

**DD Workgroup Meeting – August 13, 2018  
Minutes/Meeting Summary**

Present (17):

Gabe Alborno	Department of Recreation
Kyeshia Barlow	WorkSource Montgomery
Nancy Corr	Parent
Claire Funkhouser	Parent
Scottie Holton	Parent
Annette Jolles	Parent
Vicki Kane	Department of Recreation
John Jay Kenney	Department of Health and Human Services/Aging & Disability
Shawn Lattanzio	Department of Health and Human Services
Tom Liniak	JSSA
Betsy Luecking	Department of Health and Human Services
Kim Mayo	Department of Health and Human Services
Karen Morgret	Treatment and Learning Center/Outcomes Services
Sarah O'Neil	MMARS RC
Marie Parker	TransCen
Kenneth Vinston	Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Carolyn Chen	Staff, Montgomery County Council

**Welcome and introductions;** Kim Mayo, Department of Health and Human Services, welcomed everyone and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

**Background Information Provided:** The Workgroup was provided with a draft report section on Employment prepared by Linda McMillan and Carolyn Chen, Council Staff with Kyeshia Barlow, WorkSource Montgomery, Lu Merrick, The Ivymount School, Karen Morgret, Treatment and Learning Center/Outcomes Services and Tom Liniak, JSSA.

The Workgroup was also provided the testimony of a TLC/Outcomes Services client, Brian Salewski, who testified in front of the Labor Department on the benefits of customized employment. The testimony was positively received and members were asked to submit additional client testimonies/stories to illustrate the employment issues highlighted in the report.

**Review of July 30, 2018 minutes/meeting summary:** The Workgroup reviewed the minutes/meeting summary. No changes were made. The Workgroup requested that the dates for future meetings and the tentative HHS and Council meeting dates for the report be included in the next agenda, so people can hold the dates on their calendar.

## **Discussion of Draft Section on Employment:**

The Workgroup focused their discussion on the Gaps, Innovations and Recommendations section of the draft report. The following issues and items were discussed to be incorporated into the report:

**GAP:** The transition from youth finishing school to being employed or matched with a program; where there is a waiting list and no movement. No clear pathway/eligible positions to transition from a County intern to full-time employment with the County.

**GAP:** Not clear on who is not being served; recommend a gap analysis to find out the specific need and demographic that is in most urgent need of employment services. Include individuals that are underemployed, low-income, Medicaid eligible, non-citizens to determine pathways to equitable access to services.

**GAP:** Uncertainty of DDA funding to existing agencies – Will agencies receive the same or adequate level of funding that will allow them to at least provide the same services to current clients? Concern that the level of funding will not be enough to achieve the wage goals set out for programs.

**Innovation:** Government programs or private-public partnerships that encourage employer tax breaks; discuss with County employers what the specific skills or tasks that they need and tailor training programs. Strengthening programs with WorkSource Montgomery and Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) to increase outreach to businesses. Model programs on national models of excellence in other industries and jurisdictions. Examples discussed: Project Search, Giant, Target, software industry, Philadelphia model.

Competitive advantages to hiring people with disabilities were discussed: high retention, punctuality, brand loyalty, morale, benefits of meaningful work to employees.

**Recommendation:** County Council to create a platform or formal process to promote/highlight/feature/award successful programs through Chamber of Commerce, awards events, media, etc. and focus on employers sharing their stories with other employers. Highlight employer tax breaks.

**GAP:** Discussion on senior employment – JSSA and TLC/Outcomes have seen increase in seniors seeking employment and expect the trend to continue. JCA holds 55+ senior expo and fair to show the value of a mature workforce. Leverage current events and expand to include seniors with disabilities; similar to what the Transition Fair is for transitioning youth.

History of CHI Centers and sheltered workshops – Simple manufacturing contracts where individuals were employed for specific tasks in large groups, employing profoundly disabled or institutionalized. Discussion on pros: highly structured environment with intense training to a group which allowed for efficiency and more

individuals with severe disabilities employed. Many individuals had behavioral issues and needed significant staffing for training. Value of environment to be relevant across age spans. Cons of sub-minimum wage and isolation. Sheltered workshop model was eliminated without an alternative employment situation. Many of these individuals may be on the DDA waitlist for services.

**Recommendation:** Determine a continuum of structure for employment from severe to mild disabilities. Conduct a survey of former employees of CHI Centers/sheltered workshops to find out where are they now and what employment or community services they need. Create a pathway for individuals with severe disabilities to access services.

Economic Development – Discussion on strengthening partnership with MCEDC to understand where employment with people with disabilities falls within the County’s strategy for bringing businesses to the County. Promoting the County’s employment rate for people with disabilities (58%) as the highest in the nation and compare to the national stats (70-80%) and how the percentage has not moved.

Basic understanding on minimum income to live and work in the County for people with disabilities and communicating with WorkSource Montgomery, MCEDC and other agencies.

**Innovation:** Focus on pre-employment, internships, summer jobs to lengthen the employment experience and increase training opportunities since it takes longer to learn a new skill or task.

Discussion of volunteer opportunities as an opportunity for more training that benefits nonprofit organizations in the County. Issue of insurance liability was brought up and the flexibility to bring a job coach, coordination with DORS and other pre-employment services and whether volunteer opportunities are valued the same as employed work.

**Recommendation:** MCPS has an insurance liability requirement that is higher than the State insurance requirement for agencies/nonprofits to place interns in MCPS (e.g. \$1M vs. \$400K). County Council can investigate this gap and either lower the insurance liability requirement or sponsor the insurance cost.

**Next meeting:** The next Workgroup meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 17, 2018 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at 401 Hungerford, 1<sup>st</sup> floor large conference room.