

Minutes from CRP Advisory Committee Meeting

May 23, 2022

In Attendance:

DORS Staff: Scott Dennis, Jody Boone, Darlene Peregoy, Toni March, Wanda Peele, Randy Diehl, Patrick Peto, Kate Drake, Toni Cobb Cannon, Jessie Markum, and Derick Serra.

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

Introductions/Presentations

Scott Dennis (Assistant State Superintendent in Rehabilitation Services):

- The rate for Job Development and Job Coaching will increase July 1, 2022. The new rate will be \$60/hr. for all providers offering job development and job coaching (short term and/or Supported Employment). Look for an information bulletin in the near future that explains the new rate.
- Please submit all outstanding invoices for current fiscal year. This will assist in rolling out the new rate.
- Scott is in the process of reviewing the Milestone Rates (for EBPSE providers) and its structure with a possible modification to payments to be in line with DORS performance measures. This study is being conducted through San Diego State University.
- DORS is currently performing its three-year Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. Watch for surveys coming out shortly. The information you provide will assist DORS in determining resources and annual planning. The surveys and other forms of information gathering will move quickly. DORS must have a draft plan by late August to present to the Sate Rehabilitation Council for review and input.
- RSA Monitoring. DORS will participate in monitoring the first two weeks of August. This monitoring is virtual and may include some of our providers. DORS will reach out to providers to participate in this process.
- Data Analysis. The new Superintendent is very interested in performance data, especially CRP and service delivery data. DORS is experiencing a greater level of accountability through 911 reporting which is close to real time data.

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

- DORS is examining data from individuals who have exited DORS services. Specifically, the percentage of individuals in unsubsidized employment in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit. A data match is performed with data from unemployment that includes wages and employment information for three months of earning. The data also looks at median earnings at second quarter after exit.
 - For Program Year 2022 DORS goal is 43% of individuals exiting are earning wages in the 2nd quarter after exit. DORS is currently at 40%. At one year, 41% after exit. Currently at 41.5%.
 - Median Earnings are \$4,022 nationally at 2nd quarter. DORS is at \$4, 000,

- This heightened statistical awareness is causing us to re-define success. Previously it was considered 90 days of employment, Working towards meaningful and sustainable employment.

Darlene Peregoy (Director, Administration and Financial Services):

- COVID. Like the state of Maryland, DORS is experiencing a rise in covid cases. Just last week the state was at 6.37% and today it is at 8.39%. DORS has protocol for staff to follow. If they are not well, they are asked to please stay home. This is applicable to our provider community as well. When in doubt, it is preferred to reschedule an appointment when meeting with consumers to assure everyone is as safe as possible. DORS encourages the use of masks and social distancing when in offices and the use of home test kits. There is a third round of government issued free in-home test kits. These kits can be ordered at: www.covid.gov/tests
- DORS website has information available for our providers. This information can be found at: [CRP Resources \(maryland.gov\)](#).
- Ability 1 contract sites. DORS has noticed an increase in requests for medical and psychological documentation for individuals being placed at these contract sites. DORS will not schedule a psychological for this purpose. DORS is currently corresponding with the commission to verify whether a letter with the diagnosis and functional limitations will suffice.
- Maryland Works. Providers with Maryland Works contracts. When it is time for renewal of their cooperative agreements DORS will advise Maryland Works whether they are in good standing with DORS. Providers with contracts must be providing employment services for DORS as DORS does not provide approval of a CRP for the sole purpose of their obtaining contracts.

