

# Minutes from CRP Advisory Committee Meeting September 18, 2023

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## **In Attendance:**

DORS Staff: Jody Boone, Darlene Peregoy, Toni March, Brian Haas, Randy Diehl, Patrick Peto, Tamla McDowell-Omodho, Jessie Markum, Megan Glaze-Keller and Marla Friedman.

84 individuals representing DORS CRPs attended this virtual meeting. All CRPs and CAS providers were invited.

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## **Introductions/Presentations**

### **Jody Boone (Senior Executive Director, Planning, Operations, and Field Services):**

- Provided an overview of roles and responsibilities within her new position as Senior Executive Director Planning, Operations, and Field Services
- Update provided regarding the State Superintendent's decision to withdraw his continued contract with the state board – a transition plan is forthcoming
- Official recruitment for the Assistant State Superintendent/Director of DORS has not begun
- Adult WBLE – The work group are in the final stages of the project, new staff member Megan will be helping to write up the policy for the Adult Work Based Learning Experience (upon completion, Kate and Tamla will work with CRPs who state interest to complete addendums)
- DORS staffing – We currently have about 24 vacancies within the agency (including DDS), 13 positions have selected candidates, OFS has 7 contractual positions

### **Patrick Peto (Program Manager, Quality Assurance, Policy, and Planning):**

- Update on electronic signature -The Citrix electronic signature has been rolled out across the State with much success – Some challenges still occurring with our visually impaired consumers and screen readers (keep in mind the signature certificate validates the electronic signature)

#### Policy updates

- Financial needs policy – review of individual and family income has been eliminated (as of July 1, 2023)
- Post-secondary policy - removed barriers to obtain post-secondary education, making it easier for both consumers and counselors, and with obtaining Measurable Skills Gains (as of July 1, 2023)
- RCS Deaf and Hard of Hearing services fees have increased to match job coaching fees for services (up to \$70), RCS intake and planning fees are now \$140 flat fee (2hrs of services)
- Pre-Adaptive Home Modification – fundamental alteration of a bathroom or kitchen structure – DORS will no longer consider funding for fixtures
- Pre-Adaptive Driving Consultation – New vehicle modification service provided that is required for any vehicle modification or driving services (provided by WTC services)
- Welcome to new staff members Megan Glaze-Keller (Policy and Regulation Administrator), Marla Friedman (Client Assistant Program Director)
- CAP video shared (can be found on DORS website)

**Darlene Peregoy (Director, Administration and Financial Services):**

- A reminder that the DORS website is a valuable resource for CRPs. We post new information and notifications there and have plans to create a section of on-demand training on employment. Click on the link on the top banner for Community Partners.
- Please remember to inform Kate Drake and Tamla McDowell-Omodho if your CRP has a change in CEO, Executive Director, or Director of Employment/Vocational Services or an address or email change. This is critical to ensure that CRPs receive important information from DORS.
- COVID Update: We have seen a recent surge in employees reporting COVID infection and we soon will be entering flu season, so this is a reminder that job coaches are encouraged to keep safety in mind when working with DORS consumers.
- DORS has a policy and an Internship Agreement for employers and consumers to sign relative to unpaid internships. Counselors and Business Services Representatives can provide additional information.
- Special Options Eligibles List – special non-competitive hiring option in Maryland State government for individuals with disabilities. Consumers can be hired non-competitively- information can be provided by Business Services Representatives and on the DBM website here:  
<https://dbm.maryland.gov/jobseekers/Pages/Disabilities.aspx>

DORS AFS – Our facilities department have hired about 8 consumers from this list

Feel free to reach out to Wanda Peele or Business Service Representative for assistance with consumers

- We are happy to have Megan Glaze-Keller on board, as we are working on updating our policies around accreditation and approval of CRPs. In June 2022, DORS provided notification that we moved to requiring providers to be accredited or licensed by 2025. By January 1, 2025, all providers must be licensed by DDA or BHA or accredited through a third-party organization to remain on the DORS fee schedule. Accreditation through The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facility (CARF), The Council on Accreditation (COA) and The Joint Commission (TJC) as it related to the provision of behavioral health services will fulfill this requirement. Please contact Kate or Tamla for additional information
- Also, we are moving to provide a one-year provisional Cooperative Agreement for new or returning CRPs. This will allow for close monitoring and support as they begin working with DORS and then a three-year CA will be issued. Policy.
- DORS is working closely with Maryland Works to monitor CRPs who are approved to participate in the Employment Works Program. DORS do not approve CRPs for the sole purpose of obtaining EWP contracts, so CRPs must have a cooperative agreement and be actively providing the core services of Job Development and Job Coaching. A report that details the monthly number of authorizations and invoices paid to CRPs who are in EWP was created to help monitor CRPs services.

