

## Community First Choice (CFC) Committee

Wednesday, April 5, 2023

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Meeting Summary

Members Present: Tom Florentino, William Halsey Cathy Ludlum, Karyl Lee Hall, Michelle Jordan, Anna Doroghazi, Sheila Molvie, Melissa Morton, Mary Ann Langton

Members Excused:

Members Absent:

Members of the Public: Jose-Michael Gonzalez (DSS), William Halsey (DSS)

1. Meeting call to order. Convened at 11:07.
  - William Halsey introduction as temporary absence coverage for Dawn Lambert.
2. Prior meeting minutes to approve
  - Motion to approve by Cathy. Second from Mary Ann. Approved as submitted by all. No opposed. William abstained.
3. FI Contract Update
  - William informed that in the middle of procurement and the process is moving, being careful of not sharing too many details of an active procurement phase on a significant contract.
  - Mary Ann asked if there was a timeline. William informed the contract is moving and no timeline can be provided at this time.
  - Anna asked, will there need to be a re-negotiate bargaining agreement with new entity? William informed that it is scheduled to end 6/30/23.
  - Karyl Lee Hall asked that once contract signed, is it subject to public distribution? William informed the council, that once a contract is executed, it is a public document.
  - Tom shared group as well as public concerns and problems regarding current FI expressing the urgency of this onboarding of the new FI. William informed that all parties attempting to get it right.
4. DSS Fair Hearings and complaint resolution (Tabled for next meeting)
  - o Discussion on the formal hearing process items due to timeliness
    - a. Protocol
    - b. Steps
    - c. Timeline
    - d. Hearings
    - e. Requirements
5. Adjustments to CFC programs that would increase support for clients (Tabled for next meeting)
6. DSS steps to educate other agencies and shareholders about CFC (Tabled for next meeting)

## 7. PCA workforce/staffing update

- Cathy and Mary Ann reported that there are 427 members on the CT PCA Connection Facebook page that has been successful with connecting with educational institutions. In reviews of the Facebook page, there are still individuals that are struggling. Indeed platform worked for Mary Ann, turnout was better, but incentives were offered. Will there be a pay raise to \$20.00 for the PCA waiver in July?
- Melissa responded that the PCA workforce council is in negotiation of new labor contract that is expected to expire soon, there is no wage cap, and if the employer's budget allows this, a higher hourly rate can be offered, but again the agencies will need to look at those care plans for health and safety which means a reduction in service or hours. Cannot discuss status of negotiations or proposals as they are confidential under the guise of collective bargaining, including career ladder options and access to pay leave as raised previously.
- Tom asked how long will it take to get approved? Jose-Michael informed group of the DSS process for budget justification. Cathy shared her experience, and she is in between CFC waiver, she hired someone in June and August, and they did not get paid properly until November, after calls to Sandata and Allied. They finally got paid until November with a big lump sum, but she hired a new person and is not being paid properly yet either, yet it was attributable of asking for a higher wage and it has not worked with the single new hire since then. Cathy was talking to Dawn and other parties but could not get her answers as of yet. Jose-Michael to take back to DSS staff for follow-up with Cathy.
- Cathy reported back that the employer support group meets on second Monday of each month, next meeting is April 10<sup>th</sup>, meet twice 2:00pm and 6:30pm to accommodate schedules. Thanked DSS staff for sponsoring the platforms.
- Jose-Michael informed that the RFP process of Employment Network Website and Mobile Application as an employer matching system to enhance recruitment based on self-directed need is underway and in contract review.
- Anna presented senate bill 7-28 paid sick leave bill, addressing the paid leave law. The problem lies in section 2, regarding verbiage that personal care attendants are employees of the PCA workforce council and undermines the fundamental self-directed employer of record driven process, and the group of union volunteers cannot be the employers of record and it has come up in this bill, but the job is that legislators understand it will have major repercussions to employers and needs to come out. Melissa added there is a legal slippery slope appeared in the comments that expresses for the purposes of this bill, the council is the employer, which would signal the council to implement the paid leave. Legally, even if the council were to make the employer of record just for paid leave, it opens the state deemed as joint employer and undermines self-direction at its root over the entire scope of the program. It can potentially trigger the fair employment standards act. Anna responded that PCAs work very hard and deserve benefits, but what would it mean for employers of record and self-directedness which would require further discussion of this good intention conversation. Tom asked if there was a fiscal note attached to it, explaining that if they were to extend benefits, it would be substantial cost. Melissa stated this is not the case of this bill and would not be attached. There is a council that collectively bargains on behalf of PCA and there is a process to get to that end. Anna added that it is an SB 78 with current substitute language that has come out today but has not been yet reviewed. Tom asked if DSS made any communication to legislature on the language, and William informed there is draft testimony that was circulated. Cathy has said she has always had a personal business and has run it as a business, and it is not that hard to do it and has completed the paperwork and

obtained paid leave through Allied under the waiver. Is this coming up because Allied is not taking taxes out or not getting leave when they should, what is the responsibility as some get it and others do not? Melissa responds that the governor has a paid time off bill that does not have the language in the bill, listing the same amount of 80 hours to be carried over. However, the paid time off benefit awarded in last agreement and FIs in transition have been challenged to implement the PTO benefit. The PCA Workforce council were subject to class action suit which led to a settlement agreement that was reached stating that anyone who would have qualified (meeting criteria) received a \$250.00 dollar check the week of June 19<sup>th</sup>. People are accruing time off, but there is no mechanism to utilize the new time off until there is a new FI which they will have access to all of their accrued time off until that point. People will be getting a check over summer to compensate until then.

8. EVV/S&PC Resources update

- Launch of this year's iteration SPC coach annual training with Cathy Ludlow as trainer of Person-centered Planning component and providing Employer of record voice, and the current attendees maxed at 50 participants through Event Brite who are undergoing the onboarding process with Allied and can potentially be assigned to address ongoing EVV issues as part of a strategy that includes various troubleshooting from DSS prior to engagement in an informal 4 step TA process. Initially there were 8 SPCs last year, that grew to approximately 23 SPC, and now increased from this last iteration. The SPC Work group has formed that meets bi-weekly to trouble shoot any remaining gaps in this process.

9. Meeting to adjourn. Tom motioned to adjourn at 12:01pm. Cathy second, all in favor.

Annual CFC Committee meeting dates, agenda and minutes will be available on the Secretary of State and DSS Websites.

Next meeting: **VIRTUAL June 7th, 2023 at 11:00am.**