



Division of Rehabilitative Services

Employment Service Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC)

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

In-Person Meeting Location: 1602 Rolling Hills Dr Henrico, VA 23229

Minutes

Members Present: Alan Hargraves, Joanne Aceto, Chris Lavach, Chuck McElroy, Shirley Lyons, Jim Fenerty

Members Absent: Jason Harper (personal)

Committee Vacancies: 4

DARS Staff Attending: Kathy Hayfield, Anita Mundy, Dale Batten, Julie Jacobs, Donna Bonessi, Richard Kriner, Meghan Cox, Charlotte Arbogast

Full Committee Call to Order and Introductions

Alan Hargraves, Committee Vice- Chair

Alan Hargraves called the meeting to order at 10:39 a.m. and welcomed members and guests.

Approve Meeting Minutes from January 9, 2024, and Current Agenda

Alan Hargraves

The Committee reviewed a draft of the meeting minutes dated January 9, 2024, and the agenda for today's meeting.

A motion was made by Chris Lavach and seconded by Joanne Aceto to accept the agenda as written. All members present voted in favor to accept the agenda as written.

Chris Lavach commented on what he felt to be a discrepancy in the January 9 Minutes regarding the Prompt Payment discussion. A motion was made by Shirley Lyons to delete the sentence "Her research discovered that incoming authorizations have increased by twenty-two thousand in a little over a year, resulting in many offices falling behind in payment due to staffing shortages." Ms. Lyons recommended that the sentence be changed to read "Her research discovered that incoming authorizations have significantly increased, resulting in many offices falling behind in payment due to staffing shortages." Shirley Lyons then made a motion to accept the Minutes as amended, Chuck McElroy seconded the motion. All members present voted to approve the Minutes as amended.

Public Comment***Alan Hargraves***

The ESOSC offered three opportunities during the meeting for public comment. No members of the public in attendance made remarks. Public notice was posted prior to the meeting with the opportunity for the public to submit written comment via a variety of means by April 1, 2024. Anita Mundy shared comments made by Stacy Chapman of Didlake Inc. regarding the use of projected LTESS-EES balances. Ms. Chapman suggested utilizing some of the funds for Community Support Services for those individuals who do not have a support system in place. The Committee discussed this suggestion and has taken it under advisement.

Update on Reappointment/New Appointment Statuses of ESOSC Committee Members***Anita Mundy***

Anita Mundy reported that, as of this meeting, there have been no additional appointments to the Committee. Ms. Mundy will continue to monitor and provide updates to the Committee.

Status Update on Recommendations Previously Made by the Committee***Anita Mundy*****10/11/2022 Recommendation 7 (Approved/Ongoing)**

The Committee recommends that stipends in the amount of \$2,500 each be paid to ESOs for each staff member who successfully completes the WISA training to compensate ESOs for lost revenue due to staff time away from billable activities and is contingent on the availability of funds. (Motion put forth by Chris Lavach and seconded by Shirley Lyons. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried).

Update 04/02/2024- As funding permits, DARS plans to reimburse organizations whose staff successfully completed the WISA training through Cornell University and earned a WISA credential, in Quarter 4 of SFY24. Organizations that did not submit Spending Reports for funds received for Capacity Building (Rounds 1 & 2) will not be reimbursed. Presently there are 11 Spending Reports that have not been submitted. Not all have staff who received WISA training, but there are some. Final notice that these reports are due was sent out to these ESOs with a due date of 4/5/2024.

01/10/2023 Recommendation 1 (Approved/Ongoing)

The Committee recommends that DARS offer grants of up to \$50,000 per organization, up to \$1,000,000, to be used for capacity building for employment services personnel. The application process should be simple and justify how the funds will be used for capacity building. Outcomes will be reported at the end of 6 months. Additionally recommended that a second round of disbursements if funds are available. The first round to be paid out by April 30 and second round to be paid out by June 30, 2023, pending the availability of funds. (Recommendation made by Shirley Lyons, seconded by Jim Fenerty. All members present voted in favor of this recommendation-Lavach, Harper, Hargraves, Fenerty, Aceto, Lyons, Hoer, and McElroy.)

