



## Division of Rehabilitative Services

### Employment Service Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC)

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

In-Person Meeting Location: 8004 Franklin Farms Drive Henrico, VA 23229

### Minutes

**Members Present:** Alan Hargraves, Joanne Aceto, Chris Lavach, Chuck McElroy, Greta Harrison, Chris Martin, Shana Boutchyard, Stephanie Porter-Lopez, Jason Harper

**Members Absent:** Shirley Lyons, Jim Fenerty

**Committee Vacancies:** None

**DARS Staff Attending:** Kathy Hayfield, Anita Mundy, Dale Batten, Donna Bonessi, Catherine Harrison, Julie Jacobs, Dionca Coleman

#### **Full Committee Call to Order and Introductions**

***Jason Harper, Committee Chair***

Jason Harper called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. and welcomed members and guests.

#### **Approve Meeting Minutes from July 9, 2024, and Current Agenda**

***Jason Harper***

The Committee reviewed a draft of the meeting minutes dated July 9, 2024, and the amended agenda for today's meeting. A motion was made by Chuck McElroy and seconded by Shana Boutchyard to accept the minutes as written. All present voted in favor to accept the minutes as written. A motion was made by Greta Harrison and seconded by Chris Lavach to accept the amended agenda as written. All members present voted in favor to accept the agenda as amended.

#### **Public Comment**

***Jason Harper***

The ESOSC offered three opportunities during the meeting for public comment. Public notice was posted prior to the meeting with the opportunity for the public to submit written comment via a variety of means by October 7, 2024. No public comment was submitted prior to the meeting and no public signed up to speak at the meeting.

#### **Officer Election**

***Jason Harper***

A motion was made by Joanne Aceto and seconded by Greta Harrison to nominate Chris Lavach as Chair and Chris Martin as Vice Chair. All members present voted in favor to Approve these nominations. Newly elected officers will assume their roles at close of today's meeting.

**Vote to accept Changes Proposed to Electronic Participation & All Virtual Meetings as Reviewed at the Previous Meeting**

**Anita Mundy**

Anita Mundy reviewed the changes proposed to the Electronic Participation and Meeting Policy that were reviewed at the July 2024 meeting. A motion was made by Chuck McElroy and seconded by Chris Martin to approve changes proposed to the Electronic Participation and Meeting Policy as reviewed. All members present voted in favor to accept these changes.

**Status Update on Recommendations Previously Made by the Committee**

**Anita Mundy**

**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 discussed the E1200 service code initially be set up as an individual service code, set up for reimbursement at an hourly rate. The Committee is recommending that DARS expand on 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 10/8/2024 –**

There was no usage for E1200 or E1201 in Quarter 1 SFY25

**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 10/08/2024-**

**E6030 use for Q1 SFY25**

6 Organizations utilized this code.

692.25 billable hours

Total Reimbursed: \$50,276.53

That is an increase of 2 organizations using this code. Total reimbursement for this quarter increased by almost \$11,000 from last quarter.

The Committee did not request that DARS track EWISA services, however, Anita Mundy ran a report for SFY25 Q1 and noted that 419 EWISA services were provided to participants in in long-term follow-along this

quarter. Six organizations provided the service with two of these organizations utilizing about 77% (321/419) of the funds (TCG-189 & PWC-132). Total Billable Hours is 315.45. Total amount billed for EWISA services this quarter is \$24,978.42

DARS will continue to track this service since a substantial increase in EWISA services was noted.

**04/02/2024 Recommendation 1 (Approved/Ongoing)**

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 CARF 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.

**Update 10/08/2024-** Organizations who achieve CARF accreditation between May 15, 2024 through May 15, 2025 are eligible for CARF cost reimbursement. This will be Round 2. There are a couple of organizations that have been surveyed and accredited and are waiting reimbursement. Several ESO's have had their CARF survey pushed back several months. DARS will monitor and plans to reimburse eligible organizations by December and then again before May 15, 2025, prior to the end of SFY25.

**04/02/2024 Recommendation 3 (Approved/Ongoing)**

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.

**Update 10/08/2024-** This recommendation is still under consideration. No feedback has been provided to DARS from the Committee or Public. DARS continues to encourage feedback which should be sent to Anita Mundy.

**04/02/2024 Recommendation 4 (Approved/Ongoing)**

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. DARS Commissioner, Kathy Hayfield, approved this recommendation immediately after the recommendation was made by the Committee.

