



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

Minutes of February 20, 2024, ARPA Advisory Committee Meeting

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Keith Lavalette, Tracey Walker, Cheryl Ellis, Shannon Jacovino, Barry Simon, Gunnar Abrahamsson, Mary Pat DeCarlo, Brian Smith, Heather LaTorra, Amy Montimurro, Win Evarts, Sarah Ullom-Minnich, Lori Coughlin, Adriana Ramirez, Sean Bannon, Trevor Rogers, Catherine DeStefano, Deloitte- Betsy Bella

Absent, Kate Haaland, Paige Librandi, Michael Beloff, Kathleen Stauffer,

Gunnar Abrahamsson called the meeting to order.

Keith Lavalette read the Public Meeting Requirements

Minutes of the 1/30/2024 Advisory Committee meeting were approved on a motion by Jacovino/Evarts

Trevor Rogers along with Catherine DeStefano gave the 2024 updates for the DDS employment and day services unit.

- Developed a flyer for employers who are open to hiring individuals with disabilities.
- Employment Transition Services is a time limited, community based vocational service that focuses on Career discovery and exploration, skill development and self-advocacy. The based rate has been increased for providers and a incentive driven payments for those who transition individuals to employment is currently being worked on.
- Project Search is a 9-month internship training program available to school transition age students and young adults eligible for DDS services, who need more intensive employment skills training. DDS is looking to continue its collaboration with Project Search to expand its presence in CT.
- Innovated Employment opportunity grant notice of opportunity is for applicants who have a business, product or service or to explore business ideas and develop a business plan.
- DDS just released a new Employment Services video which is available to view on the website.
- Customized Employment is an alternative method of finding competitive integrated employment that focuses on strengths, skills and abilities and is highly structured and person centered.
- The new CE resources include a CE ISE Comparison Document along with a new CE Brochure and a CE Provider handbook.
- Individualized Day Vocational can request additional hours if there is a need and additional support can meet that need.
- Individualized Supported Employment can receive supplemental services for socialization or skill development.
- EDS team also presented goals for 2024.

A question and answer period with the EDS Team took place.

Gunnar Abrahamson discussed the transformational plans that have been submitted to the department and the approved and pending plans. 17 Providers are currently approved and are being executed, transitions are occurring, and incentives are being paid. Vinfen and Kennedy Collective both recently had their plans approved. Vinfen has a residential plan that has 9 individuals moving to supportive housing or IHS. It was noted that three of the individuals that were moving to IHS had LON level of 6 or higher. Kennedy Collective is one of the largest plans with 41 individuals. 40 individuals moving from GSE to ISE and one individual will be moving from IDV to ISE. Total incentives are over 3 million dollars. The Lighthouse is a small private provider that submitted a plan with five individuals for an employment plan. Four additional providers are working with Deloitte on submitting plans.

Communications Presentation- Gunnar gave the communication report. DDS has updated their website. We are working on troubleshooting issues and working on updating the site.

Shared Living update: MaryPat DeCarlo gave the shared living update. DDS is working with Deloitte. They have finalized the vision and are about 90% of the way through the definition. Supporting documents are being worked on but the committee must pause its work as the waiver will need to be rewritten and that will not be completed until next year. The committee finished its work with Deloitte and feel they are in a good place once they can restart when the waiver revision gets approved.

Deloitte Presentation- Betsy Bella updated the committee on the TA process. Deloitte has shifted to a once or twice a month technical assistance session. In January, they had two sessions that focused on going through the summaries of the submitted plans as providers wanted to hear about plans already approved. Deloitte has developed a summary of all the approved plans which will be placed on the website and sent to the providers through Everbridge.

Last week Deloitte held a session on how providers were using the incentive or how they were planning on using their incentive money. There was a good amount of interest in what it is to restructure a setting. Deloitte continues to provide one-to-one assistance if a provider is interested.

Open Discussion: There was discussion of how the transition process works in relation to when the incentives are paid.

Motion to adjourn by Simon/ Jacovino

The next meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2024, at 1:30pm.