



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

Minutes of April 6, 2023

ARPA Residential Transformational Committee Meeting

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Peter Mason, Heather LaTorra, Kathy Bobenski, Carly Bobenski, Brian Holmes, Tammy Venenga

Guest: Julia Oaks

Absent: Pam Fields, Peter Engelbrecht, Lori Coughlin

Introductions Peter Mason, called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm.

Peter reviewed the rules for public meetings

Minutes from March 2, 2023 - Brian Holmes made a motion and Heather LaTorra 2nd to accept the minutes and the motion carried

Discussion took place regarding the newsletter sent out to all individuals, families and providers. Three family members (Brian, Kathy and Tammy) all stated they did not receive it. Peter stated he would go back and find out what happened and why they did not receive the newsletter.

Update by Julia Oaks from Deloitte Consulting LLC

- As of the date of the meeting, there had been 8 providers that submitted a transition plan. The providers were throughout the state (3- North Region, # South Region, and 2 -West Region).
- The plans included transformation from a couple of individuals to 11 CRS settings.
- 4 plans were for residential transformation only. 2 were for day programs only. 2 were for both residential and day programs.
- There was a discussion regarding the closure of homes while there is a need for group home placements. Tammy discussed the issue of individuals being transferred from DCF to DDS without any place for them to live. She stated her concern that the possibility of more homes being closed through the Step Program could make the issue worse. Peter discussed the makeup of the current homes and how they may not meet the needs of these individuals. He stated the transformation process encourages providers to look for alternative community placements for individuals living in a CLA or CRS setting o consolidating vacancies. While some providers may take this opportunity to consolidate the homes, DDS is encouraging the providers to look to transform the home to provide supports for individuals with more significant medical or behavioral needs such as the individuals from DCF.
- Discussion took place on transitional housing and not being reimbursable from the Step initiative. Heather stated she thought it was short sighted by the department not to use the ARPA funding to encourage these types of settings. Peter stated that while it is not part of the incentives, DDS is encouraging providers to include these types of settings into their plan. The Department has the ability to fund these through the one-time process or by other means. Just because it is not an incentive of ARPA does not mean that it can't be part of a provider's plan.
- Discussion took place regarding homes that are being vacated and usage. Mary Pat asked if a provider could rent a home to another provider. Peter stated that this can be a complicated process. A home that

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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has been operating for a long time and no longer has a mortgage may run into issues with DSS depending on the rental amount. Since the State has already paid off the mortgage of the home, DSS would want to see a rent that is based on actual costs and not fair market rental value. Homes that still have a mortgage would be a little bit easier to get approval for the rental amount since the state has not fully paid for the home.

- Heather stated that she has not been able to submit a transition plan because her agency is constantly revising it to meet all of the department and agency expectations. Peter stated that her agency needs to be careful not to look to submit a perfect plan. DDS will allow providers to revise their plans. A provider can submit an initial plan that may not include everything. As the agency refines the details, it can keep adding it to the plan. The key will be to keep the region up to date on where they are and where they plan to go.

DDS Updates:

- DDS is submitting a revised Appendix K that will increase the incentives based on the feedback from providers and other stakeholders. These are proposed incentives and must be approved by CMS before they can be finalized for payment. While the department is confident that these will be approved, nothing is guaranteed. I am presenting these for your information but want to emphasize that these are only proposed and not finalized.

1. Incentive-based outcome payments to any qualified residential or day provider covered under the waivers listed above that submits a transition plan that is approved by DDS.

- \$7,5000 for 1 agency program,
- \$12,500 for 2 agency programs,
- \$ 17,500 for three or more programs or an agency wide restructuring plan.

2. Incentive-based outcome payments to any qualified residential or day provider covered under the waivers listed above that transitions a waiver participant.

- Outcome payment for residential move - \$ 33,000
- Outcome payment for a day move \$ 15,000

3. Incentive-based outcome payments to any qualified residential or day provider covered under the waivers listed above that completes one of the following objectives, as part of the approved transition plan to the satisfaction of the Department.

1. Restructuring of a residential setting to support new individuals with specialized or complex medical, behavioral or clinical needs and are in need of residential support (as defined by our residential wait list, an unmet residential need or the residential move better aligns to meet the needs of the individual).
2. Restructuring a day program to provide new supports that now focus on employment-based services.
3. Restructuring a day program to support new individuals with specialized or complex medical needs and are in need of a day support (as defined as an unmet day need).
4. Ending a subminimum wage arrangement for individuals supported in the program to minimum wage arrangement.

- Incentive payment of \$ 33,000

4. An incentive payment for any DDS qualified provider that completes the National Core Indicator IDD State of the Workforce Survey.
 - 2500 incentive payment per provider
 5. An incentive payment for any DDS qualified provider that completes training expectations (Shift)
 - Incentive payment of \$ 3,000 per person up to a max of \$ 30,000.00
 6. An incentive payment for any DDS qualified provider that completes training expectations for ISE (Acre)
 - Incentive payment of \$ 3,000 per person up to a max of \$ 30,000.00
- Rent Subsidy Proposed changes:
 1. Reviewing the Health and Safety Checklist
 2. Reviewing the effect of a housemate moving out and there are more bedrooms than the number of people living in the location on rent subsidy
 3. Reviewing the percentage of the rent or other periodic payments for use and occupancy of the rental property must be or less than the fair market rent for the area from 130% to 140%.
 4. Reviewing the quarterly income verification reports

Heather stated how important it is for rent subsidy to be sufficient for individuals to live independently. She stated that Housing Raps (Housing Rental Assistance Program) are a better program for individuals. Peter stated that he is hoping that the proposed changes to rent subsidy will help to make this much more beneficial to the individuals we support.

- Other ARPA items
 1. Rewarding Work redesigned website hit a snag and has been delayed. These have been corrected and should be available soon.
 2. 4 AT NOO grants–
 - a. One for individuals and families – 34 applications,
 - b. one for providers, 7 applications
 - c. one for employment and AT - just was issued this week
 - d. staff training for AT certification – 34 applications 2 - 3 hour trainings for 10 weeks
 3. AT RFP was issued yesterday
 4. Non-project based Supportive Housing grant –

Heather asked if there is going to be some kind of tracking of all the Assistive Technology equipment that is being purchased. Peter stated that this will be a component of the Assistive Technology RFP to establish a data base on equipment, owner, and usage.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Next meeting date April 20, 2023. Minutes submitted by Peter Mason