



Department of Aging and Disability Services



Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

TEAMS Mtg. 1-3:30p.m.

SRC Minutes – March 26, 2025

Welcome and introductions: Chairperson, Kate Travis

attendees: Fred Brisbois, Contessa Big Crow- Jenkins, Jill Larmett, Laura Luna, Kate Travis, Brian Smith, Stephanie Trelli, Lauren Maurice, Tom Cosker, Carissa Decelles

Excused: Linda Rammler, Joe Wendover, Robert Nims

Volunteers: Tara Baldwin- Eversource talent acquisition recruitment

Other Participants: Nicole Rico Serrano, Daniel Parker, Kerri Fradette, David Doukas

Budget Review: Carissa D. – no changes to budget - remains the same

1:15 –Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation (MPTN) Presentation:

Nicole Rico Serrano – Director at MPTN, 5 yr grant, renewed in Oct. Active grant since 2002. MPTN Program Director. History and background of tribal rehab. Native Americans with cultural backgrounds. Issues and challenges: poverty, remote, high rates of disability is high. Underserved population. Culture background. Main goal finding or starting employment. Job readiness training. Currently serve 40 individuals with the goal of 15 individuals employed annually. PPT to be shared with group.

Client Assistance Program Updates: Tom C. – no trends or issues that they are aware of. Pre-ets receive them at the school. Access through the school, through BRS/BESB. Nothing big to report.

David Doukas, Director-Updates: VR uncertain about where it will land. Perhaps a new home from dept of Education. May result in flat level funding from 2024 in grant funding. Only received a portion of 2025 funding to date. Nationally centered on WIOA, not a lot of cracking open of language within VR, but maybe in other areas. Educating on the impact of lack of funding, good work and potential cuts, and impact of funding cuts. Doing our best to get through these tough times.

Question: CT as far as OOS, where is that headed? Kate T., Dave D. response: detrimental to the efforts of the program, waiting list to receive services, we are trying to



Department of Aging and Disability Services



figure out how to stay steady, our budget remains solvent through next fiscal year. We don't want to run out of money, we are not there yet, but we may be there 20-25. .

- Discussed CRP options to increase referrals and participation. Looking into reaching out to OPM – emergency provisions with CRP's that were not included in the original RFP. Hopeful that we can increase pool of CRP's to support applicants.
- Where are we with CRP's -looking for updates and understanding what the updates are knowing what is going on is helpful and procurement. Provided overview of BRS/VR stats and updates. See attached.
- Green staff, what is the plan to train them up? Introduce into caseloads, veteran caseloads, experience soup to nuts in case management. 2 years to get new counselors trained up, looking for a boot camp, fast track model to get them to production quicker.
- How can we help (SRC) on our end with CRP's creating a training on what "job ready looks like", it could differ depending on each individual. What does Job readiness look like. Support our partners and VR on AJC end. Jill L.
- Defining services statewide training, regional trainings for CRP's to deploy staff. Concept of job readiness .making quality referrals. Service delivery model.
- Brian S. - learning curve with new staff, training and DDS/BRS. Collaboration within agencies. Case managers length of time independent and autonomous – can be time consuming.
- Looking to increase capacity and work with new vendors. Some of them may be DDS consumers. Serving the same population. Waiver language we are going with to improve.
- Relationship with DDS/ bringing the right people to the table. Moving in a good direction. Looking forward to continue to build that. Braided services. BRS/DDS Great training.

SRC/BRS Marketing and Branding Discussion: A letter was written to Commissioner Porter and received feedback from her. Group determined it is what it is. We got a response and put it out there with our concerns and it has been noted.

Updates:

- **Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)** – sent to everyone for review. We will discuss at the next meeting.



Department of Aging and Disability Services



- **Consumer Satisfaction Survey** – working with BESB and CCSU to get a MOU underway to conduct a consumer satisfaction survey. Stephanie T. will work on getting feedback to the existing survey questions.

Kate T. - APSE focus this year national making sure VR and Medicaid funding is available. National APSE calls are great with information and good way to learn.

Committee Updates:

- Legislation and Policy - Tom C. -focused on working with Alicia K. dug in informed choice and training for VR counselors and informed choice and VR perspective, employment, etc, mtg and email, going well. Alicia great with accommodating SRC with information and feedback.
- Membership – Laura Luna chair –gathering members information via sharepoint doc. Term end dates.
- Program Review- update already given above.

Public Comment: DDS looking to hire seasonal workers, life guards, 3 camp openings

Next Meeting: May 14, 2025 1-3:30 via TEAMS; **New Member Training:** May 1, 2025 1-3pm. Via TEAMS