What is MRC?

- MRC is a state agency that provides services to persons with disabilities.

- Has three divisions:
  - Community Living
  - Disability Determination Services (SSDI and SSI)
  - Vocational Rehabilitation
Vocational Rehabilitation Mission

To provide vocational counseling and other support services to people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining or retaining employment.
HOW CAN MRC HELP MY STUDENTS?

Transition Services

WHAT ARE TRANSITION SERVICES?
- SERVICES THAT SUPPORT A STUDENT’S TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD/HIGHER INDEPENDENCE

MRC VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES SUPPORTS A STUDENT’S FUTURE WORK GOALS.
Is MRC the right place for Me?

An individual may have a qualifying disability if he/she has experienced any of the following:

- Have/Has received Special Education Services in school
- Have/Has had a 504 Plan
- Have/Has had District Accommodation Plan
- Need Assistance with Transition
- Lack skills to get job offers
- Difficulties interacting with others
- Unsure of career direction
- Never been employed
- Incomplete education/training
- Need extra support to maintain job
The Right Fit

- If MRC is right for the student, an MRC counselor will help to develop a plan that will address any employment barriers in the areas of:
  - Mobility
  - Communication
  - Interpersonal skills
  - self-care
  - self-direction
  - work tolerance
  - work skills

- What do we consider?
  - Areas of need, which are often those areas addressed in a Special Education Plan (IEP), 504 Plan or District Accommodation Plan
Types of Referrals

- **Chapter 688**
  - Be receiving special education services
  - Be in need of continuing adult services
  - Be unable to work more than 20 hours per week
  - * individuals on SSI or SSDI are automatically eligible for 688

- **Local Education Authority (LEA)**
  - All non 688 eligible students in need of services

- Young Adults are encouraged to apply for services at the end of their sophomore year, beginning of junior year of high school, or

- If the student is in a turning 22 program, he/she is encouraged to apply there are two years remaining in their program.
Wait List

Waitlist Time: 60 days

While on the wait list, students should:

- Contact their counselor with address, telephone number, or any other contact information changes.
- Stay connected to health care providers, for example, primary care physician, therapist, psychologist or any other supports that oversee their treatment.
- Obtain proof of benefits if receiving SSI or SSDI.
- Obtain medical records if possible/applicable.
Getting Started

- Services do not begin until the student has signed the application form (at the initial interview) and has been determined eligible for MRC services.

- The student will receive a letter indicating the date that he/she will be coming off the wait list.
Meeting Your Counselor

During the 1st meeting, the counselor will do an initial interview asking for the following information:

- Family & close contacts
- Education & work history
- Medical data (information about areas of disability, doctors, medications, hospitalizations)
- Income sources and amount of support
- Criminal history
- Goals and services the student is interested in pursuing
Eligibility

- After the initial interview is completed, the counselor will determine the student’s eligibility based on:
  - Barriers to employment caused by a disability based on medical records, proof of benefits, and diagnostic assessments.
  - A reasonable expectation that a positive employment outcome will occur as a result of receiving vocational rehabilitation services.
• The counselor has 60 days from the initial interview to gather documentation from doctors, therapists, psychological assessments, schools, etc., to determine a student’s eligibility.

• Extensions after the 60 days may be granted if proper documentation is not provided/available.
The Relationship with Your Counselor

- Your child/student will work with their counselor to create a plan that is in their best interest.
- The counselor will help the student explore community resources and provide employment services.
- It is the student’s responsibility to be active in the vocational process and to keep regularly scheduled appointments with his/her counselor.
MRC and High School

Services available to students while they are in high school are expanding with the implementation of the Workforce Investment Opportunities Act (WIOA) Updates.

- MRC counselors work with the students to determine abilities, interests and needs for assistance and help them plan for the transition beyond high school.
- During this time MRC can offer the following services:
  - Counseling and Guidance
  - Assessments
  - Vocational Exploration
  - Referral for Other Services
- All services provided will reflect the student’s unique aptitudes, interests, needs, and goals
Once a student completes high school, MRC counselors will continue to work with him/her in reaching the career goal.

