

**Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
Executive Retreat Minutes
August 28, 2018**

In Attendance:

Scott Dennis	Anil Lewis	Patrick Peto
Kim Schultz	Sue Schaffer	Megan Glaze-Keller
Jean Jackson	Jody Boone	John Stem
Sandy Bowser	Christy Stuart	

Welcome & Opening Remarks – Anil Lewis

Anil Lewis, Co-Chair welcomed the SRC Council members and DORS staff to the meeting and asked for everyone to introduce themselves.

Budget/Staffing – Scott Dennis

Budget:

DORS will have some carry over funds from FY18- Federal Fiscal funds – predominately Pre-Employment Transitioning Services.

FY19 Budget should be finalized sometime in November.

DORS is doing well with state funding for FY18 and we are above our match and maintenance of effort requirements. FY20 has just been submitted; we should know more regarding what our appropriations should be for FY20 sometime in January after the Governor has finalized his budget.

Staffing:

DORS continues to receive exception for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor series. This exception allows DORS to bypass the hiring exception process allowing us to hire counselors within 3-4 months of a vacancy.

At this time, DORS has not received word of any position abolishment.

Survey Information – John Stem

Quality Assurance Trends:

Quality Assurance (QA) – Case Reviews began in February 2018 and are expected to be completed by September 28, 2018. A team of four – John Stem, Patrick Peto, Megan Glaze-Keller, and another seat consisting of a rotating administrative supervisor.

As of today's date, 592 cases have been reviewed with six offices remaining. The next QA cycle will begin the first week of October and will end August 2019.

QA Results:

●Case Status

Service	36.70%	217
Employed	15.00%	89
Closed-Rehab	30.70%	182
Closed-Other	17.60%	104

●Application Date Match – 56% - The team was very stringent on this date and expects improvement on the next case review cycle as RSA is looking for consistency so they know that date is accurate.

●Referral to Application date within 30 days – 59% - explanation must be added if not entered on time.

●Initial interview considerations:

- Good emphasis on employment – 84%
- Fair emphasis on job readiness activities – 66.7%
- Fair emphasis on next steps – 73%
- Case note present or checklist – 84%
- Poor on required forms signed by intake – 61.7%

●Eligibility

- 71% - Good on timeliness – within 60 days of application date
- 69% - Eligibility date often not consistent with counselor signature on the printed signature and/or the supervisor's approval case note – issues resolved by recent policy change

●VR Needs Assessment and IPE Development

- 54% - Analysis of strengths, needs, barriers, etc.
- 65% - Evidence that consumer involved in planning process
- 56% - Functional limitations addressed
- 50% – Comparable benefits documented on IPE

●IPE Date – 54%

●Service Delivery

Two-thirds of the time goods and services were provided in a timely fashion

●Documentation of Wages

- 95% - confident that employment was CIE
- 85% - documentation of wages present in the case
- 50% - collected within 3 weeks of closure date

●Successfully case closure

- 90% - Substantial services contributed to outcome
- 89% - Employment maintained for 90 days
- 58% - VR Supervisor Checklist completed correctly

●Closed Other

51%

A report is generated and a wrap-up meeting is held with staff on the last day of the review to go over the highlights. The full report is given to the Regional Director and their quality improvement plan is due to the OFS & OBVS Director within 30 days.

The next QA Review cycle will begin at the end of September 2018 and reviewers will complete one full region at a time.

Wait List:

Roughly 1,650 individuals were sent surveys by letter and email.

“Do you want to remain on the Waiting List?”; responses were received from 340 individuals.

14-Day Did Not Respond Letter – 1,300 individuals received this letter

Survey Highlights:

- 207 – involved with other programs
- 91% - responded for themselves
- 9% - responded for someone on the waiting list
- 44% - are receiving SSI or SSDI
- 10% - are taking classes
- 5% - are receiving TANF
- 10% - are using the AJC
- 25% - counselor informed them about other services
- 67% - not employed
- 17% - employed part-time
- 11% - employed full-time
- 95% (319) - want to remain on the waiting list – most are requesting assistance with job search (resume development; interview skills; help looking for work), others are asking for training, several are waiting for WTC driver’s education instruction for individuals with autism.
- 5% (17) - asked to be removed from the waiting list

Customer Satisfaction:

1,653 individuals were invited to respond to the survey.

43 – OBVS with 11 complete responses

1,610 – OFS with 215 complete responses

The total response rate was 13.67%, which is 2% higher than the first quarter.

Survey Highlights:

- 56% –strongly agreed or agreed they would recommend DORS to a friend
- 29% – disagreed or strongly disagreed
- 65% - DORS staff are timely
- 64% - DORS staff work well with others to become employed
- 66.6% - DORS counselor is committed to them becoming employed
- 69.9% - DORS counselor involved in decision-making
- 84% - agreed they were involved in their IPE – 5% disagreed
- 43% - agreed they were satisfied with the preparation or employment they received from DORS;
29% disagreed

79% - agreed they were satisfied with their employment; 13% disagreed

The use of these three tools will allow DORS to identify certain issues within the VR Program and develop strategies for improvement.

Regional Directors will contact consumers that requested follow-up.

DORS Counselors have requested positive and negative feed-back from the survey.

The full Customer Satisfaction Survey results is available upon request.

