

Minutes from CRP Advisory Committee Meeting January 22, 2024

In Attendance:

DORS Staff: Jody Boone, Darlene Peregoy, Toni March, Wanda Peele, Randy Diehl, Derick Serra, Tamla McDowell-Omodho.

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

Introductions/Presentations

Jody Boone (Director, Acting DORS Director)

- With Darlene Ginn's upcoming retirement, Beth Lash has now been promoted to Director, Office of Field Services
- Field Services Staffing – this time last years there were 63 vacancies and as of the time of this meeting there are currently 18 open positions (technically 14 due to 4 new hires that are starting Wednesday January 31st) All the vacant positions are in various stages of the recruitment process with some positions posted while some are in the completing interviews stage.

Beth Lash (Director, Office of Field Services):

- Beth started as a counselor with the DORS Program, then worked in the CAP Program, ultimately becoming the CAP Program Director and then on to become the Field Services Director for Region 6.
- Beth believes DORS relationship with the CRP's is critical and would love to have a better understanding of the programmatic policies in terms of the CRP's and hopes to communicate centrally and periodically on different topics such as wait time and creating a clear standardized way of informing consumers of CRP's programmatic information so they may make informed choices in relation to Community Rehabilitation Programs.

Darlene Peregoy (Director, Administration & Financial Services):

- Kate Drake is currently out on medical leave. In the interim, if you were working with Kate and have any questions or need information, please reach out to Tamla and we will assist you until Kate returns.
- 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.
- DORS has a policy and an Internship Agreement for employers and consumers to sign relative to unpaid internships. If you are working with a consumer in job development who could benefit from that type of experience and have an interested employer, please reach out to the consumer's counselor for approval, and the Business Services Representative in your area can provide additional information.
- Special Options Eligibles List – special non-competitive hiring option in Maryland State government for individuals with disabilities. Information can be provided by Business Services Representatives (or Wanda.Peele@maryland.gov) and on the DBM website here: <https://dbm.maryland.gov/jobseekers/Pages/Disabilities.aspx>
- As I mentioned at our last meeting, 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. So we are one year away from full implementation of that requirement.
- 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.
- DORS is working closely with Maryland Works to monitor CRPs who are approved to participate in the Employment Works Program. DORS does 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. We are using a report that details the monthly number of authorizations and invoices paid to CRPs who are in the EWP to help monitor CRPs services.

- A reminder, to keep the CRP's information up to date on the website to contact Tamla or Kate with any changes to CRPs such as CEO's, Director(s) of Employment/Vocational Services along with the most up to date/correct email addresses in case information must go out to all CRP's and it is received in a timely manner.
CRP Advisory Committee January 2024
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Derick Serra (Program Manager, Technical Branch):

- RISE program (Reaching Independence Through Self Employment) – we are in year 5 of our 5-year contract with the Psychometric Solutions, LLC contract (provide consultation and training to consumers, as well as DORS staff on self-employment). Derrick is currently working on obtaining a new RFP (Request for Proposals) with hopes of having them completed by the end of the year (2024).
- EDU's goal of processing all eligible consumers across the state could not be met just yet due to staffing issues and volume of incoming applications. As far as a timeline for when EDU will be able to process all eligibility decisions for the entire State of Maryland, there are currently no specific dates available. Those offices that EDU does serve have made great improvements within the last two years to make it more efficient and effective as possible.

Derick Serra (Program Manager, Technical Branch) on behalf of Jessie Markum (Staff Specialist, Transitioning and PreETS):

- On January 1st Jessie sent out a message to everyone on her distribution list including all providers who are currently providing PreETS or who are interested in providing PreETS essentially looking for proposals very specific to PreETS. Jessie will be the point of contact for questions about PreETS/PreETS related topics (jessica.marcum@maryland.gov).

The University of Maryland: Center for Transition and Career Innovation (CTCI) currently handles all PreETS referrals and are completed by their unit and sent to the DORS - EDU for processing and the grant ends in July (2024). DORS and MSDE are currently working on a RFP to have an outside entity, preferably Univ. of MD, to continue their work for the next 2-3 years with some additional services thrown in.

Wanda Peele (Program Manager, Business Service Branch):

- Described the purpose of the Business Liaison position (BSR) to include the Promotion and marketing of individuals with disabilities. Providing potential employers with a focus on disability awareness.
- Business Services has partnered with the Department of Labor to assist in filling State Job positions with DORS consumers.
- Resume training for Federal and regular employment positions are regularly held to assist in job searches and are listed in the BSR Newsletter.
- The Special Options Eligibility List had been very successful in achieving interviews/new hires. If anyone wants training on the Special Options Eligibility List, please contact Wanda Peele via email (wanda.peele@maryland.gov)

Randy Diehl (Director of MIS):

- Randy discusses the seriousness PII breaches. Please don't use email to send confidential information. Randy discussed an increase in PII breaches. Please don't use email to send confidential information. Email is not encrypted.
- Use the encrypted portal to respond to DORS. If DORS staff are sending confidential information through email, please let them know not to do it.
- SARAWORKS is currently being used by many of the offices within DORS including the Offices of Field Services and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Unit of which both are currently being trained along with other DORS offices.

Provider Forum (Q & A):

**Next Meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2024
9:30 – 11:00.**