

## Minutes from CRP Advisory Committee Meeting May 20, 2024

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### In Attendance:

DORS Staff: Jody Boone, Toni March, Patrick Peto, Darlene Peregoy, William Georg, Derick Serra, Jessie Markum, Wanda Peele, Beth Lash, Randy Diehl, Tamla McDowell-Omodho and Catherine Drake

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

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### Introductions/Presentations

#### Jody Boone (Director, Acting DORS Director)

- We are nearing the end of the fiscal year and looking good budget wise as DORS has some surplus carry over funds from fiscal year 2023 which has Dors looking good through the end of the year.
- Please make sure all bills are paid by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Do not wait until June 30<sup>th</sup> to inform District Supervisors, Regional Directors, or accounting about FY 2023 bills. Dors can only pay for bills made in that same budget year. If you are unable to contact any of these individuals afore mentioned, feel free to contact [Jody Boone](#) or [Darlene Peregoy](#) for assistance with getting bills from FY 2023 paid on time. Once FY 2023 closes out, by federal law, we can not go back and pay for services from FY 2023.
- Field staffing levels are in good place, and we have maintained a low vacancy rate throughout the year. Human resources have been doing a great job posting and filling vacant positions and filling retirement vacancies with a great pool of applicants as soon as the positions are announced. DORS biggest vacancies were in DDS which was in a hiring freeze until recently.

#### Toni March (Director, Office for Blindness & Vision Services)

- ALE (Adult Learning Experience) is a service for a very specific type of individual that has a specific career goal who may not have experience but want to gain experience in their specified field. ALE is a short-term job opportunity that can be added to the Cooperative Agreement with DORS that will allow those adults that to gain experience in their specific field. We are asking job developers (Providers with a Cooperative Agreement) to assist in identifying those job opportunities which last up to 12 weeks.

**Toni March (Director, Office for Blindness & Vision Services) cont'd.**

- ALE's fee structure is as follows:
  - \*Develop work site and obtain a signed agreement \$750
  - \*Upfront coordination \$1000
  - \*Job coaching (12 weeks) \$300 per week
  - \*Consumers will be paid minimum wage (CRPs are asked to be the employer of record)

**Tamla McDowell-Omodho (Staff Specialist- Community Rehabilitation Programs):**

- ALE can be requested by notifying [Kate Drake](#) and [Tamla McDowell-Omodho](#) on letterhead that you are interested in having the CA addendum created and they will put the service on the fee schedule after it is signed by the agency representative and Jody Boone. Requests can be made via email.

**Patrick Peto (Program Manager- Quality Assurance, Policy & Planning):**

- **Only** the Employment Stability Follow- Along for 90 Days Fee (\$200) and Employment Stability Verification at 90 Days Fee (\$100) incentives will be discontinued. Any existing authorizations for these services will be honored, but no new authorizations for Stability Fees shall be issued following this directive.
- Training Services have increased among all reported individuals/participants from Program Year 2022 Quarter 3 to Program Year 2023 Quarter 3.
- Career Services have also seen significant increases among all reported individuals/participants from Program Year 2022 Quarter 3 to Program Year 2023 Quarter 3.
- Measurable Skills Gain(Professional Certifications, credentials, completing grades in high school, completing semesters in college, completing Associates/Bachelor's Degrees on up thru Doctorates Degrees) also has seen significant increases from Program Year 2022 Quarter 3 to Program Year 2023 Quarter. The MSG Denominator(number of individual eligible to earn MSG) rose from 1071 in 2022 to 1603 in 2023. The MSG number also grew from 174 in 2022 to 205 in 2023.
- CIE Exit Data shows that majority of jobs are still direct placement positions with some increases in Automotive/Mechanics as an up-and-coming position along with increasing growth in customer service/support and different types of administrative positions also seeing growth from Program Year Quarter 3-2022 to Program Year Quarter 3-2023.
- Pre-ETS Data shows that in Program Year Quarter 3-2022, there were 4,924 SWDs (Students With Disabilities) participating in the Pre-ETS Program and 6,560 participants in Program Year Quarter 3-2023. There has been an increase in each of the 5 pillars of the Pre-ETS Program from Program Year Quarter 3-2022 to Program Year Quarter 3-2023.

Stability/Closure Policy Updates\*

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

- The new appointment of William “Bill” Georg as the new Program Manager II, Community Resources and Administration Support, within the DORS Office of Administration and Financial Services, effective May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- An email concerning the National CSAVR Provider Capacity Survey was forwarded by Kate Drake, discussing the decrease in service capacity, accessing reasons for this decrease and potential solutions to address the decrease in capacity such as training for providers especially in Maryland.
- Many providers holding Ability1 contracts have been requesting different documentation for our consumers being considered for positions on Ability1 contracts that many times were considered excessive. For example, medical documents, psychiatric documents, etc. but after review of the new updates of Ability1 qualifications (January 2024) it's come to the realization that documentation from a Vocational Rehabilitation Agency will suffice in these cases. A form letter very similar to the ones being used for federal employment is being drafted for use in cases where Ability1 contract holders require documentation. It is important to review this policy to stay informed and know that DORS is in line with federal policy.
- As a reminder we are working to try to keep updates to the DORS website, especially the CRP website with the agendas, along with meeting notes and the most up to date resources.

