

Minutes from October 26, 2015 Education and Outreach Subcommittee meeting

DDS South Regional Office
35 Thorpe Ave.
Wallingford, CT

Members attending: Ernestine Weaver, Elisa Verlado, Linda Iovanna, Rick Pittman
Members absent: Sean Rose, David Stevenson

1. The committee restated its purpose – to form collaborations between agencies and institutions of higher education to help nonprofit workers get more skills to move forward in their careers.
2. Rick reported on his conversations with Sean Rose and David Stevenson and shared some of their perspectives and ideas
3. Rick related his conversation with Sandy Porteus regarding the subcommittee on Training and Staffing. Sandy sees her subcommittee responsibility as identifying and linking agencies to state, other nonprofit agencies and community resources for staff training.
4. As the committee began discussing partnerships with the state college system, Ernestine stated that one potential barrier is that adjunct professors are unionized and this must be taken into consideration. .

She also shared a list of all the human service related courses and programs offered through the state college system.

5. The committee spent a good deal of time discussing the cost of post-secondary education and the difficulty for nonprofit employees (especially direct support staff) to afford this.

It was noted that it is more expensive for someone to attend college on a part-time basis, since they pay per credit; full-time students get a “package deal”. It is safe to assume, non-profit employees would be part-time students. (It was also noted that the average age of a Community College student is 26 years old.)

Some of the questions that arose regarding financing a college education were:

- a. Are there any loan forgiveness programs available?
- b. What scholarships are available and how do potential students get this information? In high school this is handled by guidance counselors. Should

students rely on the specific college financial aid office, or should we help in this regard by developing a packet of financial aid options and how to secure funding?

- c. How willing is the Governor to help fund higher education for these workers? (Since it is his initiative.)

Linda Iovanni spoke of the “Serve Here Now “ program as a potential option to fund college courses. She will explore this in greater depth and report back to the subcommittee. She will also look into other loan forgiveness programs.

Ernestine and Elisa will research the funding options for students

6. The committee discussed whether or not direct support workers, as a group, have the desire to pursue a career in nonprofits. It is very common for employees to be working more than one job to make ends meet, which would limit the ability to take courses. Also, anecdotally, it appears that many front line workers see their job as merely income; not a career.

However, once employed and given the opportunity for higher education, some may want upward mobility in their particular agency or the field in general.

7. Some ideas that flowed from the conversation were
 - a. Look closer at the Massachusetts Community College certificates in direct care to see if can be replicated or used as a guide to develop our own.
 - b. Look at other models in other states that may be replicated.
 - c. Form partnerships between agencies to bring in college professors to teach pertinent classes for academic credit. Hopefully, the Board of Regents would provide the instructors and the agencies would provide the space.

In this situation, child care could possibly be shared among students – babysitting each other’s kids. Or, a child care service could be offered at the agency hosting the classes

It was noted that getting support for any suggested program would need to through several layers in the board of regents. So, we need to be very clear in any proposal.

8. The committee saw educational opportunities through distinct tracks.
 - a. Entering the workforce
High school to direct line work through educational programs that ready students

for the workforce

- b. Supervisory/management
Direct line work to supervisor/manager position through educational programs focusing on these skills
- c. Clinical
Educational programs designed to move direct line workers and supervisors into licensed and credentialed positions.
- d. Executive
Educational programs designed to provide higher management/administrative skills for either clinical or program managers

Rick will develop a more formalized flow chart for these tracts using the Core Competency Pyramid on page 5 of the Nonprofit Employment Data Workgroup.

9. The committee developed the following questions for the Committee Survey: These will be sent to Kristie Scott.
- a. What percentage of jobs in your agency require:
 - i. No degree
 - ii. Associate's degree
 - iii. Bachelor's degree
 - iv. Master's degree or above
 - b. Do you offer tuition reimbursement?
If yes, is it a set amount, or do you reimburse the cost of each course? Or, do you have a different method of reimbursement? Please explain.
 - c. What do you see as the biggest barrier(s) to employees in furthering their education:
 - i. Child care
 - ii. Transportation
 - iii. Lack of available time due to work schedule and other commitments
 - iv. Ability to pay
 - v. Other (please add)
 - d. What percentage of your employees would pursue higher education if these barriers were removed

- i. Less than 5%
- ii. 6-10%
- iii. 7-15%
- iv. Over 15%

10. Next meeting will be held at 1pm on 11/12 at the CCARC