



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont  
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff  
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo  
Deputy Commissioner

Meeting notes/minutes 12/13/2022 ARPA Advisory Committee  
Meeting started at 1:33 pm

Those in attendance: Katie Banzhaf, Kate Haaland, Kathleen Stauffer, Melissa Kremmel, Betsy Bella, Joe Carvalho, Cheryl Ellis, Shannon Jacovino, Paige Librandi, Greg McMahon, Michael Beloff, Steven Siegelaub, Tracey Walker, Peter Mason, Barry Simon

Peter reviewed Public Meeting requirements

Motion to approve minutes from previous meeting made by Joe Carvalho, seconded by Barry Simon. All approved with two abstentions by Shannon Jacovino and Melissa Kremmel.

Committee Updates:

Residential Committee –

Peter Mason reported Barry Simon presented on DMHAS programs. Peter noted that DDS is exploring how those services might be included.

Pam Fields from Mid-State Arc will be coming to the next meeting to present on her Transition Home proposal.

Heather LaTorra from Marrakech will attend a future meeting to discuss their CLA apartment program. Peter said she was presenting on apartment program in a CLA at the meeting.

The Residential committee is currently reviewing Residential Outcomes and will bring them to the Advisory Committee when the draft is finalized.

The Committee is reviewing the list of issues that may interfere with the transformation and they are looking at creating FAQs to help address issues.

Committee met last week to discuss issues relating to Rent Subsidy, Security Deposits and Personal Needs Allowance. Peter Mason noted that the Security Deposit can be challenging to manage. An alternative may be to work with first and last month rents as an alternative to simplify the process.

Michael Beloff noted that the Personal Needs Allowance should be for all those new people who receive funding and not just for those participating in the transformational initiative. He also suggested that families be encouraged to use ABLE accounts to reduce financial liability.

Steve Siegelaub cautioned that Security Deposits need to be in dedicated accounts that need to be segregated. Peter noted that this process would not change that.

Barry Simon suggested that use Section 8 right out of the gate, that people work closely with SSI and SSD, and that loss of security deposits should be expected as the rule.

Day Committee –

Keith Lavalette was not able to attend today's meeting. Will provide a report at the next meeting

Individual and Family Engagement Committee –

Greg McMahon reported that the Committee reviewed and approved letter to individuals and families introducing them to ARPA. This letter provided a brief overview. It is ready to be distributed.

The committee is working on developing descriptions of Services and Supports available to individuals and families that provides clear descriptions and definitions of programs available to include both benefits and challenges to the various program options.

Phone: 860 418-6000 ♦ TDD 860 418-6079 ♦ Fax: 860 418-6001

460 Capitol Avenue ♦ Hartford, Connecticut 06106

[www.ct.gov/dds](http://www.ct.gov/dds) ♦ e-mail: [ddsct.co@ct.gov](mailto:ddsct.co@ct.gov)

*An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer*

Shannon Jacovino added that the Committee also reviewed the stakeholder meetings coming up that Deloitte will be facilitating. The committee emphasized the need to assure that opportunities are available for people who speak Spanish to participate.

Shannon Jacovino also advised that the committee is compiling questions and concerns from families so that these can be addressed as we move forward.

#### DDS Engagement Committee –

Joe Carvalho noted that at the last committee meeting McDowell introduced themselves to the Committee.

Deloitte reviewed the upcoming Stakeholder meetings.

The committee reviewed their Communication Tool to keep things organized.

There was discussion about a quarterly ARPA email to keep DDS staff up to date with the ARPA initiative. First edition to go out in January.

Betsy Bella presented the following updates from Deloitte:

Deloitte will be facilitating Stakeholder input meetings during the month of January. They have added a session for people who speak Spanish tentatively scheduled for Jan 19<sup>th</sup>. They will be seeking participants for Families and Individuals through social media as well as through the ARCs and CTFSN.

Shannon Jacovino asked about other languages for the forums. Peter explained that DDS has limited time and resources to adjust for all languages. DDS chose the two most popular languages which are English and Spanish. These represent over 96% of the population.

For Providers, Deloitte will be seeking participants from the Alliance and the ARC. They will also reach out to those agencies that are not affiliated with either of these provider groups. All groups will be limited to 20 participants to encourage active and engaged conversations.

Barry Simon asked that Deloitte assure that the groups be balanced between the two provider groups. Peter assured that that, as well as other factors, will be weighed to assure a balanced group.

Betsy provided an update on the Phase 1 portion of the initiative- She reported that 16 agencies responded to the initial interest survey to participate in Phase 1. Of that group, half indicated that they would participate and half were unsure. It is a mix of day and res with one agency interested in a full agency transformation. The Transformation template and materials will go to all agencies that respond by this Friday (Dec. 16). A follow up letter will go out to seek others who may have interest in Phase 1 participation. Deadline for Phase 1 is early March. Cheryl Ellis asked whether there was language included to address needed accommodations in the plans. Betsy noted that there are questions asking how agencies will communicate to stakeholders but there were no questions specific to accommodation. This could be considered in Phase 2.

Betsy reported on the status of report of initiatives in other states. It is still be reviewed and finalized. The report will highlight those best practices that could be implemented within the current DDS waiver structure.

There was further discussion regarding adding services. While new services can be considered it is felt that most services can be accommodated within our waivers, but new services would be difficult to add within the ARPA timeline. Michael Beloff noted that Benefits counseling should be considered. Peter provided the following updates on other ARPA initiatives:

A pre and post survey will be sent to families by McDowell to assess the knowledge and opinions of individuals and families regarding DDS services and their understanding of the ARPA initiatives. The survey is expected to go out by the end of the month. Information will go out to case managers and providers so that they can respond to questions from individuals and families.

We are moving forward with Assistive Technology initiatives. Another round of grants will be coming out for providers and individuals for assistive technology. These will be issued on a rolling basis.

Assistive Technology equipment has been purchased for the DDS Respite centers to provide opportunities to introduce tech to individuals while staying at the centers.

There will be upcoming AT training for providers and DDS staff.

Using the Connecticut Tech Act, looking at expanding lending libraries to introduce technology experiences for no cost.

The AT & Me Project will be rolled out with self-advocates training others in the use of certain technology.

RFP for virtual reality training is in the works. Michael Beloff asked whether the Medication Certification system could be included in the development of virtual training. Barry Simon said that the providers and DDS have been working on a system similar to DCF and DHMAS.

Rewarding Work has received the contract to provide employment matching services for those who self-direct their services. The contract was effective Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>. We are currently developing an RFP with DSS for an expanded staff matching platform that will combine agencies and include a means of providing staffing emergency backup staffing.

A Notice of Opportunity will be issued to expand Supportive Housing to non project-based settings in existing apartment complexes.

DDS is waiting for an advanced planning document to improve critical incident reporting in conjunction with Pulselight to better track critical incidents.

DDS is in the process of looking for an "off the shelf" system to improve Case Management systems and to provide electronic access that is more available to families and providers.

DDS continues to review how the Universal Assessment could be integrated into DDS. There are numerous challenges in how that would be structured into DDS.

National Core Indicators surveys will be done by UCONN after the first of the year.

The Advisory meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> will be cancelled. The next Advisory Committee meeting will be on January 10<sup>th</sup>.