



Division of Rehabilitative Services

Employment Service Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC)

DARS Central Office, 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Henrico, Virginia 23229

Conference Rooms 101-103-105

Tuesday, January 7, 2020

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Minutes

Members Present: Shirley Lyons, Chuck McElroy, Alan Hargraves, Joanne Aceto, Megen Bergen, Chris Lavach, Shawn Smith, Jason Harper

Members Absent: Robin Metcalf, Jim Fenerty, Teresa Hall

Guests Attending: Jan Smith, Lance Elwood, Erik Smith, Matthew Shapiro, Carey Yates, Mark Whetstine, Kim Heath, Karen Tefelski, Holly Peele, Crystal Trent, Jan Williams, Christin Jackson, Kim McCarthy, Emily Huber

DRS Staff Attending: Donna Bonessi, Charlotte Arbogast, Leah Mills, Dale Batten, Catherine Harrison, Kathy Hayfield, Anita Mundy

Full Committee Call to Order and Introductions

Shirley Lyons, Chair

Chair Shirley Lyons called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and welcomed members and guests. Members and guests introduced themselves. It was determined that there was a quorum present as per the ESOSC By-laws.

Approve Meeting Minutes from December 2, 2019

Shirley Lyons, Chair

The Committee reviewed a draft of the Meeting Minutes dated December 2, 2019. A motion was made by Jason Harper to approve the Minutes as written. Chuck McElroy seconded the motion. The Committee members present voted unanimously to approve the Meeting Minutes.

Public Comment

Shirley Lyons, Chair

No members of the public signed up for comment at this time.

Quarterly Update LTESS/EES, Allocations and Spending Review

**Donna Bonessi, Deputy Director,
Employment Services &
Special Programs, DRS**

Donna Bonessi provided a Quarterly Update on LTESS/EES Allocations, Actual Expenditures and Quarterly Projections. LTESS actual year-to-date expenditures through November 30, 2019 equal \$2,712,575.56. EES actual year-to-date expenditures through November 30, 2019 equal \$1,122,176.86. Both LTESS/EES spent funds are approximately 7% below what was expected for this Quarter. As of November 30, 2019, the projected FY 2020 LTESS balance equals \$668,160.25 and the projected FY 2020 EES balance equals \$348,936.12. Ms. Bonessi provided the Committee with a copy of all individual organizations allocations and expenditures for this fiscal year.

The Committee noted several organizations who have not used any of their allocated funds. Discussion entailed on possible reasons that this has not occurred. It was noted that under current allocation methods using the three-year rolling average, new organizations that have not used their allocation will eventually roll-off and will no longer receive allotments after 3 years of no use.

Update on Committee Recommendations Made to the Commissioner

Shirley Lyons

Shirley Lyons shared the response from Commissioner Hayfield regarding recommendations the Committee made at the last meeting regarding ways to increase services through LTESS and EES. The Commissioner accepted the Committee's recommendations with the exception of paying for travel for ESO employees providing support to individuals served through Medicaid Waiver. Implementing a majority of the recommendations can occur immediately; however, others will require changes under current LTESS/EES policy and will require public comment under state law before they can take effect.

Discussion of Action Items Based on the Commissioner's Responses

Shirley Lyons

Based on the Commissioner's response to the recommendations of the Committee, action items were discussed. The Committee agreed that a survey should be developed to obtain feedback from Employment Service Organizations as a way to help organizations increase services through LTESS/EES. This survey would focus on organizational/staff training needs to include areas such as: cultural competency, supported employment training(both basic and advanced), job development in rural areas, business development for organizations, systematic instruction, compensatory strategies, using assistive technology, working with special populations, and best practices of supported employment. Additionally, for those organizations currently providing facility-based employment, who are seeking to move toward competitive integrated employment, training would be offered to assist with organizational transformation.

Discussion by the Committee continued with using projected LTESS/EES funds for capacity building in underserved areas of the Commonwealth. A motion was made by Joanne Aceto to recommend to the Commissioner that up to \$300,000 or 40% of projected unexpended LTESS/EES funds can be used to assist with capacity building in the Commonwealth, specifically in underserved areas. Megan Bergen seconded this motion. All members present unanimously voted to support this recommendation. Commissioner Hayfield was present at the meeting and approved the recommendation.

Based on the approved recommendations, DARS staff will immediately begin developing a survey that will be sent out to employment service organizations. Action will also begin on developing training opportunities for organizations to enhance staff's knowledge regarding supported employment and organizations capacity building/transformation as a whole. DARS will notify Employment Service Organizations that recommended changes in allowable activities were approved. This notification will include a definition regarding recommendation 1.e. that will define short term follow-along services that are discrete and

are not considered post-employment services. DARS will ensure that this information is shared with vocational rehabilitation field staff so they are aware of the changes.

Review and Discuss LTESS/EES Policy

Shirley Lyons

The Committee reviewed the current DARS LTESS/EES Policy Manual dated December 1, 2015 and made updates and recommendations throughout the document to include legislative changes made to the Code of Virginia. Discussion involved adding more parameters to the 3-year rolling average as it pertains to the current LTESS/EES allocation/reallocation plan, the removal of references to 125% of rolling average, and the addition of recommendations from the previous meeting regarding new vendors.

Additional parameters were recommended to add to the EES Minimum Work Requirements for onsite employment to include LTESS Minimum Work Requirements and Group Supported Employment Minimum Work requirements. Corrective action plans for those organizations not adhering to the guidelines will also be developed. It was noted that 6 out of 17 vendors last year did not meet the 70 hour requirement. Lastly, the Committee recommended that allowable activities include examples of both billable and non-billable services.

A motion was made by Jason Harper that DARS will complete a deeper analysis surrounding the 70 hour per month minimum for LTESS/EES and provide feedback to the Committee. Chris Lavach seconded the motion. All Committee members present voted unanimously to approve this recommendation. DARS will conduct this analysis and provide feedback to the Committee at its next scheduled meeting.

DARS will work on updating the LTESS/EES Policy Manual and will send it out to individual members for individual comment before sending the revised manual out for public comment.

Public Comment

Shirley Lyons

Two individuals signed up for public comment.

Karen Tefelski suggested that a cost of living increase be given to providers through LTESS/EES funds. Carey Yates stated that she thinks that it is important to make VR Counselors aware of the projected balance of LTESS/EES funds. She is seeing an increase in Job Coach Training (JCTS) referrals and a decrease in Supported Employment referrals.

Future Meeting Dates, Upcoming Agenda Items, and Other Business

Shirley Lyons

Jason Harper inquired about the Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure forms that need to be completed by Committee members. Anita Mundy stated that she has provided the names of all Committee members to the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council. Committee members were emailed individually by Cecily Slasor of DARS informing them of the filing deadline of February 3, 2020. Committee members will receive a link from the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council with further instructions. Anita Mundy will send out additional information to the members regarding contacts for assistance in completing the necessary forms.

The next meeting of the Employment Organization Steering Committee is scheduled for April 14, 2020.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.