2016 Program Evaluation / Outcomes Management Report

*A summary of our program goals, results, and conclusions*



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***Midwest Special Services, Inc. is committed to ongoing quality review and service improvement. The information in this report reflects just a few of the ways in which we measure our performance, identify trends, and gather feedback from our persons served and other stakeholders of the organization.***

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# PERSONS SERVED SATISFACTION

282 persons served completed the survey, representing approximately 42% of the total number of people (675) in all MSS programs. Survey items included both ratable statements and open-ended questions. Responses to ratable items were **96% positive** (“Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” to the statements below).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ratable Survey Items** | **Positive Ratings** |
| 1. *MSS takes into consideration what makes me feel happy, fulfilled, satisfied, and comfortable when providing supports.*
 | 97.98% |
| 1. *MSS gives me opportunities to have control over my environment when possible (where I choose to work, where I choose to eat lunch, who I choose to socialize with, etc.).*
 | 95.69% |
| 1. *MSS provides me with opportunities for regular meaningful non-work activities.*
 | 95.30% |
| 1. *The physical environment at MSS supports my goals and needs (for example, does MSS provide spaces for larger group activities as well as solitary activities?).*
 | 94.07% |
| 1. *I am satisfied with the variety and quality of the opportunities in the community provided to me by MSS.*
 | 92.89% |
| 1. *MSS takes my culture (language, ethnicity/race, religion, sexual orientation, sex/gender roles, socioeconomic status, and age) into consideration when planning/implementing services.*
 | 96.61% |
| 1. *MSS is the most integrated setting in which I can currently be best served.*
 | 96.69% |
| 1. *My life has improved as a result of the services received at MSS.*
 | 97.57% |
| 1. *Overall, I am satisfied with the services I have received at MSS.*
 | 97.57% |

# SUPPORT TEAM SATISFACTION

242 Support Team members (e.g., family, guardians, county case managers, residential providers) completed the survey. Survey items included both ratable statements and open-ended questions. Responses to ratable items were **98% positive** (“Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” to the statements below).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ratable Survey Items** | **Positive Ratings** |
| 1. *MSS takes into consideration what makes the person I support feel happy, fulfilled, satisfied, and comfortable when providing supports.*
 | 100% |
| 1. *MSS gives the person I support opportunities to have control over their environment when possible (where they choose to work, where they choose to eat lunch, who they choose to socialize with, etc.).*
 | 99.12% |
| 1. *MSS provides the person I support opportunities for regular meaningful non-work activities.*
 | 97.41% |
| 1. *The physical environment at MSS supports the goals and needs the person I support (for example, does MSS provide spaces for larger group activities as well as solitary activities?).*
 | 97.90% |
| 1. *I am satisfied with the variety and quality of the opportunities in the community provided to the person I support by MSS.*
 | 95.71% |
| 1. *MSS takes the culture of the person I support (language, ethnicity/race, religion, sexual orientation, sex/gender roles, socioeconomic status, and age) into consideration when planning/implementing services.*
 | 99.53% |
| 1. *MSS is the most integrated setting in which the person I support can currently be best served.*
 | 97.00% |
| 1. *The life of the person I support has improved as a result of the services received at MSS.*
 | 98.73% |
| 1. *Overall, I am satisfied with the services the person I support has received at MSS.*
 | 98.74% |

**COMMENTS FROM PERSONS SERVED & SUPPORT TEAM SATISFACTION SURVEYS**

**What does MSS do best?**

* I like the jobsites, my friends, and my staff.
* Person-centered planning is really thorough.
* MSS has been the perfect next step for my daughter. I could not be more pleased with the positive staff and environment at MSS! MSS has transformed our young adult into a more satisfied person; mixing the right amount of employment, socialization, and functional skills development to improve her self-esteem. She comes home happy which has helped to greatly improve our family life as well.
* I really enjoy the fun atmosphere and caring staff.
* MSS provides a positive, healthy, safe, clean, and joyful environment for our daughter.
* The Creative Arts program is wonderful!
* MSS has the help and the tools I need to participate in the things I like best. I really like and enjoy doing things that are hands on like woodworking and pottery.
* MSS listens to parents’ opinions/suggestions instead of brushing them off.
* MSS is helping to teach me how to be independent and learning how to work.
* All the staff members see the uniqueness of each individual. Everyone works as a team. MSS functions in the best ways of a true community - together, cooperatively, with the safety and success of all the members as a huge priority. There is transparency between family and staff. The partnership is marvelous. I trust MSS with my son - that is the highest compliment I can give - and it is not easily warranted!!

