

Minutes from CRP Advisory Committee Meeting

May 22, 2023

In Attendance:

DORS Staff: Darlene Peregoy, Jody Boone, Patrick Peto, Toni March, Tamla McDowell-Omodho

DORS/CRP/CAS: Representatives were virtually in attendance. All CRPs and CAS providers were invited.

Other Guest: DORS LEAP participants Alison Axelrod (Noe Turcios & Justin Creamer), Brian Haas (Kim Schultz), Christina Nixon (Tim Kelly & Erica Kneessi), Connor McGinley (Jessi Markum), Luigi Toma (Adam Travelpiece), Mindy Potter (Derick Serra), Patrice Sedgwick (Elo Enoch), Samantha Cole (Kate Drake), Samantha DeFranco (Amy Wustner)

Introductions/Presentations:

Darlene Peregoy (Director of Administration and Financial Services)

Welcome to Tamla McDowell-Omodho, the new Staff Specialist for CRPs. Noted that Tamla has replaced Toni Cobb-Cannon.

Tamla McDowell-Omodho (Staff Specialist for Community Rehabilitation Programs)

Background information shared regarding past employment as Employment Specialist, Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist, and current position.

Darlene Peregoy on behalf of - Scott Dennis (Assistant State Superintendent in Rehabilitation Services)

- The announcement of Scott Dennis retirement was presented.
- The Commission to Study DORS, created by House Bill 660 legislative sessions have concluded. DORS planning meeting will be held on June 13, 2023. DORS strategic plan and the commissions to study final report (HB 660) will be discussed, along with making plans for the upcoming year.

Jody Boone (Director of the Office of Field Services)

- Update provided on adult learning experiences (similar to the Pre-ETS WBLE). DORS have received much interest from CRPS to provide services to adult consumers. Please contact Kate Darke - Catherine.drake@maryland.gov or Tamla McDowell-Omodho - tamla.mcdowell-omodho@maryland.gov if your program has interest in provided future services.
- DORS have worked diligently to reduce the number of vacancies across the state. The Eligibility Determination Unit (EDU) is making efforts to fill several contractual vacancies.
- The roll out of SaraWorks, a bi-directional communication system, built for use by vocational rehabilitation agencies has built excitement within the agency. SaraWorks will provide digital assistance with consumer follow-up, data entry, and retrieving documentation, allowing Counselors the ability to provide stronger counseling and guidance services.

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

- DORS is using Citrix RightSignature electronic signature tool to obtain signatures from consumers. Citrix employs an identity authentication system, producing a certification after completion of all signatures obtained, which staff will maintain within DORS case management system. CRPs may utilize other electronic signature systems but must ensure the system is authenticated.
- A slide presentation was made regarding WIOA performance indicators - PY2022 Q3 vs. PY2021 Q3 comparison. The slide presentation will be made available for individual review post the meeting.

Darlene Peregoy (Director of Administration and Financial Services)

- Reminder made that DORS website is a valuable resource for CRPs - <https://dors.maryland.gov/crps/Pages/CRPs.aspx>. We are working on developing a hub for CRPs to include important topics for job development and job coaching, such as resume development, business engagement, report writing, etc. The intent is to develop on-demand training available to new and current CRP staff to assist them in providing quality services. If you have any suggestions for topics, please let Darke - Catherine.drake@maryland.gov or Tamla McDowell-Omodho - tamla.mcdowell-omodho@maryland.gov know.
- 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: As you may be aware, the federal Public Health Emergency ended on May 11th. The Maryland Department of Health has launched a new set of webpages where information on COVID-19 may be found long-term, including testing, vaccines, data and other resources. The new website is: <https://health.maryland.gov/covid/Pages/default.aspx> This new site consolidates information from several previous sites, such as Covidlink. The ending of the public health emergency signals low levels of infections; however, COVID is not gone and there are many other illnesses floating around, so job developers and job coaches are encouraged to keep safety in mind when working with DORS consumers.
- DORS is working closely with Maryland Works to monitor CRPs who are approved to participate in the Employment Works Program (EWP). DORS does not approve CRPs for the sole purpose of obtaining EWP contracts, so CRPs have to 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 the EWP has been created to help monitor CRPs services.
- As mentioned, the COVID public health emergency has ended, so CRPs are highly encouraged to provide services in the community versus virtual services. Our employment outcomes continue to be down as compared to pre-pandemic levels, despite businesses reporting that they have many openings and are having a hard time finding help.
- TWO IMPORTANT REMINDERS:
- In June 2022, DORS 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. Currently there are eight CRPs who still need to work towards this requirement, and a reminder letter will be sent out to them shortly.