Update 04/02/2024- As stated above, 11 organizations have not submitted Spending Reports for funds received.

01/10/2023 Recommendation 2 (Approved/Ongoing)

The Committee recommends that DARS create a service specifically for EES services to support activities for individuals transitioning from Group Supported Employment, center-based, or facility-based employment, into community-based employment. (Recommendation made by Stephanie Hoer, seconded by Jason Harper. Members in favor: Lavach, Harper, Hargraves, Fenerty, Aceto, Hoer, and McElroy. Lyons abstained.)

The Committee originally recommended that the E1200 service code be set up as an individual service code, with reimbursement at an hourly rate. The Committee recommended on 01/09/2024, that DARS expand the service description to allow for the E1200 service to be delivered in a Group Setting of no more than 7 individuals in a group and reimbursed at a Daily Rate. Chris Lavach made a motion for DARS to establish a Group Rate for no more than 7 individuals in a group, based off the E1200 service description, and reimbursed at a Daily Rate. Joanne Aceto seconded the motion. Lavach, Aceto, McElroy, Hargraves, Harper voted in agreement of the motion. Lyons abstained. DARS will establish a group code for this service.

Update 04/02/2024- Service Code E1201 was created and eligible ESOs may now use this code when providing E1200 services in a group setting (no more than 7 in a group). ESOs seeking to use this code must submit a request to have it added to their approved services.

To date 15/73 participants enrolled with an E1200 code have billed a total of 22.25 hours for SFY24.

07/11/2023 Recommendation (Approved/Ongoing)

The Committee recommends that DARS conduct a pilot to increase employment services to individuals with Medicaid Waiver funding. This pilot will allow LTESS funding to be utilized to fund staff travel that is over one hour, one way, from the employment staff's starting point. Current LTESS providers who serve Medicaid Waiver participants are eligible. Providers that participate in this pilot will sign an agreement stating that they will continue services if LTESS funds can no longer support staff travel. The pilot will be reviewed quarterly by the ESOSC and DARS. (Motion put forth by Shirley Lyons and seconded by Alan Hargraves. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried and was immediately approved by DARS Commissioner, Kathy Hayfield).

Update 04/02/2024- To date, 19/22 participants enrolled have utilized the E6030 code totaling 178.4 hours used for SFY24.

01/09/2024 Recommendation 1 (Approved/Ongoing)

A motion was made by Shirley Lyons to add BNAFSH as a LTESS provider once CARF accreditation has been achieved and if funds are available. BNAFSH has two vendor ID's, and each location will receive five-thousand dollars for the remainder of the year. Joanne Aceto seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor and motion carried. DARS will seek approval from Commissioner Hayfield to add BNAFSH to the LTESS roster, upon successful CARF accreditation and as funds allow.

Update 04/02/2024- CARF accreditation has not yet been achieved. LTESS funds have not been allocated.

01/09/2024 Recommendation 2

A motion was made by Joanne Aceto and seconded by Alan Hargraves for DARS to offer funds of up to \$50,000 per organization, up to \$1,000,000, to be used for capacity building for employment services personnel. The application process should be simple and justify how the funds will be used for capacity building. Outcomes will be reported at the end of 6 months. The Committee also recommended that organization that have not submitted Spending Reports for previous funds received, not be eligible to receive further relief until these outstanding reports are submitted and pending the availability of funds. Funds may only be used for expenses incurred for the delivery of employment services. Funds cannot be used for expenses incurred for other service lines, such as day support services, or residential services.

Organizations accepting funds will be required to submit a detailed accounting of how funds were spent. All members present voted in favor of this recommendation.

Update 04/02/2024- This recommendation was not approved. DRS is requesting additional recommendations of how these funds can be better utilized.

LTESS-EES SFY24 Third Quarter Spending Report, Comparisons, and Projected Balances

**Donna Bonessi,
Director, ESSP**

Ms. Bonessi reviewed the LTESS-EES SFY24 Quarter 3 Spending Report, Comparisons, and Projected Balances. Quarter 3 total LTESS-EES projected balance is \$1,452,632.69. EES expenditures for Quarter 3 were at 40% of what was anticipated. LTESS expenditures for Quarter 3 reflect 66% of what was expected for the Quarter. EES expenditures are the same as reported in SFY23, while LTESS expenditures increased by 4% from SFY23.