**If you could change anything about MSS, what would it be?**

* A decrease in staff turnover.
* Shorter bus rides.
* Multiple people voiced a desire for more frequent and more varied work opportunities.
* Multiple people expressed that they want more opportunities for integration with the larger community.
* Provide services 7 days a week, our son misses attending MSS on the weekends.
* To let the broader world see and know the magnitude of what happens there for the individuals who are so often unseen or marginalized.

*"It was once said that the moral test of the government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life - the sick, the needy and the handicapped." - Hubert Humphrey*

MSS cherishes, serves, equips and defends those in the shadows of life. Thank you!

# DEMOGRAPHICS OF PERSONS SERVED

# 2016 PROGRAM OUTCOME MEASURES – VOCATIONAL SERVICES

***Measures of Effectiveness***

| Objective | Measure | Data Source | Goal | 2016 | 2015 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Maximize "Person-centeredness" of Services | Input of persons served: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to satisfaction survey items “MSS takes into consideration what makes me feel happy, fulfilled, satisfied, and comfortable when providing supports.” And “MSS takes my culture into consideration when planning/implementing services.”.  | Annual Satisfaction Survey Results | ≥ 95% | 94% | 95% |
| Input of Support Team: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to satisfaction survey item “MSS takes into consideration what makes me feel happy, fulfilled, satisfied, and comfortable when providing supports.” And “MSS takes my culture into consideration when planning/implementing services.”. | Annual Satisfaction Survey Results | ≥ 95% | 99% | 100% |
| Maximize Achievement of Individualized Goals/Objectives | MSS Service Coordinator input: % of “made progress” or “maintained” responses to survey assessment re: goal/objective progress. | Service Coordinator Assessment/Survey | 90% | 85% | 84% |
| Increase Competitive Job Placements | # of persons served who secure competitive employment  | Director of Vocational Services | 44[[1]](#footnote-1) | 40 | 36 |
| # of persons served who move from center-based employment to competitive employment (Ramsey Co EDTH and DEED grant programs). | 9[[2]](#footnote-2) | 19 | 6 |
| Maximize Mobile Work Crew Opportunities  | Difference in total annual Mobile Work Crew hours. | Accounting Dept. | Increase (hrs) | +2,918 | -6,975 |
| Maximize Job Retention | % of persons served placed in competitive employment who maintain employment for 90 days or more. | Director of Vocational Services | 75% | 65%‡ | 91% |
| Maximize Persons Served Earnings | Average hourly wages of individuals who secure COMPETITIVE employment. | Accounting Dept. | $10.50[[3]](#footnote-3) | $10.97 | $8.96 |
| Average hourly wages of individuals who secure COMMUNITY-BASED employment (Mobile Work Crews). | $7.253 | $8.37 | $6.67 |
| Average hourly wages of individuals who secure CENTER-BASED employment. | N/A2 | $6.15 | $5.05 |
| Increase Production Employment Hours | Total # of persons served work hours (center-based only). | 65,000+[[4]](#footnote-4)  | 30,535 | 52,829 |

***Measures of Efficiency***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective | Measure | Data Source | Goal | 2016 | 2015 |
| Minimize staff turnover | Agency-wide staff turnover (excluding internal transfers and promotions) | Director of HR | < 45% | 43% | 30% |
| Direct Support Professional\* staff turnover (excluding internal transfers and promotions) | < 45% | 46% | 30% |
| Minimize Time to Job Placement | Average # of weeks from start of job search to competitive job placement. | Director of Vocational Services |  24 wks[[5]](#footnote-5) | 13 wks | 13 wks |

\*For the purposes of this report, we define "Direct Support Professional" as those with the following job titles: Direct Support Professional, Service Coordinator, Job Coach, and Job Placement Specialist.

