DARS Maywill Office, Richmond, Virginia

Tuesday April 18, 2017 10:45 AM

Meeting Minutes

**Members Present**: Robin Metcalf, Chuck McElroy, Phil Nussbaum, Mike King, Sharon Bunger, Chris Lavach, Megan Bergen, Nova Washington, Linda LaMona, Greg Ellison, Tammy Rucker for Rachel Rounds, Michelle Flynn, David Gusler, Lance Wright, Stephanie Lau and Jan Williams for Natalia Yu

**Members Absent**: Gary Cotta, Emily Gebhart, Marshall Henson, April Pinch Keeler, Natalia Yu, Dan Reichard, Rachel Rounds,

**Guests Attending**: Kwaku Agyeman, George Homan, Jason Harper, Carey Yates

**VTC Sites:** Not available for this meeting

**DRS Staff Attending**: Kathy Hayfield, Mark Peterson, Donna Bonessi, Dale Batten

**10:45 am – Full Committee Call to Order Robin Metcalf**

* Introductions
* Review and approval of draft minutes from January 10, 2017 meeting

**DRS Directors Update** **Kathy Hayfield**

Kathy Hayfield, Director of the Division of Rehabilitative Services, stated that new Order of Selection (OOS) categories for VR became effective April 17, 2017. There are now three instead of four categories; Most Significantly Disabled (MSD), Significantly Disabled (SD), and Non-Significantly Disabled (NSD). In addition, the SD category was opened on April 15th; approximately 800 people can be removed from the waiting list as a result. The goal is to clear the waiting list by the end of June. There are currently over 18,000 people being served in the VR system with a number of people in employment status.

Pre-employment transition (Pre-ETS) services are up and running. DARS has hired 8 of 10 new counselors to facilitate Pre-ETS and to serve students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR. Transition counselors will provide Pre-ETS services to those students with disabilities who are current VR clients.  Kathy stated that DARS will likely reach out to ESOs and CILs in the future to develop and provide Pre-ETS programs.

Kathy Hayfield announced that as of July 1, 2017, no additional enrollments into LTESS will be allowed for sheltered employment services. She also stated that DARS is putting together a plan to increase the use of LTESS for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE).  LTESS currently supports individuals in both sheltered and supported employment options. 50% ($2.8 mil) of all LTESS dollars are used in Sheltered/Group options. Kathy also discussed the need for federal and state employment funds to be used for CIE.  Facility-based, center-based and most group services do not meet that definition.

Donna Bonessi discussed that several organizations that have begun to offer Supported Employment Services leading to Competitive Integrated Employment services that had not previously offered them. DARS is working with organizations that make us aware of transition plans, to ensure no loss of LTESS dollars during that transition. While dollars will be used for reallocation purposes at the end of the year, the organization will begin the next FY with the full allocation they started with in FY 2017.

**WIOA Updates Catherine Harrison**

Catherine Harrison updated the group about WIOA. She spoke about competitive integrated employment. The primary focus in WIOA is on youth with disabilities to prepare them for competitive integrated employment. The website WINTAC.org is the VR technical assistance website and has good information for all programs.

**Legislative Updates Committee Members**

No data report available

**Situational Assessments Robin Metcalf**

Robin reported that TCG have experienced DARS not paying for situational assessment (SA) development. Mark Peterson and Dale Batten discussed that SA development can be funded if there is a specific need for an individual and DARS does not fund SA development as a standard practice. Mark Peterson stated BDM’s and placement counselors can help with SA development. However all SA development should be discussed with the counselors at the time of referral and that SA development should be agreed upon then.

**Section 511 Update Donna Bonessi**

Donna Bonessi stated DARS has contracted with The Partnership for People with Disabilities at VCU to provide career counseling and information and referral services to about 2100 individuals. The training is geared towards individuals with MSD. ESO’s should notify DARS if training is needed as DARS will not reach out to see if training is needed.

**Customized Employment Mark Peterson**

Mark Peterson spoke about Customized Employment. He has been facilitating an advisory committee made up of DBVI, DBHDS, DOE and DARS representatives. Griffin- Hammis is a nationwide training organization who DARS will be contracting with to provide statewide training.  The seven Districts will each receive 2-3 day training. Each training session will include about thirty people to include teachers, ESO’s, DARS, DBVI, and waiver providers. The training will consist of face to face training, technical assistance, and brain storming, working with mutual clients to develop competencies. Training will result in a National ACRE Certificate upon completion. Each district will emphasize team building. Griffin Hammis will also provide webinars on basic key points about Customized Employment to establish foundational knowledge across the Commonwealth.

**LTESS Restoration FY 17 Donna Bonessi**

Donna relayed that $200,000 has been restored to LTESS and we are awaiting our Fiscal Department to allocate the funds. This will be done prior to the end of the fiscal year.

**Funding Sub-Committee:**

Phil Nussbaum spoke about funding for situational assessments. The committee needs to look at ways to improve approving more hours or days for community work adjustment.

**Public Policy Sub Committee Report: Lance Wright**

The public policy committee discussed potential areas of focus for next year.

**Nominations Sub-Committee: Megan Bergan**

Megan stated the committee received 10 nominations for the 5 upcoming vacant positions. Five of those nominations have been selected and are awaiting approval from the Commissioner. The new committee members will be present at the July 11 meeting.

**Public Comment:**

**Meeting Dates 2017 – July 11th, October 17th**

Meeting Adjourned: 12:43 p.m.