Consumer Engagement – Scott Dennis

DORS uses the Waiting List Survey and Customer Satisfaction Survey in order to obtain feedback from consumers.

DORS is working on increasing our use of current information technology by implementing text messaging. Text messages will be sent out as appointment reminders. This feature is expected to be available within the next year.

DORS Staff and Alliance are working on programs that will capture the data necessary to contact consumers via text message – example – a text message will be sent notifying consumers of their scheduled appointments.

The Director of MIS, Randy Diehl is working on implementing other technologies to bring information into AWARE:

- Secure Fax Server

- Electronic Signatures

- External Portals

- Vendor Payment Information

911 Reporting – Patrick Peto

Maryland submitted quarterly Case Service Reports (RSA-911) during Program year 2017 on both open and closed cases. RSA provided visualization charts of Maryland data for quality review purposes. RSA-911 data charts reviewed focused upon VR Participant Characteristics and Disability, Agency funded Education and Training programs, Employment/Exit Outcomes, Pre-Employment Transition Service delivery, and WIOA program involvement. Discussion included data collection process, validation activities, and establishment of internal controls and procedures to ensure compliance with Federal requirements.

Supported Employment – John Stem/Jody Boone

During May and June, DORS staff and CRPs were trained on the changes to DORS policy and procedures related to job development and short-term job coaching. The State Supported Employment Services Program, authorized under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA (Act) provides grants to assist States in developing and implementing collaborative programs with appropriate entities to provide programs of supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, to enable them to achieve a supported employment outcome in competitive integrated employment. The new policy went into effect July 6, 2018 and can be found on the DORS website in its entirety.

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New Supported Employment Policy Highlights:

Job Development Prep – must be initiated within 30 days from the date of the authorization (8 hours' maximum: 6 hours for resume development, interview prep and cover letter creation and 2 hours for job placement plan development).

Interviewing Assistance – 5 hours at a time for accompanying consumer to an interview, transporting individual to/from interview)

Targeted Job Development- 20 hour increments as authorized.

Job Coaching – Job Log and the daily record of hours used for job coaching. During this report period the consumer's employment stable date is to be entered. Once the agreed-upon employment stable date, no further DORS-funded service is needed and placement incentives can be authorized.

Employment Stability Follow-Up – Available when short-term job coaching or intensive job coaching prior to natural supports was provided; not available when individual transitions to extended services funded by DDA or BHA. Report on employment information when the consumer reaches 90 days of stable employment.

Youth Extended Services – Job log and daily record of hours use for Youth Extended Services when these are funded by DORS at a monthly rate.

Fading Schedules:

Three new Fading Schedules were also introduced for Job Coaching:

Short-Term Job Coaching

Intensive Job Coaching Prior to Natural Supports

Intensive Job Coaching Prior to DDA or BHA Supported Employment Funding for Extended Services

Job Placement Incentives Highlights:

DORS recognizes the importance of assisting our consumers to reach a maximum level of independence by achieving the highest level of employment possible. DORS also acknowledges that, for many of our CRPs, finding positions beyond the standard entry level jobs can be difficult and time consuming. To facilitate this process, DORS has introduced placement incentives for CRPs working with consumers to obtain employment.

When job development is a service authorized by DORS, the CRP may request any or all of the placement incentives. Placement incentives will be paid after the DORS consumer maintains employment stability in competitive integrated employment for at least 90 days.

Incentive Options:

1. Designated Population Incentives
 - Ex-Offender Status
 - Specialized Disability Populations
 - Specialized Occupational Areas – S.T.E.M Occupations
2. Rapid Placement Incentive
3. 25% Above Minimum Wage Placement Incentive
4. Ticket to Work Substantial Gainful Activity Incentive
5. Supported Employment Natural Supports Incentive

DORS has required CRPs to provide quarterly check-ins. The first check-in will be at the end of September.

Post-Employment – John Stem:

RSA has made the determination that VR Agencies should not provide post-employment services after case closure. RSA states post-employment services should be provided between employment stability and closure. If the case is closed no more services can be provided unless the consumer reapplies. Discussion was held with SRC Council members for their views and feedback.

WINTAC has advised DORS to begin discussion regarding possible post-employment services when the consumer begins their 90 days of stable employment. RSA will provide further guidance in the upcoming months.

Strategic Plan – John Stem:

There was an initial discussion with several DORS staff and the SRC Sub-Committee to update the DORS Strategic Plan which will go into effect October 2018 – September 2021.

A few highlights include:

The DORS Mission and Organizational Values will remain the same.

Goals:

1. Organizational structure will support the success of DORS customers and accurate/timely disability decisions for claimants in a manner that reflects statutory and regulatory requirements, respect for customer and claimants, and equitable working conditions for staff.
2. Increased use of current information technology will continue to enhance administration of the program, provision of services, and achievement of employment for consumers and timely and accurate decisions for claimants.
3. Collaboration with partners identified within the WIOA Combined State Plan will be enhanced.
4. A strategy for increasing consistent staff training and practice will be implemented.

Discussion was held and updates were made. This draft will be presented to the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council at their September 12th meeting for their review and approval.

DORS Planning Meeting:

The DORS Planning Meeting will be held on October 17, 2018 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Baltimore Hunt Valley. MRC Council members are encouraged to attend.