- A reminder that providers approved for the provision of Career Assessment Services must have a staff person available to provide that service who has the International Certification for Vocational Evaluators credential.

<https://cvrp.net/new-applicants/icve-study-guide/?lang=usa>

Jody Boone on behalf of - Derick Serra (Program Manager, Technical Assistance)

- We are in year 4 of our contract with Psychometric Solutions - The RISE program (Reaching Independence through Self-Employment) and have been doing well.
- The EDU is going well. We are currently identifying innovative ways to attract and hire contractual staff to fill existing vacancies.
- A reminder that on July 1, changes to minimum wages will take place in Montgomery County.

Jody Boone on behalf of - Jessica Markum (Staff Specialist for Students and Transition- aged Youth)

- The eligibility determination for Pre-ETS cases through a two-year grant with the University of Maryland Center for Transition and Career Innovation to process Pre-ETS referrals continues to make strides. They've experienced an increase in intake and need more staff as a result.

Toni March (Director of Office of Blindness and Vision Services)

- OBVS continues to recruit providers for services to Blind and Low Vision individuals. Currently there are 2 programs that provide services to individuals with blindness across the state. We are searching for new CRPs.
- A reminder that we do offer a 25% enhanced rate for CRPs working with individuals requiring specialized support.
- CRPs, please submit annual training hours for approved providers to Mutassim Fadl at muttasim.fadl@maryland.gov.

Brian Hass on behalf of - Wanda Peele (Program Manager, Business Relations Branch)

- The Business Services Representatives (BSRs) are working on creating a resume training for the HUB.
- Please review the monthly edition of the DORS BSR Bugle (newsletter).
- The BSRS holds bi-monthly statewide Workforce Alliance meetings, with training on various topics. Job Coaches, Employment Specialists, etc. are encouraged to attend.

Darlene Peregoy on behalf of – Randy Diehl (Director of Management Information Systems)

- A reminder that Randy receives reports from the State firewall, which flag emails that were sent to or from DORS that contain confidential information (PII). **It is imperative that staff and vendors** who need to share information use the DORS portals instead of attaching to emails; this ensures the security of any PII being shared. Please refer to the website for additional information.

PY2022 Q3 vs. PY2021 Q3 comparison

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Participants (completed IPE)

PY21 Q3: 12,420

- 785 completed initial IPE this 1/4

PY22 Q3: 12,123

- 862 completed initial IPE this 1/4



Pre-Employment Transition Services

PY22 Q3 (PY21 Q3)

- Job Exploration Counseling: **1130** (727)
- Work-Based Learning: **834** (646)
- Workforce Readiness: **366** (388)
- Self-Advocacy: **375** (296)
- Counseling on Enrollment: **136** (112)



Exiters

PY22 Q3 (PY21 Q3)

- Total: 1399 (**1633**)
- Exited successfully: **246** (**249**)
- Average Wage at exit: **\$17.44** (**\$15.47**)
- Average number of hours worked at exit: **27.6** (**26.8**)



Supported Employment Exiters

PY22 Q3 (PY21 Q3)

- Total Exited successfully w/ Supported Employment: **89 (99)**
- Average Wage at exit w/ Supported Employment: **\$14.68 (\$14.11)**
- Average number of hours worked at exit: **24.1 (24.2)**

