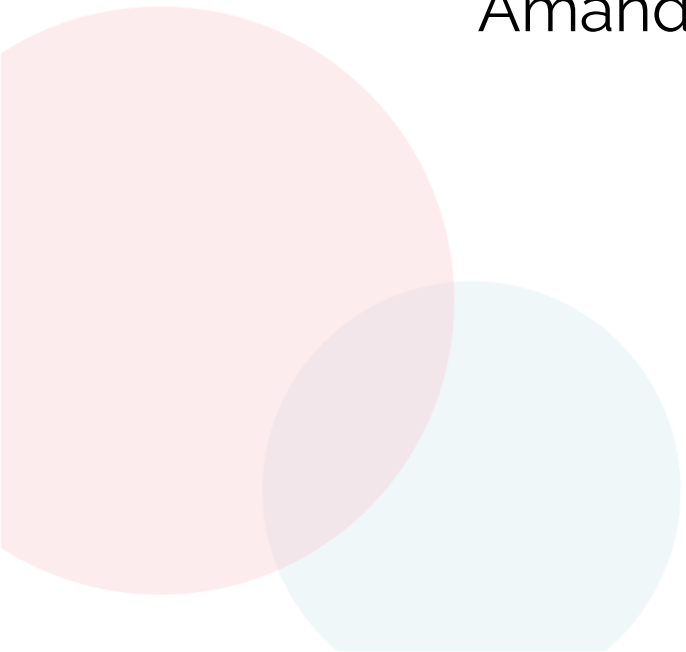


# The Office of Individual and Family Engagement Innovation in Vocational Rehabilitation

Amanda Baczko, Director, Office of Individual & Family  
Engagement

Kate Biebel, MRC Deputy Commissioner

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission



# Overview of Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)

- One of 16 agencies within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services
- 800 FTE's Agency-Wide
- Three key divisions:
  - Vocational Rehabilitation- General
  - Community Living
  - Disability Determination Services
- Majority of Individual & Family Engagement work sits within Community Living and Vocational Rehabilitation

# Development of the Office of Individual and Family Engagement

- Commissioner Wolf initiated a **Business Process Redesign in Fall 2018**, to develop a **strategic roadmap** and agency priorities to carry MRC forward.
- The Roadmap project identified **30 overall agency priority initiatives**, through interviews and focus groups with agency stakeholders across divisions, roles and regions, as well as external stakeholders.
- Initiatives were prioritized into 3 phases of implementation over 4 years (19'-22). **One of the top priorities was stronger, more effective engagement and collaboration with individuals with disabilities and their families.**
- As a result, MRC established what is now known as the **Office of Individual and Family Engagement.**

# Office of Individual & Family Engagement

## Mission & Vision

**Mission:** We are committed to prioritizing the development and delivery of comprehensive services, supports and community engagement across the Commonwealth. To do this, we partner with individuals with disabilities, families, and chosen allies to inspire, educate, develop, & break down existing systemic barriers.

**Vision:** Our vision is based on the philosophy that individuals with disabilities have the same basic rights as people without disabilities. We aspire to become the model service delivery agency in Massachusetts. We will do this by breaking down barriers and ensuring individuals with disabilities have full and equitable access to the services and supports they want and need to live life on their terms.



# Staffing

- Director of Individual and Family Engagement
  - Family Partnership Coordinator
  - Ombudsperson
  - Communications & Administrative Support
  - Disability Inclusion Leaders
  - Family Inclusion Ambassadors
  - Coming soon.....expert speakers bureau!
- 

# Why Prioritize This Office?

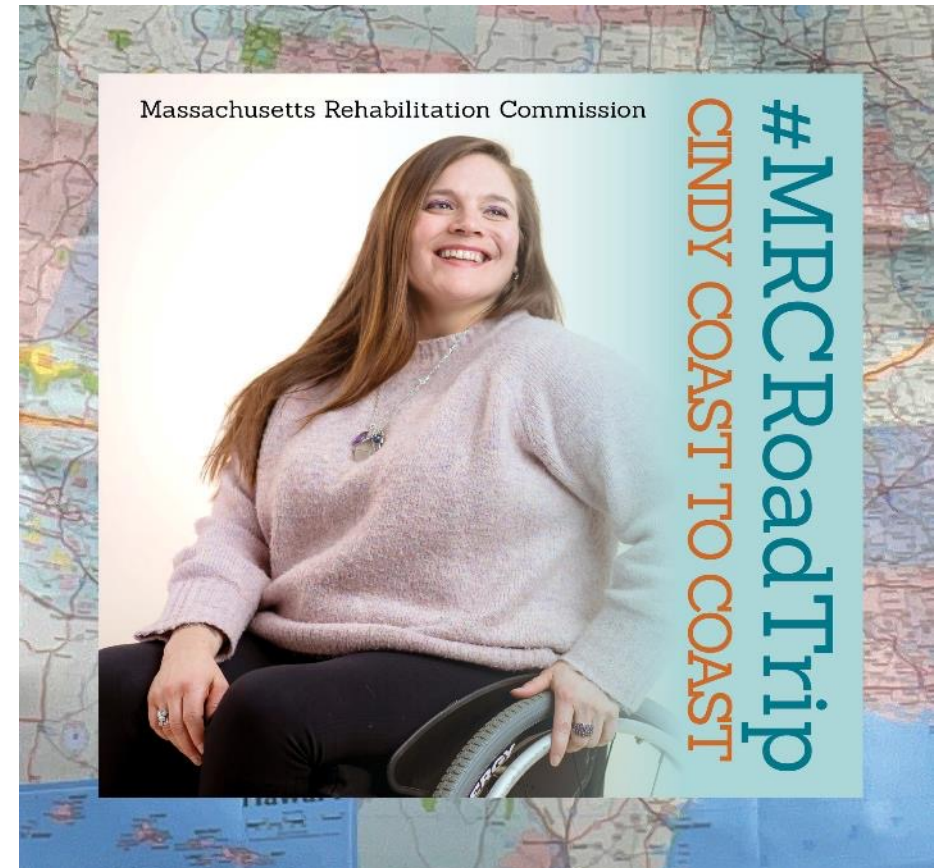
Building an MRC that *walks the walk* of the “nothing about us without us” model and serves a state leader in uplifting disability leadership leads to.....