***Measures of Service Access***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective | Measure | Data Source | Goal | 2016 | 2015 |
| Improve Service Access | In 2015, we identified six areas that are barriers to services access (baseline data). Here we report our successes/struggles to overcome these barriers. | Leadership Team | Continual Improvement | See narrative on pg. 16 & 17 | Baseline data collected |

***Measures of Customer Satisfaction***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective | Measure | Data Source | Goal | 2016 | 2015 |
| Maximize Person Served and Stakeholder Satisfaction | **Person Served** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | Satisfaction Surveys | ≥ 95% | 92% | 94% |
| **Referral source** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | 99% | 94% |
| **Family member** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | 97% | 96% |
| **Residential** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | 100% | 93% |
| **Other IDT member** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | 100% | 100% |
| **Enclave/Mobile Work Crew Employer** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | N/A[[6]](#footnote-6) | 100% |
| **Production Employer** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | N/A[[7]](#footnote-7) | 78% |

# 2016 PROGRAM OUTCOME MEASURES – DTH PROGRAMS

***Measures of Effectiveness***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective | Measure | Data Source | Goal | 2016 | 2015 |
| Maximize "Person-centeredness" of Services | Input of persons served: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to satisfaction survey items “MSS takes into consideration what makes me feel happy, fulfilled, satisfied, and comfortable when providing supports.” And “MSS takes my culture into consideration when planning/implementing services.”. | Annual Satisfaction Survey Results | ≥ 95% | 99% | 98% |
| Input of Support Team: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to satisfaction survey item “MSS takes into consideration what makes me feel happy, fulfilled, satisfied, and comfortable when providing supports.” And “MSS takes my culture into consideration when planning/implementing services.”. | Annual Satisfaction Survey Results | ≥ 95% | 100% | 99% |
| Maximize Achievement of Personal Goals | MSS Service Coordinator input: % of “made progress” or “maintained” responses to survey assessment re: goal attainment. | Service Coordinator Assessment/ Survey | > 90%  | 90% | 91% |
| Maximize Community Experiences | Total # of persons served community integration hours (# of individuals x hours of community integration). *This includes both traditional community integration and reverse integration (“outings” and “innings”).* | Program Supervisors | 43,000 hrs | 42,443 hrs | 22,441 hrs |
| Increase Reverse Integration Opportunities  | Total # of reverse integration hours (# of persons served that participated x hours of reverse integration). | Program Supervisors | 4,000 hrs | 3,447 hrs(baseline) | N/A |

***Measures of Efficiency***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective | Measure | Data Source | Goal | 2016 | 2015 |
| Minimize staff turnover | Agency-wide staff turnover (excluding internal transfers and promotions) | Director of HR | < 45% | 43% | 30% |
| Direct Support Professional\* staff turnover (excluding internal transfers and promotions) | < 45% | 46% | 30% |
| Increase volunteer hours | # of volunteers from the larger community x # of hours spent volunteering | Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator | 1,200 hrs | 1,032 hrs | 825 hrs |

\*For the purposes of this report, we define "Direct Support Professional" as those with the following job titles: Direct Support Professional, Designated Coordinator, Job Coach, and Job Placement.

***Measures of Service Access***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective | Measure | Data Source | Goal | 2016 | 2015 |
| Improve Service Access | In 2015, we identified six areas that are barriers to services access (baseline data). Here we report our successes/struggles to overcome these barriers. | Leadership Team | Continual Improvement | See narrative on pg. 16 & 17 | Baseline data collected |

***Measures of Customer Satisfaction***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective | Measure | Data Source | Goal | 2016 | 2015 |
| Maximize Person Served and Stakeholder Satisfaction | **Person Served** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | Satisfaction Surveys | ≥ 95% | 97% | 97% |
| **Referral source** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | 99% | 98% |
| **Family member** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | 98% | 99% |
| **Residential** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | 98% | 96% |
| **Other IDT member** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | 100% | 100% |
| **Mobile Work Crew Employer** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | N/A[[8]](#footnote-8) | 100% |
| **Production Employer** input: % of “agree” or “strongly agree” responses to all ratable items on the satisfaction survey. | N/A[[9]](#footnote-9) | 78% |

***Measures of Business Function – All Programs***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective | Measure | Data Source | Goal 2016 2015 |
| Fund new innovation through increased fundraising | % increase of unrestricted fundraised dollars | Accounting Department – Financial Audit | Increase of 10% | 31% increase -$91,396 | $69,745 |
| Ensure long term financial viability as a business | Maintain liquidity with current ratio (current assets/current liabilities) | Accounting Department | At or above 2 | 1.57 | 1.5 |
| Ensure long term financial viability of Employment Services | Diversification of revenue by adding an additional funding stream | Accounting Department | Add one new funding stream | in process[[10]](#footnote-10) | N/A |
| Move Employment Program toward financial self sufficiency | Decrease program cost for the Employment Services Program | Accounting Department – Financial Audit | Reduce overall cost of program to agency by 12%[[11]](#footnote-11) in 2016 | 45% reduction - ($432,961) | ($784,575) |