Jody Boone (Director, Office of Field Services):

- Unpaid internships are a great way to get work experience. Job Coaching can be provided for paid or unpaid internships.
- New Eligibility Unit now includes 5 districts and OBVS. DORS will be interviewing for an EDU supervisor next week, and a program manager and Administrative assistant in June. On June 1, 2022 individuals working in the EDS will be solely performing EDU responsibilities as many of them had carried dual caseloads since the beginning. By July 1, the EDU will increase the number of field offices that it will be performing the eligibility.
- Consumer signatures. During the pandemic DORS was able to grant an exception while teleworking whereby a consumer could “sign” by indicating approval in an email and through other means. This exception has expired. Since DORS staff have returned to their offices it is required that consumers sign all forms that require their signatures. This means that all work arounds including signing electronically with a stylus or a provider creating a digital account for a consumer cannot be accepted. An actual ink signature needs to be in place for all forms requiring a consumer signature. DORS is moving closer to being able to apply a digital signature to our forms. This feature will be coming in the near future.
- Survival Jobs. These jobs are defined as the consumer needing to work to make ends meet while participating in training. WIOA changed how DORS can provide services and under WIOA, DORS is able to provide both training and support for a consumer’s job to make ends meet. An individual’s case will remain open until training is completed. DORS is looking at developing a shorter-term Job Development and Job Coaching authorization package for survival jobs but for now, the service will look exactly like the current Job Development and Job Coaching service.

- Introduction of Jessie Markum. Jessie is the new staff specialist for Transitioning and PreETS.

Jessie Markum (Staff Specialist, Transitioning and PreETS):

- Currently reaching out to PreETS providers to get updated contact information.
- Providers may email Jessie with questions: Jessica.markum@maryland.gov
- Meeting with regional management to get a better picture of statewide services.

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

- OBVS continues to recruit providers for services to Blind and Low Vision individuals. Currently there are 9 program that provide service to individuals with blindness. These are providers that have received training from OBVS to receive the 25% incentive to work with individuals requiring specialized support.
- Toni encourages providers to consider the 25% incentive to provide services to Blind and Low Vision individuals.
- A reminder that annual training hours for approved providers need to be current. Please submit your hours to Mutassim Fadhil at muttasim.fadhil@maryland.gov.

Randy Diehl (Director of MIS):

- Portal – the portal has been updated to include the EDU and Regional Offices.
- Currently receiving lots of invoices (75-80 per day).
- Currently purging records in the portal that are 4 months or older for confidentiality reasons.
- Reminder to use the DORS feedback portal to report problems or issues.
Dors.portalfeedback@maryland.gov

Wanda Peele (Program Manager, Business Service Branch):

- PreETS Training has decreased.
- Held OJT information session last week
- Resume training is every other Monday. Providers are encouraged to send their employment staff. To register send Wanda an email: wanda.peele@maryland.gov

Provider Forum (Q & A):

Question was asked about when DORS will accept new proposals for PreETS. Jody responded that possible this summer. DORS continues to look at how PreETS services are being provided.

Paid Internships are not capped. They are individually evaluated based on the length of the program. DORS can provide job coaching support for either paid or unpaid internships.

WBLE. Length of program is set by RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration). Program is 8 weeks. A student can currently do more than one WBLE.

Portal – notification if rejected. DORS runs a discrepancy report where Staff can see which invoices were not paid. Counselors can respond to the discrepancies.

A provider expressed concern over delays in getting authorizations for PreETS students. These delays have exceeded a couple of months. Jody will look into this.

Mary Manzoni thanked DORS for including Maryland Works in the CRP Advisory Committee meetings. She mentioned that Maryland Works is hosting a DORS Report Writing training at Maryland Works on June 22.

John Katz from Sunflower Bakery noted an issue in receiving Job development and Job Coaching authorizations for their program participants as they are completing their training program. The program ends up paying out of pocket to begin the job development process. They are requesting the authorization prior to the individuals completing the program but are still not receiving them in a timely manner.

Mr. Katz also asked if there is a plan in the DORS offices to assume the counselors' case load when they are out with COVID.

The DORS waitlist for Category 2 going back to 2017, is at more than 2700.

Ideas for future provider training:

- DORS forms and how to complete them.
- General Information regarding referrals and authorizations
- Information about DORS. Online tutorials/webinars, service descriptions including the "why."
- WBLE billing training
- Invoicing requirements and the DORS Portal
- Specific Disability Populations
- Service approach and expectations
- Job development, Job Coaching/job detention
- DORS acronyms

Next Meeting is scheduled for September 19, 9:30 – 11:00.