- ✓ Improved **engagement and retention (ROI)** in our services
- ✓ Increased **satisfaction and fulfillment** of consumers and families (services people want AND need)
- ✓ Providers/staff who **authentically partner** with consumers to pursue their goals, dreams, and general independence
- ✓ The community has spoken...MRC **ROADMAP** Priority!
- ✓ An organization that “levels up” **beyond standard engagement** (e.g., advisory boards, consumer interns)
- ✓ A lot of scary, uncomfortable, and **rewarding** change in our thinking and doing agency wide
- ✓ Shifting the power dynamic

# Priority 1: Elevate Disability and Family Partnerships within MRC to identify and address community priorities

## Disability & Family Inclusion Leader positions

- **Contact:** 15-20 hrs./month for 12-24 months.
- **Key Activities:**
  - Messaging & Marketing
  - Roadmap Liaison
  - Policy Development
  - Speaker & Trainer Bureau
  - Hiring Panels



# Peer Mentors and Family Partners within VR!

- **Innovation:** New and dynamic roles that bring personal lived experience to vocational rehabilitation services
- **Peer Mentor:** Will support young adults to identify and provide choice, resources, and supports, while assisting young adults in developing Self CAREs to increase independence and success throughout their careers.
- **Family partner:** Will empower family allies of young adults served by the MRC NextGen Careers Program. Primary responsibilities include promoting partnerships between families and professionals and identifying and arranging services that assist the family in supporting their young adults in their goal of obtaining careers.



# Priority 2: Strengthen connection to disability community by generating enthusiasm and increasing awareness around MRC services

- **Quarterly Disability & Family Forums:** Educate community on MRC services and solicit ongoing feedback
- **Quarterly Newsletter:** Share inspiration and information to over 15,000 current and former service recipients and community members



# Explore Possibility Community Summit

- **Purpose:** Brought together over 300 members of the disability community for learning, networking, and fun!
- **Main events:**
  - Keynote speakers
  - Six interactive workshops
  - Speed networking
  - Deaf Networking
  - Over 30 Exhibitors
  - Professional & Fun Photo Booths
  - Lived Experience Panel



## Priority 3: Develop new data points to assess service experience (*emphasis on DEI-A & family representation*)

### Revamping the Service Experience Survey:

- **Create a framework for using data to elevate MRC services**
  - Participatory development process.
  - Understand the full journey of MRC service recipients .
  - Facilitate individual action and policy level decision making.
- **Population:** Individuals receiving Community Living and/or Vocational Rehabilitation Services. 225 surveys/month = 2,700 surveys annually.
- **DEI-A Focus:** Oversampling underrepresented populations and assessing cultural responsiveness of staff.

## Priority 4: Enhance staff education to promote effective service delivery and engagement

- **Implement cross-agency training series**
  - Training 1: Destigmatizing the Ombudsman Role and Overview of Appeals
  - Training 2: Managing and Documenting Challenging Service Cases
  - Training 3: Disability History, Etiquette and Cultural Responsivity



# Priority 5: Support implementation of a systemic approach to Diversity Equity Inclusion and Accessibility (DEI-A)

- Soliciting vendor address accessibility barriers
  - Document remediation
  - Accessibility training for staff
  - Real-time IT support for screen readers, dictation software and other assistive tech
  - Technical assistance & consultation for new program/systems roll-out
- Building a Disability Voices Employee Resource Group

# Contact Info

## **Office of Individual and Family Engagement**

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

600 Washington St., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Boston, MA 02111

**Amanda Costa:** [Amanda.Baczko@mass.gov](mailto:Amanda.Baczko@mass.gov)

**Kate Biebel:** [Kathleen.Biebel@mass.gov](mailto:Kathleen.Biebel@mass.gov)

**Facebook:** @MassRehabCommission

**Twitter:** @MassRehabComm

**Instagram:** @massrehabilitationcommission

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/massachusetts-rehabilitation-commission-mrc-/>

**Thank You!**