# SERVICE ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

“Service Access” refers to our capacity to provide services for those who desire them, thus the monitoring and assessment of services is ongoing at MSS. In 2015, staff members from each of our centers were asked to list existing barriers to Service Access. This list serves as a baseline, and future Program Evaluation reports will include ways in which MSS succeeded or struggled with overcoming these barriers.

**FUNDING**

* ***2015 Baseline****: The Disability Waiver Rate System (DWRS) is poised to decrease the individualized rates of many people. This will have limited effect until the system goes into full effect after the* [*banding*](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&dDocName=dhs16_182200&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased)*[[12]](#footnote-12) period (projected to be 2020/2021).*
* **2016**: Statewide, significant effort was put into creating and championing legislation aimed at fixing components of DWRS which, if left as is, will lead to decreases in the individualized rates of many people. Even if it is improved, we continue to anticipate DWRS will reduce some individuals’ access to our services, based on rates that do not support the cost of our services (including building costs, staff wages, etc.).

**HIRING/RECRUITMENT**

* ***2015 Baseline****: Turnover in the disability services field is high – especially in the Direct Support Professional (DSP) position.*
* **2016**: Hiring and retaining high-quality DSPs remains a significant struggle in our field. Our rate of turnover increased in 2016 (as did the rates of providers throughout Minnesota). Legislative efforts to increase the wages of DSPs failed to pass. MSS is piloting some programs that we hope will lead to increased staff retention. These include a new, more comprehensive, training curriculum for incoming DSPs, and a mentorship program which pairs new DSPs with another staff member upon hire. We are hopeful that these efforts will make a positive impact on turnover/retention.

**Barriers to Community Integration/Inclusion**

* ***2015 Baseline****: As we increase efforts to maximize the frequency and quality of experiences that persons served at MSS have in the larger community, we are frequently met with barriers to accessibility*.
* **2016**: We have been collecting and sharing data on which areas of the community are fully accessible, and which areas are not. Rather than each center learning these things themselves, they can access this information when planning experiences in the larger community to maximize their success.

**Building capacity/waiting lists**

* ***2015 Baseline****: Five of our six program locations are at or very near their licensed capacity. There is currently little support from the government to increase licensed capacity or build additional centers.*
* **2016**: We continue to have waiting lists at two of our locations, and providers are restricted from expanding services or building additional centers.

**Transportation**

* ***2015 Baseline****: Increasingly, people who live outside of our existing transportation areas are requesting our services.*
* **2016**: When individuals outside of our transportation areas are seeking services, we are exploring solutions, including offering them admission at another MSS location that may fit more logically with our bus routes, utilizing alternate transportation services (usually Metro Mobility), or asking family members or residential staff to provide transportation to our center, or on occasion to meet us in a location near one of our existing routes.

**Employment**

* ***2015 Baseline****: Community employers have little incentive to hire individuals with a disability.*
* **2016:** We received grant funding from MN Department of Human Services and the F.R. Bigelow and St Paul Foundations to support our pilot model of a Community Hub. A key component of this project is to offer local small businesses free or reduced rent, if they move operations into our now-vacant production area and hire some of our persons served at minimum wage or higher. We are quite hopeful that this incentive will be successful. If so, it could potentially be a model that other DTH providers could adopt, as they increasingly transition away from in-house production/sub-contract work.

# CONCLUSIONS

Below are some of the conclusions, learning points, and action steps resulting from our 2016 performance analysis:

2016 was a milestone year for MSS. We made the decision to shut down our in-house production operations in July after more than 40 years of work, and we began converting that space into a vibrant Community Hub. The Community Hub includes production and storage space for local small business, incentives for them to hire people from MSS, creative maker spaces, and a variety of accredited certificate programs - all accessible to the people at MSS and the larger community. We received significant grant funding from the MN Department of Human Services and the F.R. Bigelow and St Paul Foundations to support this conversion, and we think this new model of providing services, if successful, answers the calls from initiatives such as the MN Olmstead Plan and the Home and Community Based Services Final Rule to support individuals in a more integrated environment and to provide them with new and innovative paths to employment. Some of the objectives in this report have been discontinued or revised due to the shift away from center-based work.

