



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

Minutes of November 21, 2022 - ARPA Individual and Family Engagement Transformational Committee

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

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

Absent: Denise Palladino, Maricruz Ortiz

Guests: Kimberly Butts, Kevin Bronson (DDS), Rebecca Brockway (McDowell)

1. Call to Order by Greg McMahon. Public Meeting Requirements were reviewed.
2. Minutes from previous meeting were approved.
3. Updates & Announcements
 - **CCH Incentives** – More detail coming on CCH specific incentives, but the same structure and incentives will apply to all options, i.e, doubling the rate.
 - **Self-Direction Incentives** – there had been discussion about allowing an individual who leaves a CLA or CRS to keep those higher rates for some time for transition and program enhancements. Still no answer about safety net funding for individuals who commit to a lease, if move to an apartment does not work out.
4. Review & Feedback on A Guide to the DDS Transformation and ARPA for Individuals and Families
 - Providers will be submitting plans. The purpose of the guide is to get some basic information out about ARPA that explains what's going on and how individuals may be impacted.
 - The document is not written in language families understand, and it would not address their fears. Too much jargon, too technical. We need to try to tap into what families are fearful about.
 - McDowell had a similar reaction to the document.
 - Document needs to be simple, concise, positive. Address fears. Don't overload families.
 - Take out "overwhelming as well as exciting."
 - Document should address: intent of project; the types of support being looked at; that DDS wants to explore new supports to serve more people.
 - The committee will send Shannon additional feedback and questions that families will want answers to.

5. Discussion with Rebecca Brockway, McDowell Communications Group & Kevin Bronson, DDS Director
 - Goal in hiring McDowell was to expand DDS' reach to be able to communicate all 17,000 individuals DDS supports.
 - McDowell will work with Kevin Bronson and ARPA committees to make information more understandable.
 - McDowell is in the listening and gathering information phase. Meeting with committees, meeting with Self Advocate Coordinators, going back to watch previous meetings.
 - McDowell will focus on simplifying information to reach across all groups and stakeholders.
 - McDowell is developing a survey for all 17,000 individuals and families served, as well as DDS employees to learn how people want to get information, to get more information about our population.
 - There will be 2 surveys. This one and one at the end of the ARPA initiative.
 - Recommendation that survey should also ask individuals and families what kinds of supports they want to inform provider transformation plans.
 - All communications should be run by DDS Self Advocate Coordinators to ensure it is clear and understandable.
 - Use Plain Writing Act of 2010 as guideline for communications.
 - Recommendation that DDS have a permanent committee of families to review communications. There used to be a "readers group" to review communications in the past.
 - Reminder – all communications should be available in other languages.
6. A survey will go out to the committee to see if we can change our regular meeting day. If not, we will keep the same schedule.
7. Next meeting is December 5, 2022 at 10:00am
8. Meeting adjourned at 11:03am