

# **DORS 2018 Public Meetings Notes**

**DORS and the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council held two public meetings in 2018. One on June 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM and one on June 27<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 PM. Both meetings had a call-in, teleconference option and ASL interpreters were provided in-person. The meetings were advertised on the DORS website and Facebook page, and in each DORS field office. Approximately 20 people attended; all were DORS staff. No issues or concerns were raised.**

## **NEWS**

### **Sue Page Retirement**

The Maryland State Department of Education's, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) Assistant State Superintendent, Sue Page (DORS Director), is retiring, effective June 30, 2018. DORS Business Services Manager, Scott Dennis, has been appointed Acting Assistant State Superintendent (DORS Director), while a search is conducted for Sue's replacement.

## **PROGRAM UPDATES**

### **New Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Requirements (Scott Dennis)**

The Rehabilitation Act allows for the establishment, development and the improvement of the Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP). The Workforce and Technology Center (WTC) is considered a Public CRP. As such there are certain requirements that must be met in order to establish, develop or improve WTC. One of those requirements is evidence of a public meeting for the establishment, development or improvement of a CRP. Therefore, DORS is using the 2018 public meetings to discuss capital improvements that DORS will need to make in order to maintain the WTC going forward.

In the State fiscal year 2019, DORS is planning to replace the water treatment feeder system that provides the water to WTC's two main boilers used for heating in the winter and the summer boiler that is used to provide domestic hot water during the spring and summer months. The estimated cost to replace this feeder system is between \$55,000-\$60,000. This system was installed approximately 20 years ago and is now coming to the end of its useful life.

The second capital improvement is to rebuild the two chillers that are used to cool the water that is used to air condition WTC in the spring and summer months. The two chillers were installed approximately 20 years ago and the useful life can be extended by replacing and rebuilding critical components. The estimated cost would be between \$15,000 to \$20,000.

DORS will be asking for prior approval from the Rehabilitation Services Administration for these two capital items.

### **Customer Service Surveys & MSRC QA Initiative**

(John Stem, DORS Program Manager, Rehabilitation Services Quality Assurance & Jeff Moran, Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, Chair)

DORS has historically collected information regarding customer satisfaction only after an individual's case was closed. In April 2018, DORS began using an on-line customer satisfaction survey, sent to a random 5% sample of eligible individuals with open cases, as well as to all individuals with cases closed during the previous quarter after receiving planned services.

This survey was developed in collaboration with the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC) because customers requested the opportunity to provide feedback when their cases are open, and not only after their cases are closed, during the latest Comprehensive Assessment of the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities in Maryland in 2016. This survey will be used on a quarterly basis, during January, April, July, and October. Individuals randomly selected to receive the survey receive an email and/or a letter inviting them to take the survey either on-line or by telephone. The survey remains open for 3 weeks, and, after the survey closes, individuals who wish to provide feedback may send feedback to the DORS mailbox.

Individuals may respond anonymously, unless they wish to talk further with someone about their experience with DORS, in which case they are asked to provide their name and contact information. All requests for follow-up are immediately distributed by the review instrument to a Program Manager to provide or facilitate follow-up. During the first round, we received 216 responses from 1,952 potential respondents, which we considered a promising beginning. The next round of surveys will take place in July 2018.

#### **Quality Assurance Case Reviews (John Stem)**

- Current cycle began in February and concludes last week of September.
- DORS has 24 districts, so two or three Districts are reviewed each month.
- Review teams consist of 4-members: The QA Program Manager, the AWARE and Program Evaluation Staff Specialist, a Client Assistant Program staff specialist, and a Regional Administrative Supervisor.
- Reviews take 2 days; 35 cases reviewed-some open and some closed.
- At the end of the second day, there is a wrap-up meeting with the District Office staff, during which general observations are shared and a full report is sent to the Regional Director the next week. For areas where need for improvement is indicated, Regional Directors prepare a quality improvement plan with the district reviewed. These plans have focused primarily on staff training and procedures for documenting completion of required activities.
- After all district reviews are complete, statewide data will be reviewed with the MSRC Policy and Quality Assurance subcommittee, which may then make recommendations to the MSRC.

#### **NEW Supported Employment Policy (John Stem)**

During the past two months, DORS has been providing training for counselors and CRPs on updated DORS supported employment policy, resulting from changes within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 and from subsequent RSA monitoring in 2017. The good news is that DORS is now able to provide supported employment services for individuals for whom SE was previously unavailable. Specifically: DORS is able to prepare plans to provide supported employment services for individuals who require these services, even before the availability of long-term funding is verified, as long as there is a reasonable

expectation that natural supports will be available to provide ongoing supports after DORS funding for job coaching discontinues.

DORS may provide extended SE services for individuals less than age 25, who WIOA defines as “youth”. DORS may provide funding for extended supported employment services for up to 4 years or until the youth turns 25, or until an alternative long-term funding source or natural supports become available. Under no circumstances, may DORS provide extended services funding for supported employment job coaching for an adult.

These two updates have resulted in counselors adjusting their decision-making around whether to provide supported employment services, in that the first question used to be: “Is long-term funding for on-going support services available,” and, if yes, then they would prepare a supported employment plan. Now, the first question is “Does the individual need supported employment services”, and, if yes, then “How will these services be provided or paid for.” There is also a greater emphasis on ensuring that the individual maintains employment stability before closure for at least 90 days after transitioning from DORS-funded job coaching to extended services funded by another source.

To operationalize these changes, DORS has been updating its policy and procedures, including updates to forms and the fee schedule, to partner agreements, and within the DORS case management system. DORS has one last local training on June 20th on the Eastern Shore, and then will provide one last “mop up” training from 9:00-12:00 on June 29th at WTC or by Skype for those who were unable to attend previous local trainings. Policy changes become effective July 1st, which is the earliest counselors, may begin writing IPEs and drafting authorizations with these updates in mind.

## **Program Updates**

### **Jean Jackson, Director, Workforce & Technology Center (WTC)**

WTC has served 1,314 consumers in the past year and is on-goal for serving consumers who are blind, deaf, or on the Spectrum.

WTC and CVS Health partnered to develop and implement a retail training academy and graduated its first class in April. WTC is working on partnerships with several area businesses in hopes of developing a warehouse technician training academy.

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

There are three components to OBVS services: The Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) Program, Maryland Business Enterprise for the Blind (BEP), and vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. VR has 957 open cases and ILOB has 511 open cases.

BEP has 40 licensed, blind managers, 71 facilities, and the 2017 class had three participants who are currently in the internship phase of training. Additionally, 5 candidates have been accepted for the 2018 class.

OBVS' Pre-ETS summer program has 21 students enrolled and the year round program has 21 students

**Jody Boone – Office of Field Services (OFS)**

OFS has 15,398 open cases and 2,565 individuals in delayed status.

OFS has completed Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partnership trainings with its WIOA partners. Supported Employment trainings have also been completed for DORS staff and community rehabilitation partner (CRPs).

Twenty-one Maryland counties are participating in the Summer Work-Based Learning Experience program for area youth.