

Minutes from CRP Advisory Committee Meeting September 19, 2022

In Attendance:

DORS Staff: Scott Dennis, Jody Boone, Darlene Peregoy, Tandra Hunter-Payne (Toni March), William Brownlee (Wanda Peele), Randy Diehl, Patrick Peto, Kate Drake, Toni Cobb Cannon, and Jessie Markum.

79 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):

- Federal Funds for FY 23 – Proposed budget an increase in funding is expected if FFY 22. Approx \$3.5 million dollars. No cuts expected.
- State Funds – DORS is able to meet Match and Maintenance of Effort.
- Commission to study DORS has formed. First meeting is scheduled for 9/29. The final report which is due by 3/15/23 with an interim report is due by 12/15/22.
- Two major activities occurred for DORS this past summer.
 - RSA Monitoring – 2 weeks of in-depth reviews. The first week include a fiscal review ad the second week, program review. DORS expects that changes in RSA guidance will result in updating DORS policy and procedures.
 - Statewide Needs Assessment – DORS received a lot of good feedback which will be incorporated into the Annual Plan and the Strategic Plan. The results of the Statewide Needs Assessment will be sent to RSA by 9/30/22.
- DORS is attracting and gaining rehab counselors with the increase in starting salaries. Currently there are over 30 vacant positions and almost all have been filled at present. Due to the increase in staffing, DORS is rolling people of the waitlist. DORS will clear 2017 by December and start of 2018 after that.
- DORS has a grant agreement with University of Maryland, Center for Transition and Career Innovation to do a rate setting study working with eligibility unit regarding PreETS and Expedited processing with the schools.

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

- An electronic Signature Tool has been obtained by DORS (Citrix). DORS is performing accessibility testing at present. Expects to roll out in the field on 10/01. Essentially, the process will include the counselor sending a document in email, the consumer endorses it, and receives information on what has ben signed. DORS is hoping this will increase efficiency.
- DORS Current WIOA performance indicators:
 - Employment Rate 2nd quarter after exit – This is obtained using a data match with unemployment. DORS Goal is 41%. In 2021 DORS achieved 40%.
 - Employment Rate 4th quarter after exit – Goal is 41%. DORS achieved 40\$ in 2021.
 - Medial Earnings at 2nd quarter after exit – in 2022 \$4,022; in 2021 DORS achieved \$4,100.

- Measurable Skills Gains – This is the percentage of individuals participating in education and training. In 2021 DORS achieved – 42.7%; in 2020 – 30%.
- The credential achievement Rate is the percentage on individuals who obtain diploma or credential within one year after exit.

Darlene Peregoy (Director, Administration and Financial Services):

- COVID. Like the state of Maryland, DORS is experiencing a rise in covid cases. The rate of positivity is approx. 9%. It was at 11% a month ago. Bivalent boosters are available.
- DORS website has information available for our providers. This information can be found at: [CRP Resources \(maryland.gov\)](#). This is where you will find the minutes to our CRP Advisory Committee Meetings, the dates for future meetings, updates on rates, policies, budget templates, and CIE Resources.
- 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 contacts must be providing employment services for DORS as DORS does not provide approval of a CRP for the sole purpose of their obtaining contracts.
- Darlene mentioned concerns of DORS around virtual job coaching and job development. DORS is concerned that with sole virtual job development and job coaching, an individual cannot be observed adequately and that it raises unrealistic expectation for many individuals in the expectation that they, too, will be placed in a virtual position, when most have not adequately explored what, if any, skills they possess to work virtually.

Jody Boone (Director, Office of Field Services):

- Eligibility Determination Unit – Derick Serra, Program Manager, oversees the EDU. Pamela Clyton is the Program Manager of the EDU. There are two supervisors: Trina Robinson and Elona Napoli. Two administrative aids and two more to be hired. Ten VR Specialists plus two additional counselors (to be hired) and Four part time VR Specialists. Currently ten field offices and OBVS are being sent through the EDS. By the end of the year, 11 more district offices.
- Staffing – Due to the increase in counselor pay, DORS has experienced a jump from 4 to 40 applications for a position. Currently 44 vacancies. Five were filled on Wednesday and 30 are in various states of recruitment. DORS reinstated four previous employees.
- Paid and Unpaid Internships – the policy for internships is in the RSM 2, Section 718 on the website. CRPS can help with job development for internships. DORS will provide job development hours (limited) to develop an opportunity. A fact sheet (RS7p) is available for employers that outlines the IRS Criteria (six criteria). Also, RS7m is an internship agreement. Some employers have a paid internship program. Placement and Stability fees are available on the website.
- RISE (Reaching Independence Through Self Employment) – DORS works with Psychometric Solutions to administer the self-employment program. Currently there are 72 participants. There are no set eligibility requirements, But the program typically looks for experience in the area in which self-employment is being requested. Counselors have a checklist of things to consider with individual to see if self-employment is a good fit.

- Jody responded to a question about a neuropsychological and whether they are required. It depends on the individual's status. There are no counselors in the EDS currently dedicated to TBI but there is a list of counselors (statewide) on the website that have that specialty. There is a counselor in the EDU that work with ABI previously.

Jessie Markum (Staff Specialist, Transitioning and PreETS):

- Providers may email Jessie with questions. Her contact information is: Jessica.markum@maryland.gov
- Jessi described the grant with University of Maryland CTCL. The focus of the grant is on internal PreETS services and consistency across programs and on methodology and Research. The goal is for DORS to receive a PreETS funding model. On 9/7 CTCL began doing intakes for all Pre ETS referrals. CTCL cannot qualify the students, they make the recommendation. To date there have been 127 referrals within the first two weeks of referrals to CTCL.
- Jessi is waiting to open up approval for additional PreETS services at this time. Proposals can be considered on an as needed basis.

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.
- As technical problems prohibited Tandra from continued reporting, Toni Cobb Cannon described the enhanced rate and how a CRP can add OBVS services to their fee schedule.
- CRPs need to submit their annual training hours for approved providers need to be current. Please submit your hours to Mutassim Fadl at muttasim.fadl@maryland.gov.

Randy Diehl (Director of MIS):

- Portal – no updates, no issues.
- Providers can use the email Portal to send issues and recommendations.
Dors.portalfeedback@maryland.gov
- Randy discussed an increase in PII breaches. Please don't use email to send confidential information. Email is not encrypted. Use the portal to respond to DORS. If DORS staff are sending confidential information through email, please let them know not to do it

William Brownlee for 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. Their focus is on disability awareness.
- The Business Liaison visits the AJCs weekly. AJCs offer career exploration and access to computers, printers, copiers, etc.
- 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):

A discussion was held related to the virtual services described under Darlene Peregoy's section.

- Providers felt that there is a place for this service, especially when an individual does not want to disclose.
- Perhaps there is a possible hybrid version. Criteria and guidelines would have to be developed.
- Service should consider client and employer preferences and employer preferences.

A question was asked about authorization turn-around time. Sometimes it feels like a very long time to get a continuing or new authorization.

- The turn-around time for an authorization varied depending on counselor tenure and amount of authorization. In general, it shouldn't take more than 3-4 days. Reach out to the office supervisor if it is taking longer. If adding a service not already on the IPE, there will be additional time to get the OPE updated.

**Next Meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2023
9:30 – 11:00.**