



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

DRAFT Minutes of July 18, 2023, ARPA Advisory Committee Meeting

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Peter Mason, Keith Lavalette, Tracey Walker, Cheryl Ellis, Shannon Jacovino, Greg McMahon, Brian Smith, Katie Banzhaf, Melissa Kremmel, Win Everts, Michael Beloff, Lauren Gray
Deloitte attendance- Julia Oak,

Absent: Paige Librandi, Barry Simon, Kathleen Stauffer, Kate Haaland

Tracey Walker, Chair, called the meeting to order

Tracey Walker read the Public Meeting Requirements

Minutes of the 6/20/2023 Advisory Committee meeting were approved on a motion by Jacovino/Everts

Update from Committee co-chairs

Residential Transformational Committee- The Residential Committee met last Thursday and much of the information that was discussed will be reviewed in today's meeting.

Day Transformational Committee- The committee did not meet and will be meeting on July 31.

DDS Engagement Committee- This committee did not meet

Individual and Family Committee – Deloitte provided updates on the Step initiative. Lauren provided an update on communication activities to promote Step. The primary agenda item was to review recommendations the committee had made earlier regarding how to reach out to families. They highlighted what was done including videos, factsheets in clear and easy to understand language, updating the website, organizing YouTube videos on the website, developed newsletters, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), [Fourth Tuesday Deputy Commissioner forums](#), fact sheets and training for DDS staff and educational forums for families. The remaining issue is how to communicate to hard-to-reach individuals and families. The Committee is trying to come up with ideas to reach out to this group.

Communications Presentation- Lauren Gray presented the communication report. July STEP updates were sent out. If you signed up for the [DDS e-newsletter](#) you received an email about the fact sheets and the seven core supports descriptions that are now available on the website. Information on the [regional summer virtual office hours](#) was shared and staff, providers, individuals and families are encouraged to attend and ask regional staff questions. The [DDS YouTube channel](#) was updated to include a playlist so you can click on each video and they will autoplay. Staff are also active on our [Facebook](#) page and on [Twitter](#) regularly sharing updates as

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Commented [MP1]: It would be good to include the link within the minutes.

well. We have just launched a [Calendar page](#) that has a list of events and activities coming up and it is now on the DDS website.

Deloitte Presentation: Julia shared that Deloitte hosted a three series set of STEP trainings for both the DDS staff and providers. Attendance was good and it varied a bit depending on the session. Deloitte received a lot of questions which shows staff are thinking about their roles and how it will apply to them. All trainings were recorded and are now on the website. A survey is going out to all providers that have attended the training to promote the TA sessions that are available to providers and to gather some testimonials based on feedback from the last advisory meeting. Implementation planning is actively in progress, DDS has met and assigned staff to the action steps.

DDS Update: Peter gave the DDS update. Twelve (12) plans have been approved and DDS has heard from three more agencies about submitting plans. DDS anticipates more agencies submitting plans.

The Appendix K has been approved and a letter explaining the changes has gone out to all providers. DDS will be working on issuing a more comprehensive letter that details all of the additional incentives included in the amended Appendix K to be sent out within the next few weeks. The changes in the Appendix K allows DDS to not only encourage individuals to transition to more independent and community-based settings but to assist agencies that want to restructure their programs to better meet the needs of the individuals with complex needs. DDS is open to being as creative as possible to assist the providers with restructuring their agencies.

Among the changes it includes is:

1. an outcome payment for each individual that moves from a congregate to non-congregate day program.
2. An outcome payment for any provider that successfully completes one of the defined objectives t
The four objectives are as follows:
 - I. Restructuring a residential setting to support new individuals with specialized or complex medical, behavioral or clinical needs, or who are "in need" of residential support.
 - II. Restructuring a day program to provide new supports that focus on employment-based services.
 - III. Restructuring a day program to support new individuals with specialized or complex medical needs and who are "in need" of day support.Ending a subminimum wage arrangement for individuals supported in the program and moving to an arrangement at or above minimum wage.
3. An outcome payment for all approved transition plans based on scope of transformation.
4. An outcome payment of \$2500 will be given to all agencies that agencies submit the workforce survey through NCI.
5. An outcome payment for staff that receive either an Employment and/or an assistive technology certification to enhance staff competencies.

Due to the changes in the incentives, DDS will be issuing a revised approval letter to the 12 agencies that already submitted plans

DDS is also working on its transformational outcomes and activities. Each of the identified activities have been assigned to a DDS staff who have been designated as the owners to oversee through implementation and completion.

Trainings for DDS licensing, quality assurance and abuse and neglect liaisons will be held to make sure these areas are aware of the transformational changes.

Changes have been made to rent subsidy for eligible individuals to adjust the subsidy payments that will enable more people to afford to live in their own home. Changes have been made to the rent subsidy policy that will reduce the amount of personal income the person will be expected to utilize towards their room and board costs from 45% to 30%. This will allow the individual to have more income for other personal expenses. Changes were made to the in-home inspection and reporting requirements. Security deposits are now an allowable housing cost.

Rewarding Work, the employment network for individuals who self-hire their own staff, is fully operational.

The assistive technology RFP assigning agencies to assist with evaluations, purchasing the equipment and training went to both STAR and CIB. DDS hopes to get the contracts up and running by January 1, 2024.

Non- Project based supported housing grants had three grants awarded and DDS is looking to do additional grants in the fall.

DDS has hired a project manager and a couple of business analysts for the new DDS case management system the department will be developing. They are reviewing five to seven states that currently have case management systems to see if DDS can use one of them.

Discussion also took place about House Bill 5001 and how it relates to DDS.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 15, 2023, at 1:30pm.