**Update 10/08/2024** – This recommendation is still under consideration.

**LTESS-EES SFY25 First Quarter Spending Report, Comparisons, and Projected Balances**

***Donna Bonessi, DRS Director ESSP***

Ms. Bonessi reviewed the LTESS-EES SFY2025 First Quarter Spending Report, Comparisons, and Projected

Balances. Below is the Quarter 1 SFY25 YTD Summary that reflects a Quarter 1 balance of \$336,233.56. The total Year-to Date balance is \$6,680,329.06.

<b>Year to Date Expected vs Actual FY 2025</b>			
<b>First Quarter Ending August 31, 2024</b>			
	<b>EES</b>	<b>LTESS</b>	<b>Total</b>
Expected Expenditure	\$ 642,784.00	\$ 1,471,914.50	\$ 2,114,698.50
Actual Expenditure	\$ 352,965.88	\$ 1,425,499.06	\$ 1,778,464.94
Balance on 8/31/24	\$ 289,818.12	\$ 46,415.44	\$ 336,233.56
<b>Final 1st Qtr Balance</b>			<b>\$ 336,233.56</b>

**Commissioner’s Updates**

*Kathy Hayfield, DARS Commissioner*

Commissioner Hayfield participated in the ESOSC meeting and reported to the Committee that DARS is closing out a successful year. There has been an increase in the number of people successfully employed and the average earnings are \$15.00 an hour. Earnings increased about \$1.00 per hour, however, there was a decrease in hours worked. The committee discussed possible impacts to the decrease in hours worked such as social security benefits, job types, etc. In SFY 24, DARS spent more in case service dollars, with no increase in VR dollars to the agency. She informed the Committee that the General Assembly is approaching and there is no legislation related to DARS. The Commissioner reported that the recommendation made by the ESOSC in July 2024 to combine LTESS and EES funds to allow more flexibility with the funds was submitted to the Department of Planning and Budget. Pre-ETS spending has been going well, with the goal of 15% being met for SFY23 and on track to meet 15% in SFY24 budget.

**Discussion of Projected Balances & Future Use of Funds, Recommendations to DARS**

*Jason Harper*

The Committee reviewed the YTD services and expenditures report and discussed how combining LTESS and EES funds will allow for more funds to be available to provide services. Currently, there are 22 organizations that are eligible to use LTESS and EES funds. Many of these organizations are utilizing LTESS funds for services that are eligible for funding through EES. If ESOs moved those eligible participant’s funding to EES from LTESS that would free up approximately \$1 million dollars that could be used to serve more individuals seeking competitive integrated employment.

A motion was put forth by Shanna Boutchyard and seconded by Greta Harrison which recommends that organizations that utilize LTESS funds for onsite and Group Supported Employment (GSE) services (E1100 and

E5107) transition all eligible participants currently being funded through LTESS dollars to EES dollars in order to free up LTESS funds for eligible participants. All future eligible participants of E1100 and E5107 shall be enrolled in EES for long-term follow-along services. DARS shall contact effected ESOs and provide information to them on the reason behind the request for this change, which will take effect on December 1, 2024. All Committee members present voted in favor of this recommendation. Commissioner Hayfield approved the recommendation.

The Committee also discussed the lack of funding available to ESOs when an organization is awaiting approval from DARS that a group site meets WIOA's definition of Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). During this waiting time organizations are not funded for services provided. The Committee discussed this financial hardship for ESOs. A motion was put forth by Greta Harrison and seconded by Stephanie Porter-Lopez that DARS add an allowable activity under EES where an ESO may utilize EES funds during this initial training period for a new GSE site while a CIE determination is pending. All Committee members present voted in favor of this recommendation. Commissioner Hayfield immediately approved the recommendation.

**SFY25 Future Meeting Dates, Upcoming Agenda Items and other Business**

***Committee***

SFY2025 Meeting dates agreed upon by the Committee: January 14, April 8, July 8, and October 14. The Committee has agreed to visiting WWRC on voluntary basis and opening the visit up to all ESO's. Anita Mundy will coordinate some available dates in 2025 and report back to the Committee.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

The next meeting of the Employment Service Organization Steering Committee is scheduled for January 14, 2025. The Committee will meet from 10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. or until all business has been conducted.