DARS Central Office, Richmond, Virginia

1st Floor Conference Rooms (also see VTC sites below)

Tuesday October 17, 2017 10:45 AM

Draft Meeting Minutes

**Members Present**: Megan Bergen, Michelle Flynn, Gary Cotta, Chris Lavach, Jason Harper, Natalia Yu, David Gusler, Michelle Brownlee, Emily Gebhart, Cheryl Moran, Shawn Smith, Phil Nussbaum, Mike King, Robin Metcalf, Stephanie Lau, Rachel Rounds, Dan Reichard

**Members Absent**: Sharon Bunger, Marshall Henson

**Guests Attending**: Zanelle Nichols, George Homan, Anita Mundy, Alan Hargrove, Joann Ellis, Christopher Hicks, Anita Mundy

**VTC Sites:** Ashley Thompson, Joanie Harmon, Frank Dowell, Tracey Thomas, Anne Lane, Nova Washington

**DRS Staff Attending**: Kathy Hayfield, Jessica Stehle, Cathy Staggs, Donna Bonessi, Jim Rothrock, Richard Kriner, Mark Peterson, Dionca Coleman

**10:45 am – Full Committee Call to Order Robin Metcalf**

* Introductions
* Review and approval of draft minutes from July 11, 2017 meeting.

**Commissioners Remarks Commissioner Rothrock**

Commissioner Rothrock acknowledged the hard work and achieving the goal of reaching 100% competitive employment.

**DRS Directors Update** **Kathy Hayfield**

Kathy Hayfield provided performance outcomes for FFY 2017, which paralleled the impressive 2016 outcomes! Four of seven districts met their goals, and together our work led to:

* 4,037 job candidates now successfully employed (Goal of 4,000)
* $10.77 Average hourly earnings
* 100% of new employees are competitively employed in integrated settings (1st time 100%)
* 7,492 individual plans for employment were written for 2017 (Goal of 7,000)

Kathy reported that DARS closely monitors expenditures in order to leave OOS categories open as long as possible to best serve applicants.  On September 1, 2017, DARS closed the SD category.  NSD has remained closed for longer.  On November 1, 2017, MSD will close.  New applicants determined to be eligible and placed in to the MSD priority category will go onto the waiting list.  We will use the “faucet” approach to bring people off the waiting list as we have in the past.   Our goal continues to be to limit time on the waiting list to 90 – 120 days, so that we can help people move forward toward employment as quickly as possible.

We are well on our way to having a robust program of Pre-Employment Transition Services for the 14-22 year old students whom we serve.  We currently have nine Pre-Employment Counselors and are expanding to have 30-35 by the end of the year to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services.  This is necessary to fully serve the students with disabilities currently in our system and those who are in the schools, but not receiving VR services (whom we call Potentially Eligible or PE).  We will accomplish this by converting existing positions – in many cases those who have large numbers of younger youth on their caseloads.  The process of converting positions may differ from one office to another, depending on caseloads and staffing structures.

Pre-Employment counselors will help participants with career exploration ensuring they have some work based experience. They will ensure each participant is offered the 5 services required for students with disabilities: job exploration counseling, work based learning experiences, counseling about enrollment in post-secondary educational programs, work readiness training, and instruction and self-advocacy.

**LTESS/EES System**

Donna Bonessi reported that the agency has approved the development of a new LTESS/EES system. This will be system built from the ground up and will not be updates to the current system. We are seeking one - two long term ESO’s to participate in the development of this new design. If anyone has suggestions please email those to Donna. The estimated time frame before this goes live is a year.

**EES Spending/trend Review Funding Sub-Committee**

Phil Nussbaum reported that the Funding Sub-committee is taking a look at how to maximize utilization of ESS dollars. There was $287,000 unspent EES dollars in SFY 17. The committee has sent a request for information to current organizations that receive ESS dollars, that didn’t spend all their allocated money to see what their thoughts were as to why all the allocated money wasn’t spent. It also gave them an opportunity to see how they were planning on spending all of it moving forward. They will compile this information and look at similar trends. The committee has developed several recommendations.

1. Share information on current year expenditures so that all ESO Managers are aware of their status (underutilized, about right, over spent)
2. Provide training to ESO staff on how EES funds can be used for different activities as their organizations are making the transition to community integrated employment.  (or move some of their LTESS people to EES to use up these funds)
3. Identify persons (Board members, Administrators, Staff, Family members) of transitioning programs who would be willing to be a resource to their respective counterparts in organizations who are just beginning (or considering) this process.
4. Establish a process (mirroring LTESS) whereby ESO’s could become EES funds recipients.  (need to work out how many $$ there are for each part of the state)
5. Target the use of the EES funding pool for those persons who need more supports than could be funded by current LTESS guidelines (limit of 10 hrs a month), but won’t qualify for Waiver funding.  This may involve transitioning away from the daily rate that is used to fund some EES recipients, and go to just hourly, but at a lower reimbursement rate than the standard Vendor hourly rate.  Think of the Workplace Assistance model.  Using a lower reimbursement rate for ongoing supports than the initial training reimbursement that a Job Coach would demand.  This addresses those persons who find themselves in between support need levels currently addressed by DARS and Waiver funding options.

Donna Bonessi will send out the Sub-committee’s recommendation to the full ESOSC committee

**LTESS Documentation reviews Cathy Staggs**

Cathy Staggs reviewed random case review documentation requirements:

Progress notes for Individual Supported Employment Services (E5129 – billed hourly)

1. Date of service provided
2. Number of hours of service provided
3. Summary of service provided
4. Amount of time for direct, indirect and documentation activities for each entry

Monthly summaries for Group Supported Employment (E5107 and E1100– billed daily)

1. Dates of service provided
2. Length of time of service provided each day
3. Summary of service provided during the month

Examples of non-billable services that have been billed for recently are:

Coordination of childcare services

Correspondence with DARS Counselor

SSA review services

**Public Policy Sub Committee Report:**

Chris Lavach did the report on behalf of Greg who wasn’t in attendance. He said the committee is reviewing the LTESS/EES policies for needed revisions. Furthermore the committee will be reviewing the 125% allocation and discussing how new vendors can receive a LTESS Allocation. He stated the LTESS policy still referenced the 125% allocation, but this is no longer active. The Sub Committee will be meeting on December 5 to review the policies

**Nominations Sub-Committee:**

Megan reported that the first candidate that was selected has declined. The committee has selected another candidate and they are sending this nomination to Donna to review and forward to the Commissioner for approval.

Public Comment: None provided.

Meeting Dates: January 9th, April 10th, July 10th, October 16th

Meeting Adjourned: 12:05 p.m.