



2011 Public Meeting/Public Comment Summary

DORS and the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC) held four public meetings and a statewide teleconference during March 2011:

- Easter Seals Greater Washington-Baltimore Region (Silver Spring)
- Lower Shore Enterprises (Salisbury)
- Blind Industries & Services of Maryland (Baltimore)
- The Arc of Carroll County (Westminster)
- Statewide Teleconference

The purpose of the meetings include the following:

1. To obtain feedback from consumers, community partners and other stakeholders about the 2012 State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Vocational Rehabilitation program.
2. To present updates on priority topics:
 - Budget and Capacity issues for the public vocational rehabilitation program in Maryland
 - Benefits Planning - services for DORS consumers who are beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income
 - DORS services for Individuals who are Blind/Low Vision
3. To address comments and inquiries about DORS programs and services from attendees.

DORS advertised the public meetings on the agency Web site, distributed the meetings flyer on the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing list serve, approved an article for the Department of Disabilities newsletter, posted announcements on local cable public access channels and on MSDE's Facebook page, enlisted regional directors and supervisors to promote the events by networking in their respective regions and distributing posters, etc., sent an E-mail campaign to consumers, advocacy groups, transition professionals, workforce professionals and other stakeholders, and sent public service announcements to local media.

DORS also invited public comments by letter, e-mail or phone call on the public Web site.

Attendance

Easter Seals, Silver Spring	19
BISM, Baltimore	56
Statewide Teleconference	11
Lower Shore Enterprises, Salisbury	13
The Arc of Carroll County, Westminster	<u>13</u>
TOTAL	112

DORS/MSRC Presenters & Representatives

MSRC Members Participating in the Public Meetings included:

Kali Mallik (Chair)	Paulette Epps
Daniel Frye (Vice Chair)	Michael Whitehill
Josie Thomas	Laurie Elinoff
Mike Bullis	

DORS Staff Participating in the Public Meetings included:

Suzanne Page, Assistant State Superintendent
Susan Schaffer, Director, Office for Blindness & Vision Services
Polly Huston, Director, Office of Program & Community Support
Thomas Laverty, Acting Director, Client Assistance Program
JoAnne Materkowski, Program Manager, Office of Field Services
Beth Lash, Regional Director, Montgomery & Prince George's Counties
Michael Breeden, Regional Director, Baltimore City
Donna Lettow, Public Information and Accessibility
Kimberlee Schultz, Public Information & Planning

Public Meetings Guest Speaker:

Work Incentives Project Director, Maryland Department of Disabilities, Michael Dalto

Written Comments

No written comments were received.

Summary of Public Meeting Comments

1. DORS Services

- Two consumers commented about insufficient vocational rehabilitation services for deaf-blind consumers. One consumer stated that her most urgent concerns were regarding the need for more Assistive Technology (AT) services for deaf-blind consumers and for AT trainers who can communicate with and provide training for these consumers.
- One person commented on the Model State Plan for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing services that was implemented last year and asked for a status update. The Regional Director and OBVS Director provided updates.
- One person commented that despite the availability of DORS services for deaf and hard-of-hearing (HoH) consumers, many deaf and HoH consumers do not access vocational rehabilitation services.
- Two consumers had questions about DORS services. The CAP representative and/or Regional Directors will follow-up.

2. Transitional Services

- A parent of a DORS consumer commented on a gap in the transition process from high school to community college. The college is requiring that the student have a recent psychological evaluation, but the high school is not providing the evaluation. The parent stated she was not able to get an answer from the DORS counselor regarding whether or not DORS would provide assistance with getting the evaluation.
- A community rehabilitation program (CRP) representative followed-up by sharing information about the statewide workgroup that is working on this gap. In many areas of the state, psychological evaluations are no longer being offered by high schools, but colleges may still require these evaluations.

3. Benefits Planning

- Three people commented that the addition of Benefits Planning services to DORS services was helpful and appreciated.
- Three CRP representatives had comments and questions about the number of people who are currently certified in Benefits Planning in Maryland.

4. Miscellaneous

- A representative from Office of Special Needs Populations, Mental Hygiene Administration commended DORS for DDS' involvement and participation in the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) Initiative.
- One person asked if the MSRC meetings could be attended via teleconference. An MSRC member will follow-up.
- One person commented and had a few questions about DORS use of volunteers.