Upon graduating the following services can be offered to assist with obtaining and maintaining employment:
After High School - continued

- Counseling and Guidance
- Interest and Aptitude Testing
- College or Vocational Training
- Tutors
- Assistive and/or Rehabilitation Technology
- Consultation to Employers
- Job Placement Assistance
- Job Coaching
- Follow-up and Referrals
Determining Your Vocational Goal

- Once found eligible for services, the counselor will work with the student to develop his/her vocational goal.

- If the student already has some job goals in mind, his counselor will help explore their feasibility.

- If a student does not have clear career direction, his counselor may recommend that he participate in career assessment testing at the office.
Your Individual Plan for Employment

- Once determined eligible, the student will meet with his counselor to discuss the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

- IPE: a written document that outlines a student’s vocational goals and all services that will be provided to achieve the goals.

- It will also document the time frame to meet these services and the cost breakdown. ("pink form")

- The MRC counselor will work with the student and his family (and often other people such as teachers, counselors, or coaches) to identify the training/school programs that will best meet the student’s needs. We consider:
  - Learning Skills and needs
  - Emotional needs
  - Physical needs
  - Financial needs
Transition Services

TO HELP YOUR STUDENT
○ Choose a career goal that fits the student’s choices, needs and abilities

MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS
○ Regarding training including: two or four year college, trade or vocational school, job specific training programs or other post-secondary training options

○ *It is not a requirement that a student go on to “College” after high school. Rather, the counselor will help the student to consider the job the student will be seeking, the hiring trends, and education level needed.

PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL AID
○ MRC tuition waiver for state college
○ MRC financial assistance for training programs
○ Assistance to purchase books
○ Assistance in applying for state & federal student aid
Services and Supports in the IPE may include:

- Vocational Guidance and Counseling
- Vocational Evaluations
- Interest and Aptitude Evaluations
- College or Job-Specific Training
- Accommodations at College (disability services, tutoring)
- Assistive and/or Rehabilitation Technology

- Assistance with building your Resume, Networking, and Interviewing Skills
- Assistance with applying for jobs and talking to employers about on-the-job needs
- Job Placement Assistance
- Job Coaching/Accommodations On the Job
- Follow-up and Referrals
If the student’s vocational goal requires additional training, MRC can assist with planning for college, technical training school, or licensure programs. In some cases, funding supports are available.

MRC can provide a wide array of training options to assist you in preparing for employment.

We can assist with college degree and certificates programs at any state school.
Vocational Training & Education

- All state schools waive tuition costs for clients of MRC.

- To receive financial assistance from MRC, a student must be found financially eligible for paid services.

- Typically MRC is not able to assist with degree programs at private schools unless a particular program is not available at a state college.

- MRC requires all students to apply for financial aid services.
Job Placement Services

- Once job ready, a student may receive assistance with the following:
  - Resume writing
  - Interviewing skills
  - Developing job leads
  - Employer advocacy
  - Job coaching (if needed)
  - OJE/OJT
Post Employment Services

- MRC will provide students with support, advocacy and follow-up services for at least 90 days after securing employment.

- Students may be eligible to receive post-employment services after they have obtained a job and their MRC case has been closed.

- After 3 years, the student’s file will be destroyed if they are not receiving services.
School vs. MRC – Who Helps When?

- Keep in mind that certain services for students with disabilities are legally mandated to be provided by schools, whereas Adult Services are subject to a determination of eligibility.

- There are a number of services available from BOTH the school and MRC; the best outcomes occur when there is ample communication among team members to ensure all of the student’s service needs are met in a timely manner.
What can parents do?

Participation by parents is very important, especially when student is less than 18 years of age.

They know their child best; go with them to their first meeting with the Mass Rehab counselor.

- Stay in touch with their child's VR counselor to make sure planning for post-high school activities is consistent with the plans you and your child have been making with the school.
Who will make the decisions about student’s VR program?

- Your child will make the final decisions that fit his/her own career interests, choices and goals.
- The best situation is one in which everyone works together.
- When the IEP is complete, the IPE begins.
- An Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is a plan for VR services needed to enable you to reach your career goals.
Suggestions for Success

- Communicate!
- Advocate and Ask Questions
- Get to know school support staff
- Support the student’s ability to Self-Advocate and Learn from Experiences
- Support the student investing more in the VR process than anyone else
Remember, ......

Our job is to help students get a JOB!
All of our services are focused on the job goal the student has identified with his/her counselor and services do not end until he/she is EMPLOYED!
Questions???