



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont  
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff  
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo  
Deputy Commissioner

Minutes of May 1, 2023 - ARPA Individual and Family Engagement Transformational Committee

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Greg McMahon, Shannon Jacovino, Dr. Cheryl Ellis, Kevin Arce, Pat Tyler, Maricruz Ortiz, Joanne Malise, Jessica Sundell, Denise Palladino

Absent: Adrianna Ramirez, Geri Kogut, Lena Esposito

Guests: Kimberly Butts, Maura Fitzgerald (McDowell), Rebecca Brockway (McDowell), Lauren Gray (DDS), Owen Shome (Deloitte)

1. Call to order by Greg McMahon. Public meeting requirements were reviewed.
2. Minutes from previous meeting were approved.
3. Deloitte

**STEP Update**

- 15 plans have been submitted.
- Working on updated templates to streamline the process for providers.
- Information and training sessions on STEP are taking place in May for DDS staff and providers.

4. McDowell

**STEP Update**

- Upcoming May forums for individuals to understand support options, and to explain STEP.
- May newsletter mailed to individuals & families.
- A web developer is designing a dedicated STEP page on the website with information about STEP including an explanation of STEP and support description "one pager" worked on by this committee, and videos of support options.
- Support descriptions, along with a STEP one pager geared towards individuals and families a being sent to the designer.
- There will be a full newsletter for individuals & families in June.
- STEP videos – rough cuts of CCH & Supportive Housing are done. Others will be done within the next few weeks.

**Service Description Reviews**

➤ **Assistive Technology (AT)**

- The staffing section could be misleading and is more relative to remote supports. The rationale for keeping that section is that many families are concerned that AT will be used to replace staff. It is important to make clear that AT is intended to complement staffing.
- Benefits section. "enhance communication" is not clear. Needs to be sent back to subject matter experts for clarification. First 2 bullets are redundant.
- Eliminate the "Residential Services' preamble, as AT is not a residential support.

➤ **Employment Services**

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- The Customized Employment definition needs to be sent back to subject matter experts for more work.
- Should Group Supported Employment (GSE) be included? Perhaps yes, because GSE is being incentivized under STEP.
- Benefits section – combine 1&2.
- Challenges section – understanding how wages impact benefits is a huge challenge for people, as is transportation. While the goal of these descriptions is to just give basic information, the group discussed ways these could be incorporated. A suggestion was made to put BRS Benefits Counselors under the “How can I learn more section.

5. Updates and Topics for future meetings - None identified.

6. Announcement of next meeting- Monday, May 15, 2023 10:00 am.

7. Adjournment.