Please contact Darlene, Kate, or Tamla for additional information.

**Derick Serra (Program Manager, Office of Field Services):**

- RISE program (Reaching Independence Through Self Employment) – we are in year 4 of 5 with the Psychometric Solutions, LLC contract (provide consultation and training to consumers, as well as DORS staff on self-employment). They've worked with over 125 consumers and their Business Committee has approved 15 business plans for DORS funding
- EDU – The unit is overseen by a Program Manager, two Supervisors, and about 17 staff. The goal of this unit is to review and determine eligibility for all offices across the state of Maryland.

Currently, there are over 1,100 open referrals, 800 open applications, covering 11 DORS offices for VR referrals and applications, 19 counties for PreETS referrals and applications, and all OBVS referrals and applications. Additional staff are needed in order to cover all the DORS office's

**Jessie Markum (Staff Specialist, Transitioning and PreETS):**

- Providers may email Jessie with questions regarding Pre-ETS. Her contact information is: [Jessica.markum@maryland.gov](mailto:Jessica.markum@maryland.gov)
- Training on changes to the PreETS Progress Report form and plans for “standardizing” PreETS programs (Job Exploration Counseling, Workplace Readiness Training, Self-Advocacy, and Counseling on Enrollment) is tentatively scheduled for the month of October.
- Please assure your provider contact information is up to date
- WBLE – services are meant to provide experience (light touch), try a job, or to assist students to identify what they like or do not like- it's not job development/placement. Please collaborate with students and counselor when overseeing planning.
- The Uni. Of MD: Center for Transition and Career Innovation (CTCI) – all PreETS referrals are completed by their unit and sent to the DORS - EDU for processing. They have doubled the number of staff they have since starting the program. 3,728 referrals have been completed. There remains a need for more CTCI staff to effectively manage the volume of referrals.

**Toni March (Director, Office of Blindness and Vision Services (OBVS):**

- OBVS continues to recruit providers for services to Blind and Low Vision individuals. CRPs completing the appropriate OBVS training receives a 25% increase for providing these services. The training is a requirement to qualify for providing services to OBVS consumers. Currently have 1 CRP that specializes to work with the population
- We request CRPs complete annual training. Please submit your hours and questions to Mutassim Fadl at [muttasim.fadl@maryland.gov](mailto:muttasim.fadl@maryland.gov).
- Any agency that has been approved but not receiving referrals, please contact Mutassim
- Skills should be enhanced on an annual basis and the certification is for the agency and not for individual staff

**Brian Haas (Business Services Representative) on behalf of Wanda Peele (Program Manager, Business Service Branch):**

- Business relation team- doing training for businesses. Please contact BSRs for additional information, as well as Facebook or LinkedIn pages
- Resume training is every other Monday. Several Federal resume trainings were provided, but low attendance. If training in this area is desired and 10 or more individuals are attending, you can email William Brownlee at - [William.brownlee@maryland.gov](mailto:William.brownlee@maryland.gov).
- Providers can utilize the American Job Centers for workshops regarding resume development/preparation

**Randy Diehl (Director of MIS):**

- Portal – slight changes have been made to add an additional layer of protection: You will not receive confirmation emails anymore. When you get to the final page, please use the guidance noted to print your confirmation page.

- Sara Works – bi-directional communication with our case management system (sends SMS, emails, notifications, and more to and from our Counselors/case management system). We are in the testing phase, shortly we'll complete training with our staff, and roll out Sara Works over the next few months
- Four ways to send information encrypted: portal, send encrypted email applications, fax (eFax), and snail mail
- Randy discussed an increase in PII breaches. Please do not use email to send confidential information unless encrypted. If DORS staff are sending confidential information through email, please let them know not to do it. MSDE is working on a data privacy policy in accordance to the state law – Maryland Personal Information Protection Act.

**Provider Forum (Q & A):**

*Lauren Krach – Potential of shortening the timeframe for closure (post stability)?*

DORS response RSA clarification is being sought after to see if stabilization time can be shortened

DORS Exec Staff Comment - Please ensure that invoices are current so that we can utilize our funding accordingly- please send them by Sept 26th

If you have reached out to Counselors and are having trouble with getting invoices paid, please use the following steps to gain assistance:

1. Speak with Supervisor (no resolution)
2. Speak with Regional Director (no resolution)
3. Speak with Jody regarding OFS and Toni regarding OBVS

**Next Meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2024  
9:30 – 11:00.**