**Derick Serra (Program Manager, Technical Branch):**

- The Rise Program is a way DORS supports individuals who want to be self-employed as their vocational goal. In the past four years we've had an outside contractor, Psychometric Solutions LLC, as being the business specialists specific to self-employment to provide consultation as well as courses from the beginning stages of self-employment all the way up to creating a business plan. We are now in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of our 5-year contract. In the next few months, we will be working on a new proposal to see if there are any other individuals, organizations or entities who are interested in providing this service. Hopefully, this task will be completed by the end of the summer.
- As a reminder, self-employment is always an option for DORS consumers whether they are independent in their pursuit of self-employment or need supported self-employment via BHA or DDA. For more information on the RISE Program feel free to contact [Derick Serra](#) via email or phone call.

- EDU currently is understaffed; Beth Lash and Jody Boone are currently working diligently to find other counselor positions that will handle the entire state. Within the unit, all the “allocated” positions are filled but it is not enough unfortunately. We would like to be able to handle the entire state including all of the DORS’ offices. Even though understaffed we have a great team of managers handling the caseloads. If you have any questions/problems, please contact Pamela Clayton-Johnson, who is the manager of this unit.

**Jessica Markum (Staff Specialist III-Students and Transition Age Youths):**

- All Pre-ETs referrals/qualification recommendations are currently being completed by the intake unit at the University of Maryland and then it is approved by the EDU who then completes the official qualification.
- Currently there are 6,500 Pre-ETs students (an increase from the previous year) and we are looking for more Pre-ETs services for these students.
- We are working on standardizing the service model of the 4 Pre-ETs that are not WBLE (job exploration counseling, workplace readiness training, self-advocacy in counseling and post-secondary enrollment). The components of that which are going to be standard are the learning objectives associated with each service, the associated fees and the amount of time spent within those services. At the beginning of the calendar year a checklist was distributed to help with proposal submissions. If you did not receive the distributed information and would like to receive it, please feel free to contact Jessica Markum via email.
- Pre-ETs proposals are not grant proposals, there does not have to be a long narrative such as including the history of the applying organization or those kinds of things. We are looking for proof that the basics of the Pre-ETs services are being covered. We are looking for the learning objectives that are being focused on, the content in the curriculum that is being used to help the students achieve those objectives and how the determination is made on if the student has met that objective or not. The proposals should generally be three pages and focused on a single service. Not to say multiple services cannot be put on one proposal but it may be very difficult to place that much content along with the objective on those three pages. For example, if your organization wants to do job exploration and self-advocacy, you may want to submit two different proposals, one for each service.
- Currently, none of the PRE-ETS proposals that are being reviewed are solely virtual services. Virtual can be an option and there can be virtual delivery, however, in the proposal, what the possible “Plan B” would be if a student needed in-person services. The point of standardized services is in case that if all 6,500 students could access the services if need be.
- The Intensive Support Fee (\$300) is an accommodation put in place so that students can access your PRE-ETs services if they have some disability related reasons making it difficult for them to have access to the services whether it’s behavioral, academic,

communication, etc. This additional service call would come from the counselor and the supervisor if it is determined that these accommodations may be needed.

- We are hopeful to have these new standardized processes in place by July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- We will continue to accept proposals past the July 1<sup>st</sup> cutoff date.

**Wanda Peele (Program Manager II- Business Relations Branch)**

- The Business Services Relations Branch is currently holding two free virtual training courses pertaining to Standard Resume Training and Federal Resume Training which are held every three months on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month. The next virtual training will be on July 8<sup>th</sup> at 10am which will be the Federal Resume Training and the Standard Resume Training will be at 1pm that same day. Extra training courses will be held if enough requests are made.
- The Business Services Relations Branch will also be holding ADA and Disclosure and Accommodations Trainings which has been very successful with several counselors and units attending and requesting this training which also has been held for consumers as well. This course is beneficial to consumers, along with their counselors, informing them of their rights as far as when, what and how to disclose information concerning any disabilities they may have when entering the working world.
- A 5-day intense training is currently in the works that will take place in October for National Disability Awareness Month for consumers who are currently searching for employment opportunities and wish to brush up on their interview skills, learning effective communication skills, time management among other things. Consumers will receive certificates at the end of the training session. Notice will be sent out via the BSR Newsletter, email, or by emailing Wanda Peele and via the CRP's once everything is finalized.

**Tamla McDowell-Omodho (Staff Specialist- Community Rehabilitation Programs):**

- Co-Operative Agreements-It is **VERY** important that everyone remain in good standards with the Co-Operative Agreements. Please turn in the Cooperative Agreements in a timely manner to Kate or Tamla so they put them with the other necessary documents.
- We have been using electronic signatures for the Cooperative Agreements to move them forward for all parties apart from the visually impaired because the process is a little different. Once you have received the draft Cooperative Agreement and it is approved that everything is accurate in the agreement and it is ready for signature, it is then placed into the Citrix signature process where it is routed to the first signatory in the agency to sign off on, to the second individual it

then comes back to Kate and I and then routed to DORSW and MSDE designated staff. Once it is fully executed it returns to Kate and I and is then sent back to you fully executed. So, remember to get us the completed documents in a timely matter.

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

**Next Meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2024  
9:30 – 11:00.**