

Division of Rehabilitation Service  
**CRP Advisory Committee Minutes**  
February 23, 2021

**Attendance:** 101 participants were in attendance (including DORS staff). All CRPs were invited.

**Presenters:**

**Scott Dennis, Assistant State Superintendent**

- General Assembly is in session
- Budget (2021)
  - No cuts
  - Able to meet federal mandates/federal match
  - Good status
- Budget (2022)
  - Budget is under review during the general assembly
  - Expect a slight increase in federal dollars
- Received some hiring exceptions. Needed after staff turnover.
- Portals (on-line referral and invoicing/reporting)
  - Continue to look at ways to improve
  - Welcome feedback on portals
- MSDE
  - Dr. Salmon is retiring
  - Looking for a new Superintendent (replacement)
  - Decision should be made by June, 2021
- Field service office
  - Offices will be downsized and/or merged
  - Staff will have hybrid schedules (in-person and onsite)
  - First office to close = Salisbury (Eastern Shore)
  - Decisions will be made as DORS approach the end leases, now through 2027
- WTC
  - Some in-person, hybrid services are being provided
  - Sephora (warehouse) training currently being offered

**Jody Boone, Director of Office of Field Services**

- Although offices will be downsizing and merging, there will continue to be space available as a resource room
- Offices will be downsized by 35% – 50%
- Office space will a model of office sharing and “hoteling”
- Offices will have work stations for consumers, a space for consumers to virtually meet counselors, employers, etc.
- Experienced some turnover; at least 30 hiring exceptions pending
- Invoices are being processed faster. DORS has no control of the release of payments from the Comptroller’s office
- Anticipating opening in-person services for students by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Staying in alignment with the opening of school systems and watching the positivity rate.
- Harford County remote WBLE opportunity offered to two students (pilot program)

## **Darlene Peregoy, Director of Administration and Financial Services**

- Chair of the Pandemic Task Force
  - Currently the state is in category 1C of the vaccination distribution plan
  - Some counties will alert you when you are able to get the vaccine
- The State will have a limited supply of vaccines for State employees. So far DORS has submitted 44 names of employees to receive the vaccine. The names that are on the priority list are employees providing in-person services.
- Cooperative Agreements continue to be monitored and updated. Please make sure contact information is current. Please be responsive to the Staff Specialists seeking to renew Cooperative Agreements
- Virtual services have a positive response. In-person services were approved in July.
- Continuously seeking to refine the referral process with Optum; ongoing discussions.
- Selected DORS staff are required to participate in Vocational Rehabilitation training modules. DORS was awarded a grant for the training.

## **Toni March, Director of Office for Blindness and Vision Services**

- Continue to encourage non-blind providers to consider providing services to consumers who are blind/low vision
- 25% increase/enhanced rates (up from 15%) for providing job development and job coaching services to consumers who are blind/low vision (for providers who are non-blind CRPs.
- Virtual training completed and updated. This training is for non-blind providers. Contact Muttasim Fadi to inquire about or schedule the training at [elmutassim.fadi@maryland.gov](mailto:elmutassim.fadi@maryland.gov).

## **Patrick Peto, Program Manager- Quality Assurance, Policy & Planning**

- See attached statistics
- Thanked the CRPs for the great work they provided

## **Wanda Peele, Program Manager of Business Service Branch**

- Business Service Reps created 29 Pre-ETS trainings (once final touches are applied they will be available)
- Created Federal Resume Training to be presented to OBVS and Field Services
- Created disability awareness/ethics trainings for the American Job Centers

## **Randy Diehl, Director of MIS**

- Reporting/Invoicing portal
  - 13,300 submittals from CRPs to DORS
  - 7,740 submittals from DORS to CRPs
  - Dramatic decrease in portal questions in the Feedback Mailbox
  - Discrepancy report created in November
    - Ran bi-weekly
    - Compare invoices to payments not submitted
  - Issues are resolving and the portal is working well
  - Alliance Enterprises and DORS are in the process of developing a new portal that can upload, track and integrate with DORS current case management system (AWARE). This portal will eventually replace the current portal, after running both simultaneously for a period of time. Expected to be released in mid to late Spring.

## **Derick Serra, Program Manager – Technical Assistance Branch**

- RISE - The Reaching Independence through Self-Employment (RISE) Program is a self-employment initiative for consumers sponsored by DORS through an outside vendor. This program is renewed with a new vendor.
- 25% increase/enhanced rates for providing job development and job coaching services to consumers who deaf or hard of hearing. Provider must have a staff person proficient in ASL (certain standards and skill sets must be met).
- Currently in the hiring process of a Statewide Coordinator for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Deadline for applications is 3/11/21.

## **Jill Hill, Staff Specialist, Transition and Supported Employment**

- DORS continues to not accept proposals for non-solicited Pre-ETS services (effective March 2020)
- Currently serving over 10,000 students and youth
- Potential to serve over 22,000 students
- Goal: to have the Pre-ETS program revamped by August 2021

Toni Cobb-Cannon and/or Kate Drake welcome suggested topics for the next meeting.

The next meeting's scheduled date is: to be determined (within the next three-four months).

Minutes are emailed and posted on DORS website.

## **DORS Statistics Reported in Meeting**

- 299 Consumers successfully exited since 10/1/20
  - Average wage at exit: \$14.97
  - Average hour/week at exit: 28.3
- From federal reporting:
  - 2nd Q after exit wages= \$13.13 (\$4,091.58 quarterly wage)
  - 4th Q after exit wages= \$14.20
  - Wages 2nd & 4th after Exit= 363
  - Retention with same employer 2nd and 4th Q after exit= 294
- Agency- 5035 new applications in last year; Referrals- 9575 Referrals received in last year
  - 883 Applications from 1/1/21 to now.
  - 1820 Referrals from 1/1/21
  - 14,988 vendor authorizations in last year
- Agency 20,085 total cases open
  - 10,361 25 and Over
  - 10,670 Age 24 and Under
- Currently Open: 4618 PET - 15622 VR