

## LETTER OF AGREEMENT

August 21, 2024

Over approximately the past nine years, the State of Connecticut's Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Department of Aging and Disability Services, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) have been working to develop and implement initiatives that will expand the availability of competitive integrated employment (CIE) for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (IDD) in Connecticut. Throughout the last several years, Disability Rights Connecticut (DRCT) and the Center for Public Representation (CPR), along with other stakeholders, have provided input and made suggestions with respect to these efforts.

DDS, BRS and the State of Connecticut do NOT admit that they have engaged in any act, practice or omission in violation of any state or federal statute or regulation, constitution or common law.

### **A. Development of a CIE Transformation Plan: Components of the Plan**

DDS, BRS, DRCT and CPR (collectively "the Parties") agree that they will continue to work collaboratively along with other stakeholders, to implement these initiatives through the creation of a CIE Transformation Plan (hereafter "the Plan").

The Plan will incorporate the activities initiated and developed by DDS and BRS to expand CIE for transition-age students and adults with IDD in Connecticut. DDS and BRS provided DRCT and CPR a description of these activities in January 2024.

The Parties agree that the components of the Plan will correspond to the following topic areas in the State's responses:

- 1) Building a Pathway to CIE;
- 2) Expanding Career Development Planning;
- 3) Vocational assessments and opportunities to learn about CIE for individuals who apply to the VR program and demonstrate interest in CIE as a desired employment outcome as well as opportunities for career discovery/exploration for individuals enrolled in DDS services but who are not enrolled in the VR program so that they can make an informed choice as to whether to pursue customized employment.
- 4) Strengthening Individualized Informed Choice;
- 5) Creating a Communication Strategy on the Benefits of Employment;
- 6) Delivering Technical Assistance to Providers;
- 7) Improving Interagency Collaboration; and
- 8) Developing Outcome Measures and a Quality Assurance Plan, including:
  - a) baseline and prospective data collection strategies and metrics to assess and report on progress towards implementation of the Plan;
  - b) specific goals and benchmarks to measure the implementation of each aspect of the Plan, including individual employment outcomes; and

- c) an estimated timeframe for the implementation of each key aspect of the Plan.

## **B. The Process and Schedule for Plan Development**

The Parties agree to the following schedule and process for development of the Plan:

- 1) DDS and BRS will work together to develop the proposed Plan and will use reasonable efforts to provide a first draft of the Plan to DRCT and CPR by November 1, 2024.
- 2) DRCT and CPR will provide joint written feedback on the draft Plan to DDS and BRS within 10 business days of receipt.
- 3) Following DRCT's and CPR's submission of written feedback on the draft Plan, a work group with representatives of all of the Parties will meet no later than November 15, 2024, to discuss further revisions to the Plan.
- 4) DDS and BRS shall use all reasonable efforts to develop a final draft Plan by November 30, 2024, which will be provided to DRCT and CPR for final review and comment.
- 5) DDS and BRS shall use reasonable efforts to finalize the Plan by December 16, 2024, based upon any feedback it receives from DRCT and CPR.
- 6) BRS and DDS will post a copy of the Plan on their respective websites.

## **C. Implementation of the Plan**

DDS and BRS will begin to implement the Plan no later than fourteen days after its final execution and approval shall continue until the June 30, 2027 (hereafter the "implementation period").

In order to collaboratively monitor progress under the Plan, the Parties agree to the following:

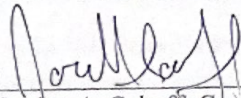
- 1) Throughout the implementation period, the Parties will meet quarterly to discuss ongoing implementation of the Plan. The Parties will agree upon a quarterly meeting schedule by December 16, 2024.
- 2) At least five (5) business days prior to each implementation meeting, DDS and BRS will provide DRCT and CPR with data reflecting the progress towards agreed upon goals and benchmarks under the Plan.
- 3) DRCT and CPR agree to keep confidential any data and information provided by DDS and BRS that is not otherwise subject to disclosure under the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act, § 1-200 *et seq.*
- 4) DRCT and CPR will be given an advanced opportunity to review and/or comment on the development of key implementation documents identified by the parties in the Plan prior to DDS and/or BRS posting them for public comment. The advanced period to review and comment shall be agreed to by the representatives of DDS, BRS, DRCT, and CPR but will be at least ten (10) working days prior to public distribution. Under this provision, DDS and BRS will consider DRCT and CPR comments. Nothing in this provision requires DDS and BRS to obtain prior approval from DRCT and CPR prior to public distribution.

- 5) DRCT and CPR agree to provide timely responses and feedback to DDS and BRS staff within ten (10) working days or in a timeframe agreed to by the Parties.
- 6) The Parties will jointly review upcoming implementation tasks and activities and identify opportunities for DRCT and CPR input and collaboration.

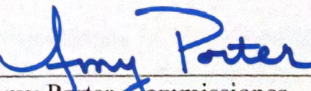
It is the Parties' goal to work together collaboratively to develop, implement, and monitor progress under the Plan. As part of the Agreement, DRCT and CPR will forego filing a complaint in court regarding Connecticut's current employment services systems during the Plan's implementation period.

In the event that there is any disagreement about the adequacy of the Plan, the status of implementation, or reasonable progress towards its goals, DRCT and CPR shall provide written notice, including: the nature of the disputed issue and any initial proposed corrective actions. DDS, BRS, DRCT and CPR will use reasonable efforts to meet and discuss the issues raised in notice within fourteen (14) business days of its receipt and will memorialize any negotiated resolution through a further writing. In the event that either Party determines that the disputed issue cannot be resolved, it may terminate this Agreement.

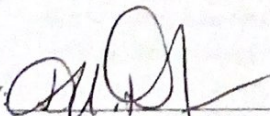
The Parties look forward to their continued work together to improve and expand CIE for individuals with IDD in Connecticut.

BY:   
 Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner  
 Department of Developmental Services  
 460 Capitol Avenue  
 Hartford, CT 06106

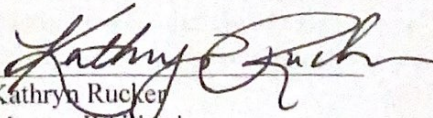
8/26/2024  
 Date

BY:   
 Amy Porter, Commissioner  
 Department of Aging and Disability Services  
 55 Farmington Avenue  
 Hartford, CT 06105

8/26/2024  
 Date

BY:   
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 DISABILITY RIGHTS CT  
 75 Charter Oak Ave., Ste. 1-101  
 Hartford, CT 06106

Aug. 21, 2024  
 Date

BY:   
 Kathryn Rucker  
 Morgan Whitatch  
 Steven Schwartz  
 CENTER FOR PUBLIC REPRESENTATION  
 5 Ferry Street #314  
 East Hampton, MA 01027

Aug. 21, 2024  
 Date