Third Quarter Ending February 28, 2024			
	EES	LTESS	Total
Expected Expenditure	\$ 642,784.00	\$ 1,546,892.00	\$ 2,189,676.00
Actual Expenditure	\$ 326,179.34	\$ 1,384,732.42	\$ 1,710,911.76
3rd QTR Bal 02/28/2024	\$ 316,604.66	\$ 162,159.58	\$ 478,764.24
YTD bal 3rd QTR			\$ 1,452,632.69
Final balance after 3rd Qtr			\$ 1,452,632.69

SFY24 Projected Balances, Future Use of Funds, and Recommendations to DARS

Alan Hargraves and Committee

The Committee discussed alternatives for the utilization of projected balances. Discussion included how Community Support Services are believed to be a needed service and a possible good use of these funds. Behavior Supports was also discussed to provide support for those utilizing long-term follow-along services. Reimbursement for CARF accreditation and expenses related to the accreditation process were discussed.

A motion was made by Shirley Lyons and seconded by Chuck McElroy that LTESS-EES funds be made available to all eligible Employment Service Organizations, up to \$10,000, to be used for costs related to Employment Services accreditation. This is for expenses paid to CARF and not to cover internal expenses. Surveys must be completed between June 1, 2023 and May 31, 2026 to be eligible for this reimbursement. This is a one-time reimbursement for the achievement of a 3-Year accreditation. All members present voted in favor of this recommendation. Commissioner Hayfield was present during discussion and approved this recommendation.

A motion was made by Shirley Lyons and seconded by Joanne Aceto to amend the ongoing/approved 07/11/2023 Recommendation where the Committee recommended that DARS conduct a pilot to increase employment services to individuals with Medicaid Waiver funding. This pilot will allow LTESS funding to be utilized to fund staff travel that is over one hour, one way, from the employment staff's

starting point. Current LTESS providers who serve Medicaid Waiver participants are eligible. Providers that participate in this pilot will sign an agreement stating that they will continue services if LTESS funds can no longer support staff travel. The pilot will be reviewed quarterly by the ESOSC and DARS. (Motion put forth by Shirley Lyons and seconded by Alan Hargraves. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried and was immediately approved by DARS Commissioner, Kathy Hayfield).

The recommendation made by Ms. Lyons at the meeting today was to amend the previous approved recommendation that will reduce the required one hour of travel time one way to travel that is over 30 minutes, one way, from the employment staff's starting point. All members present at today's meeting voted in favor of this recommendation. DARS Commissioner, Kathy Hayfield, approved this recommendation immediately after the recommendation was made by the Committee.

A motion was made by Shirley Lyons and seconded by Chuck McElroy recommending that DARS expand allowable activities under LTESS-EES funds to include brief intervention/time limited services to help an individual maintain job stability resulting from unforeseen circumstances. DARS will determine what the additional allowable activities may include and will update the service description to reflect these changes. All members present at today's meeting voted in favor of this recommendation. DARS Commissioner, Kathy Hayfield, approved this recommendation immediately after the recommendation was made by the Committee.

Lastly, Alan Hargraves made a motion and Shirley Lyons seconded, that DARS investigate capacity building in underserved areas and how LTESS-EES funds may be used to support this. All members present approved this recommendation.

Commissioner's Updates

Kathy Hayfield, DARS Commissioner

Commissioner Hayfield stated how pleased she is with the work of this Committee and is eager to see these recommendations implemented. The Commissioner reported that the VR Program is stronger than ever. Wages are higher and individuals are getting employed. She continues to challenge organizations to assist individuals in gaining employment in jobs with career paths. Commissioner Hayfield is aware that there are projected balances for LTESS-EES funds, however, she is unable to approve funds where outcomes are not being shown. She praised the Committee for the creative ideas that are being generated.

Upcoming Agenda Items and other Business

Committee

Merging LTESS-EES funds Discussion

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:09 p.m.

The next meeting of the Employment Service Organization Steering Committee is scheduled for July 9, 2024. The Committee will meet from 10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. or until all business has been conducted.