental health disruptions, often based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and age.
- Gather information, data and research on promising vocational rehabilitation, employment and education practices for individuals with significant mental health conditions. Make recommendations based on this information; monitor the implementation of these recommendations; and advocate for the resources to operationalize them.
- Ensure that applicable state agencies and employment providers have the necessary resources inclusive of staff training to assist individuals with lived experience to make informed employment-related decisions that include access to accurate and timely education around the impact of work on their public benefits and entitlements.
- Respond to emergent policy, fiscal, and legislative issues that may impact the availability of employment services for individuals with significant mental health conditions.

- Advocate for greater education and collaboration amongst legislators, state agencies, employment providers, and private entities including employers to preserve, enhance and support integrated and coordinated employment services and opportunities for individuals with significant mental health conditions.

GOALS – FY22-23

Objectives:

Goal 1: Analyze outcomes of DMH employment programs including the ACCS/MRC collaboration and make recommendations for improvements or enhancements. **Time Frame: By June 30, 2022**

Objectives:

- a) Review outcome data of ACCS/MRC, Clubhouses and other relevant programs as available.
- b) Review cross-section of race and employment data so we can identify and address racial, cultural and linguistic disparities in employment outcomes.
- c) Provide feedback and develop recommendations for DMH as relevant.

Goal 2: Prioritize Race, Equity and Inclusion in outcomes, interagency relationship and staff training. **Time Frame: By June 30, 2023.**

Objectives:

- a) Increase transparency of racial, cultural and linguistic disparities in vocational outcomes and services for persons served by DMH through providing these data every sixth months to relevant advisory bodies.
- b) Survey and/or hold focus groups with under represented and under served populations to better understand their specific vocational needs and preferences.
- c) Using the race, equity and inclusion information gathered, make recommendations for reducing barriers to employment, enhancing the MRC/ACCS collaboration, and better identify and support staff training needs.

Goal 3: Enhance relationship between MRC and DMH to ensure the employment needs of individuals served by ACCS are met. **Time Frame: By June 30, 2022**

Objectives:

- a) Cross-representation on respective committees, i.e., SMHPC Employment Subcommittee and MRC Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC).
- b) Host a Best Practices Forum in collaboration with the MRC SRC.
- c) Analyze outcomes data.
- d) Survey and/or hold focus group with key stakeholders.
- e) Research/Identify best practices.
- f) Develop a report and make recommendations.

Goal 4: Identify training needs of DMH-funded employment provider staff and make recommendations to DMH for professional development opportunities. **Time Frame: June 30, 2022**

Objectives:

- a) Assess training needs of DMH-funded employment provider staff
- b) Identify available training resources.
- c) Develop recommendations to address training gaps.