



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Minutes of the February 8, 2023 Meeting

Location: Meeting Held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Princess Russell-Raynor, Co-Chair; Peter Mason; Marina Derman; Yana Razumnaya; Shannon McCormick; Dawn DeMatteo; Claudine Testani, Gunnar Abrahamsson; Wayne Seidel; McDowell (Maura Fitzgerald and Rebecca Brockway); Deloitte (Betsy Bella, Pam Hatcher, and Julia Oak).

Absent: Sherri Knightly, Kevin Bronson,

Introductions

Co-Chair, calls the meeting to order at 11:06 am

Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

Peter Mason made a motion to approve 12/7/22 and 1/25/23 minutes as written, Wayne Seidel seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

New co- chair - Cres Secchiaroli, DDS South Region Regional Director

New committee member - Gunnar Abrahamsson, DDS Exec Secretary to the Commissioner (Introduction)

Topics for discussion:

a) ARPA Updates and Overview (Peter Mason)

- Peter opened by announcing Cres Secchiaroli as co-chair and summarizing his great work in our department. Peter provided an overview of where the ARPA initiative stands:
- ARPA
 - Phase One of Transformation “Moving On” in process.
 - 25 providers have responded stating their interest in phase one. 11 of those providers are submitting their transition plans.
 - Deloitte will review state analysis- (see attachment PDF) states reviewed: Arkansas, Maine, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.
 - Individual/Families surveys submitted- 1,700 responses received at this point. Plan to review and share results/feedback soon.
 - Provider surveys response was low (37); however, there was input from provider stakeholder sessions and providers participating on committees.
 - Stakeholders Virtual Info sessions held - reviewed overall feedback, identified themes around transportation, transitions (LEA), workforce crisis/staffing, transportation, communication, case management training, identifying what menu of options are.
 - Case Managers (CMs) feedback –
 - Intraagency coordination concerns- BRS (Bureau of Rehab Services) –
 - Reconsideration for criteria/definition of employability. Historically BRS took a much stricter interpretation. DDS working with BRS to expand horizon on who is employable.

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

- It would be helpful to have access to BRS records for planning/assessment/exploration purposes.
 - Difficulty accessing multitude of communications/updated materials on DDS website.
 - Restarting regional case manager meetings; creating opportunities for and fostering peer mentorship/learning.
 - Leveraging Self-Advocates to help with transitions.
 - Building relationships with employers. Registry of employers who are more reliable and willing to hire individuals with disabilities.
 - McDowell working on creating (7) videos for support models to help stakeholders gain insight on how those models work for people, to inspire creative possibilities using assistive technologies, including testimonials from stakeholders. Identified production company to start this project.
 - Rewarding Work- contracted 12/1; redesigning website eff 3/1
 - Posted additional assistive technology grants for individuals/providers (residential). Looking at adding opportunities for day services grants. Looking at ways to promote this.
 - Working to establish Assistive Tech conference (2 days) in June 2023 with speakers/vendors, demonstrations; stakeholders to attend.
 - AT conference would be followed up by establishing AT summer camp - setting up smart equipment in one of the cottages at Camp Harkness. Stakeholders can experience using tech.
 - Supportive Housing grant - looking at existing sites - not project based/from the ground up which takes 2 + years.
 - Peter Mason opened up the floor for questions following his updates above.
 - Marina Derman- discussed survey feedback from stakeholder perspective.
 - Peter Mason- clarified survey intention.
 - Maura Fitzgerald (McDowell)- Further clarified survey intention, roll out.
 - Dawn DeMatteo – discussed communication/confusion among families stakeholders misunderstanding intention of sessions as opportunity to learn/ask about different programs for individuals.
 - Co-Chair – we will look at messaging around future stakeholder sessions.
- b) Deloitte - State Analysis Presentation – PowerPoint, PDF (attached).
- Deloitte opened floor for questions-
 - Wayne Seidel – presentation would help regional management and case managers better understand the efforts.
 - Peter Mason- discussed how the states analysis helped to identify creative best practices which CT could duplicate. (Non-reoccurring payments; job centers; benefits counseling; and remote supports.)
 - Marina Derman- discussed the need for more support with benefits counseling.
 - Wayne Seidel – will follow up with BRS for an update on utilization of benefits counselors.
 - Yana Razumnaya- discussed Able Accounts, value in accessing benefits counseling, simplifying communications to individual-first language, and concerns as an individual stakeholder around ensuring privacy with remote supports.
 - Peter Mason- discussed aspects of remote supports, and clarified individuals would have control over privacy/sharing which would be discussed and coordinated through their person-centered team planning process.
- c) Co-Chair – opened the floor to McDowell Communications Consultant on the agenda; invited McDowell to share updates related to ARPA communication.
- Maura Fitzgerald of McDowell –
 - Individual/Families survey
 - DDS Staff survey online and QR code access

- 7 Support Model Videos – in development; will amplify individual success stories, inspire transformation, use of AT, remote supports, CCH etc. Will be helpful resource for stakeholders who need a visual. Production company hired and in process of scheduling and scouting locations for production.
- Newsletter- in development; for all stakeholders; updates every other month; first issue ready for initial internal review; rollout early March.
- More frequent staff communication.
- Working on revamping DDS ARPA website.
- Master communications calendar.
- Discussed what is needed from engagement committee to assist with developing future communication.
- Co-Chair- opened the floor for questions.
 - Wayne Seidel – discussed need for regional engagement; discussed CM communication efforts for support, CM winter training series.
 - Peter Mason – discussed difficult role CM are placed in with the department rolling out new initiatives.
 - Co-Chair – expanded on points.
 - Wayne Seidel – expanded on the need to communicate on the ‘why’ around efforts; and benefits of ensuring CM having tools for success, emphasizing support model videos being a helpful resource for stakeholders inspiring transformation.
 - Co-Chair- discussed the intended concept behind the term ‘Moving On’, as it was communicated that there was confusion among stakeholders around the way the term was received.
 - Marina Derman- expressed the need for CM trainings that emphasize the need for CM to consistently communicate what they learn about initiatives, resources, services/supports that is available to families.
 - Peter Mason- we are charged with figuring out how to get conversations going with stakeholders/teams around how to increase independence creatively, encouraging transformation for individuals, which will look different for everyone.

d) Future Agenda Items

- How best can we support CM? Difficult conversations with families around transformation/process/fears.
- Sending consistent information/updates on a designated day.
- Communication – simple, informative, consistent
- Building electronic communication to minimize costs
- Guest Presentation on Residential Incentives
- Invite Deloitte/McDowell to present on transformational/communication updates.
- Update on strategies and coordination around regional/divisional staff updates.

Announcement of Next Meeting

Wednesday, February 22, 11:00 am

Adjournment

Co-Chair Princess Russell-Raynor made a motion to adjourn, Peter Mason seconded; meeting adjourned at 12:32 pm.