Ceasing our in-house production work is the cause of the expected drop in center-based employment hours (pg. 11).

Community-based work hours increased, which is a result of our efforts to pursue more opportunities for individuals to find work in the larger community (in this case through mobile work crews).

Wages for all types of employment increased in 2016. This was due in part to the increase to the state minimum wage.

There were no significant changes in the demographics of persons served in 2016.

As has been the case for many years, satisfaction from persons served and support team members is high across all domains. We asked people to rate one new measure in 2016:

*“MSS gives me opportunities to have control over my environment when possible (where I choose to work, where I choose to eat lunch, who I choose to socialize with, etc.).”*

We are pleased that satisfaction of persons served for this question was 96%, and Support Team members rated satisfaction at 99%. It is also notable that the number of persons served and Support Team survey respondents increased from 2015 to 2016. This is a trend we hope continues.

The main takeaway from the satisfaction survey ratings and comments from 2016 and previous years is that people are happy with our services, but want us to do *more* - more numerous and more diverse work opportunities, and more experiences in the larger community.

We hear and value that feedback. In 2016, the hours spent engaging with the larger community almost doubled. We also added “reverse integration” as a measure to this report for the first time in 2016. Some individuals at MSS struggle to spend extended time in the larger community due to specialized medical needs or other factors. To address this concern, we want to increase our efforts to invite the larger community to come to us. An example of this is our ongoing partnership with Upstream Arts, who comes to our locations and uses theater and dance to teach concepts such as self-advocacy, work-readiness skills, and heathy sexuality.

Our greatest struggle has been with high staff turnover - especially in the DSP position, which is a statewide issue that all providers are facing. The costs of turnover are high - in addition to the financial impact of recruiting, training, and on-boarding new staff, only to have many of them leave within their first year, there are less tangible costs. When centers are short-staffed, their efforts become solely focused on the highest priority: providing care and support to individuals receiving services. This means that less energy is available for additional projects and tasks such as ensuring that our systems for tracking data and information related to our objectives are working properly.

Turnover in 2016 had an effect on the accuracy of some our data, including soliciting feedback from mobile work crew employers. We have taken steps to ensure that our systems are stronger going into 2017. Page 16 highlights our efforts to improve turnover and staff retention.

In 2016, we increased our efforts at volunteer recruitment as an additional way to mitigate the challenges caused by turnover. This resulted in an additional 200 hours of volunteers assisting us, and we anticipate this number to further grow in 2017. This increase is in large part due to the fact that we now have a dedicated staff member focusing on volunteer recruitment.

One unexpected decrease is indicated on pg. 10 with “‡”. The percentage of persons served placed in competitive employment who maintain employment for 90 days or more decreased from 91% to 65%. Some of this is likely due to the fact that our Vocational Rehabilitation program is being asked to assist people in the job search who have more significant barriers to employment. This leads to more issues with staying employed. In addition, the 2015 measure may have been somewhat incorrect due to inconsistent record keeping due to turnover in the VR department.

Regarding the business functions measures we began reporting in 2015, we far exceeded our goals in two of the areas. We believe this a temporary effect due to the closing of the production area at our St Paul center.

***We are nearing the halfway point of our current strategic plan (2014-2019). The structure and overall goals of the plan remain valid, but we recommend reviewing and revising some of the specific objectives therein to keep the plan relevant to our changing status and needs in 2017.***

1. Goal will be modified to 60 for 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As we are moving away from center-based employment, these measures will be discontinued. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. These goals have been updated to reflect economic trends. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. As we are moving away from center-based employment, this measure will be discontinued. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Goal modified to 12 for 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. We received no feedback from mobile work crew employers in 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. We received no feedback from mobile work crew employers in 2016. Additionally, as we are moving away from center-based employment, this measure will be discontinued. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. We received no feedback from mobile work crew employers in 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. We received no feedback from mobile work crew employers in 2016. Additionally, as we are moving away from center-based employment, this measure will be discontinued. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The Community Hub program trial is in progress. We will continue to seek additional funding for items such as job carving and self-employment training. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Goal modified to 15% for 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET\_DYNAMIC\_CONVERSION&dDocName=dhs16\_182200&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased [↑](#footnote-ref-12)