



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont  
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff  
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo  
Deputy Commissioner

**Minutes of January 30, 2024, ARPA Advisory Committee Meeting**

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Keith Lavalette, Tracey Walker, Cheryl Ellis, Shannon Jacovino, Michael Beloff, Barry Simon, Gunnar Abrahamsson, Mary Pat DeCarlo, Kathleen Stauffer, Brian Smith, Heather LaTorra, Amy Montimurro, Win Evarts, Sarah Ullom-Minnich, Lori Coughlin, Adriana Ramirez,

Absent, Kate Haaland, Sean Bannon, Paige Librandi,

Gunnar Abrahamsson called the meeting to order.

Keith Lavalette read the Public Meeting Requirements

Minutes of the 12/19/2023 Advisory Committee meeting were approved on a motion by Simon/Jacovino

Introduction of new committee members was made.

Gunnar Abrahamson discussed the transformational plans that have been submitted to the department and the approved and pending plans. 15 Providers are currently approved and are being executed, transitions are occurring, and incentives are being paid. 3 pending transformational plans are at the regional review committee for approval. If the three plans are approved the day transitions will climb from 148 individuals to 205. On the residential side there are currently 40 Individuals in approved plans and with the other three agencies it will be 61 individuals upon approval. We are actively working with our fiscal counterparts to make sure providers are paid in a timely fashion. Deloitte has developed a document that encompasses the key parts to each provider's plan that we plan to share as a resource to other providers.

Discussion took place on meeting the needs of individuals with more significant needs and how ARPA could possibly assist in meeting those needs.

**Communications Presentation-** Gunnar gave the communication report. A STEP survey has been sent out to individuals and families who are participating in this initiative and those individuals currently living in congregate settings. The feedback from the surveys will help us get a better understanding of the effectiveness of our communication around STEP. In addition, a survey was also sent out to staff again. The survey is a follow up to the survey that was sent out at the end of 2022.

The assistive technology support video was recently shot on site this past Saturday with the message of how assistive technology has been an effective way for individuals to communicate with families, as this video moves to its final version we will keep this committee up to date. We also have three new employment focus fact sheets being released. They include a Group Supported Employment (GSE), Individualized Day Support

(IDS) and the Employment Transitional Services (ETS) fact sheet that were developed by the Employment and Day Services (EDS) unit.

DDS has also revamped its website as part of a broader effort on behalf of the governor's office for Connecticut to have a more uniform look for various state agency websites.

**Deloitte Presentation-** Deloitte was not able to attend and will present at the next advisory meeting.

**Shared Living update:** MaryPat gave the shared living update. DDS is working with Deloitte and shared living committee members and have started from the ground level and to try to make it less cumbersome and much more person centered. Deloitte conducted a scan of different states and has found that Virginia had probably the best definition and program setup that aligned with what Connecticut was looking for. The 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the definition has gone to committee members this week and now working with Deloitte to start putting together some things in regard to building a toolkit but also looking at challenges regarding rates, DOL issues and how the department pays. Looking at a pilot to finalize the process.

Discussion on backup plans and diversity in shared living took place with the committee.

**Open Discussion:** Cheryl Ellis director of DEI let everyone know that she has an intern that is working with her office three days a week.

A question to have a future meeting to discuss AT and me and assistive technology or what its impact and what is involved.

Provider engagement as to why agencies may or may not participate in the transition process and if this committee could help to get information out to more providers to see why or why not as to their participation in the ARPA process.

Discussion around transformation and how difficult it is and how an agency needs multiple layers of its organization together and agree to make it happen makes it difficult for an agency to move forward.

Concern about the AT RFP and the difficulty with moving that RFP forward and the three agencies that received that RFP.

Motion to adjourn by Jacovino/Simon

The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2024, at 1:30pm.