



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

Minutes of September 19, 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, Melissa Kremmel, Win Evarts, Michael Beloff, Lauren Gray, Paige Librandi, Barry Simon, Mary Pat DeCarlo, Gunnar Abrahamsson
Deloitte attendance- Betsy Bella

Absent: Kathleen Stauffer, Kate Haaland, Katie Banzhaf

Keith Lavalette, Chair, called the meeting to order

Keith Lavalette read the Public Meeting Requirements

Minutes of the 7/18/2023 Advisory Committee meeting were approved on a motion by Jacovino/Walker
Peter introduced both Gunnar Abrahamsson and Mary Pat DeCarlo and their roles with DDS.

Communications Presentation- Lauren Gray presented the communication report. Community Forums are coming up with the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner and will focus on some STEP updates and will also have a Q&A at each one. October is National Disability Employment Awareness month. Each week will have a theme related to STEP, the first week will be self-direction and DDS will launch its Self-Direction video. DDS has launched the first video in the STEP video series and will be releasing one each week. DDS continues to update its Facebook and Instagram page and individuals can sign up to subscribe for e updates and the monthly newsletter and text messages. Case manager forums are starting in September and will be conducted monthly.

Deloitte Presentation: Deloitte has developed a STEP incentive cheat sheet which lists all of the incentives including the new Appendix K incentives that were approved. TA sessions are currently being held alternating mornings and afternoon on Tuesdays, also meeting with some agencies one on one. Would like to see broader participation in the office hours. Discussion took place on how to engage more providers in the transformational process. Deloitte reviewed the STEP Implementation plan; the plan takes pieces from the step plan and lays them out in sub steps. It also includes individuals at DDS who are taking responsibility for each piece to make sure things continue to move forward. Highlights of the plan include making progress with the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services to make benefit counseling more accessible to people who receive supports. Strengthening connections and outreach to improve awareness of project search. Case Management team is working on reemphasizing the Charting the Life course tools specially focusing on integrating natural supports into individuals planning discussions. A lot of progress has been made on assistive technology and remote supports. AT and Me is being tracked and rolled out.

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
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Update from Committee co-chairs

The ARPA committees have been working on different activities and charges and have finalized those activities and will be ending in December except for the Advisory Committee. The two engagement committees may look to reconstitute themselves after the 1st of the year as they continue to provide valuable input.

Residential Transformational Committee- The Residential Committee met and Peter is giving an update each time on what's happening with ARPA. The Committee has decided that the previous meeting would be their last one.

Day Transformational Committee- The Day Committee met at the beginning of September and Trever Rogers gave a SELN commission update. He stated that October is National Disability Employment Awareness month.

Incentives are now available for agencies that send staff for ASPE, ACRE and customized employment training for \$3000 per employee and the cost associated with the training. DDS has released a transportation survey, the goal is specific for individuals with disabilities and to get more information about transportation in Connecticut. A one-time incentive guide is being rewritten and is a resource that explains each specific piece, the funding that is available and a FAQ section. Ct Customized Employment Certification courses are set for FY 24 with two sessions will begin this calendar year. DDS will be accepting 22 provider staff into each session. DDS is developing a final report with a final set of recommendations.

DDS Engagement Committee- The Committee met and discussed the viewing party for the DDS videos and discussed the case management training forums.

Individual and Family Committee – The Committee discussed the future of their committee and have put together a plan for continuing to discuss the different issues. A communication update was provided as well as the Deloitte update. The Committee had some questions about the approved provider plan and what type of data is being collected as well as if families were being informed and included in the process prior to the plans being submitted. Discussion was held on the waiting list and that they are receiving all this great information, but they do not know how it will affect them or their families.

DDS Update: Peter gave the DDS update. Twelve (12) plans have been approved and DDS has heard from three more agencies that submitted plans. DDS anticipates more agencies submitting plans. Thirteen (13) Individuals have transitioned to date. We can discuss the demographics and bring it to the DDS fellow as she is working on a lot of the outcomes and the data for these outcomes. Four (4) agencies have told DDS that they are submitting a plan shortly and two agencies that have approved plans will submit an expansion to their plan.

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. Also working with Midstate Arc to have them do the rest of the West region.

100 DDS staff are completing an assistive technology certification course with the University of California. Goal is to get as many DDS staff aware and familiar with assistive technology as possible. DDS has also issued its third notice of opportunity for individuals and families for assisted technology equipment. One is issued for individual and families and one for providers. DDS is looking to set up a lending library within DDS and set up lending lockers at the different regional offices so individual can come and take out the equipment. An assistive

technology remote supports consultant is coming on board sometime in October. AT and me is the program where individuals learn about assistive technology and the first two hundred individuals train in addition two individuals so 600 people will receive and be trained on assistive technology equipment.

DDS has a contract with Rewarding Work, and they have set up an employment network where individuals who are looking for staff could set up job postings and individuals looking for jobs can place their resumes. Trying to encourage families who self-direct to start participating in the employment network. DDS continues to have ongoing talks with DSS in terms of establishing a website that both DDS and DSS individuals could self-direct.

There is discussion of Dan Jacques or someone from Rewarding Work to come to the next Advisory Committee meeting.

Deloitte has developed a report on outcome-based incentive programs that DDS is reviewing. A non-project based Supportive Housing RFP went out earlier this month and is closing sometime in October. Already completed one and three agencies received the grant. Surveys have been sent out to all providers who receive infrastructure money asking how they have used those funds.

A critical incident system was established called Pulselight and it looks at Medicare claims and hospitalizations and looking at critical incidents and incident reports to see if they match. It also looks at attaching it to the individuals LON levels.

DDS is working with UCONN on doing the NCI (National Core Indicators) and this year DDS was able to meet its targets.

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 reviewed five to seven states that currently have case management systems to see if DDS can use one of them and have narrowed it down to two different states.

Universal assessment- DDS is working with a vendor to see how all agencies can be brought on board to see how it will fit within all the agencies.

Motion to adjourn by Simon/Evarts

The next meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2023, at 1:30pm.