



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

Minutes of October 11, 2022 - ARPA Individual and Family Engagement Transformational Committee

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Greg McMahon, Shannon Jacovino, Denise Palladino, Maricruz Ortiz, Joanne Malise, Geri Kogut, Adrianna Ramirez, Jessica Sundell, Pat Tyler, Lena Esposito, Dr. Cheryl Ellis

Guest: Brian Gresko, DDS Employment Transition Advisor

Absent: Kevin Arce

1. Call to Order by Greg McMahon. Public Meeting Requirements were reviewed.
2. Minutes from previous meetings were approved.
3. Presentation on DDS Employment and Day Supports (EDS) by Brian Gresko. PowerPoint attached.
4. Questions/discussion about EDS:

EDS Innovative Opportunity Grants (https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DDS/events2022/2022_IEO_Notice_of_Opportunity.pdf)

Grants will only be awarded for competitive integrated employment opportunities. Exploratory Grants will provide funding up to \$4,000 to support the development of a viable business plans.

Implementation/Expansion Grant are for businesses already in development and ready to implement or expand. DDS will award grants in three brackets for this type of grant: \$10,000; \$25,000; or \$50,000. Examples of appropriate requests include, but are not limited to, funds for marketing, consultant fees, procurement of equipment and assistive technology, and development of technology systems grant.

Individuals being supported do not need to wait 3 years to enter the workforce. People are encouraged to enter the workforce at any time they are ready.

5. Presentation on Community Companion Homes (CCH) by Joanne Malise, Joanne Malise, MSW, LCSW, Director, Living Innovations. PowerPoint attached.
6. Questions/discussion about CCH:
 - Cultural, ethnic background along with language, religion, and food preferences are some of the first questions asked when seeking a match.
 - It is critical to have as much information up front when matching people. A provider must need to know and accept who an individual is, what they want, and what their needs are to be able to support them.

Phone: 860 418-6000 ♦ TDD 860 418-6079 ♦ Fax: 860 418-6001
460 Capitol Avenue ♦ Hartford, Connecticut 06106
www.ct.gov/dds ♦ e-mail: ddsct.co@ct.gov
An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

- Recruitment for providers is done statewide.
- CCH is still a relatively small, underutilized support in CT. By comparison, Living Innovations supports 140 individuals in CCHs RI, but less than 50 in the Mosaic Network and 25 on their own in CT.
- The process to approve a license for a home takes a minimum of 6 months in CT. In some states it can be done in 6 weeks.
- CT system needs to be streamlined, made less cumbersome/complicated.
- Many people don't know about CCH – families, school systems, DDS Case Managers... They are fearful of the program, and don't know what questions to ask.
- Respite is built into CCH budget. Home provider must have a list up – usually family members, neighbors coworkers...
- CT DDS holds the contracts with the home provider.
- CCH can be considered for anyone if home provider match can be found to keep them health & safe.
- There are challenges finding a match for: people who have irregular sleep patterns, or who do not sleep at night as this impacts sleep for home providers; people with aggressive/assaultive behavior; people with physical disabilities who require wheel chair accessibility and other types of equipment. There are not a lot of accessible homes.
- If a home provider withdraws support, the onus is on the agency to find another home provider.
- In some other states CCH is called "Shared Living." In CT with Shared Living the individual receiving the support owns or rents the apartment or home which they share with another person. That person can provide paid supports or natural supports in lieu of rent or other living expenses.
- CCH licensee and everyone else in home must have yearly background checks.
- Families must be engaged every step of the way for CCH to work. If a family does not trust the home provider, it will not work.
- Medications. Nurse has oversight, but home provider administers meds. No paid providers in CT are allowed to give insulin - not in any setting. This is not the case in other states.

7. Next Meeting: October 24, 2022 10:00am-11:30am

8. Meeting adjourned 11:36 am