IDDC Policies and Programs Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: April 9, 2025
Time: 3-4 p.m.
Location: Virtual Meeting
Meeting Attendees: Lisa Lorraine, Rick Callahan, Najla Wortham, Onesta Duke, Crystel Britto, Susan Hartung
Guest Speakers: Stephanie Jones, Director of Innovation, DDA HQ
                         Antoine Williams, Programs Director, DDA HQ

Approval of March 4th Meeting Minutes

- March 4th Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved by the committee
- The MC-IDD Commission will be sharing recommendations made by the various committees with the County Executive and HHS by September or October 2025.

Draft Customized Employment Letter

- **The customized employment letter** was referred to the Commission for approval.
  - This letter was drafted by Susan Hartung to restart a customized employment program with the intention of creating long term positions that are customized for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
    - Due to budget constraints within the county, people with I/DD should be prioritized for existing vacant positions.
    - Montgomery County has always done a good job with employment program
    - The point of the letter is to alert the commission of the importance of employing people with I/DD.
    - The County will follow up with the MC-IDD Committee on how things are going.
    - The draft letter was sent via email to the group and will be shared with the County Executive.
  - The MC PIP (Montgomery County Customized Intern Project) is a program in Montgomery County, Maryland that offers flexible employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities to fulfill the work requirements of County. departments. This program will county more money which is an incentive for supporting the proposed employment initiative.

- MC PIP was dissolved and replaced by MC L.E.A.P.
- There are existing vacancies in the county that can be redirected and customized to employ people with I/DD.
- The letter will be revised to say "existing vacant position without additional cost to the county".
- First employment opportunities should be given to people with I/DD.
- There are no conflicts with meeting the DDA's competive integrated employment requirements.
- The committee voted on the draft letter with the proposed edits; letter was approved with the recommended edits.

Direct Support Professional (DSP) Initiative:

- College of Direct Supports:
  - Purpose: The college of direct supports is a resource for Direct Support Professionals to participate in trainings that provide them with specialty training to allow them to earn professional certifications.
  - A centralized place for service providers to assign and track staff training.
  - Who: The project vendor is currently the University of Minnesota. The university has experience creating learning platforms for a variety of states.
  - The platform includes ACRE Training. ACRE stands for the Association of Community Rehabilitation. This is a competency-based training for employment professionals. This is required by DDA for Providers who do Employment Services such as Job Development and Job coaching, etc.
  - The Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) is working in collaboration to provide the clinical portion of the ACRE training.
  - When: The platform is scheduled to roll out to all providers no later than the beginning of May.
  - **Question asked by Rick Callahan: Is this compatible with the current training platforms**? Elsvere will do this on a case-by-case basis, as all systems are different, so it can be requested and managed one-on-one with each agency that steps up
  - There will be no cost to providers
  - Will conduct a pilot with a group of people to look at the technical aspect of the e-learning platform and whether it's working correctly.
  - The e-learning platform may not be available to interface with existing provider software such as ICM, Therap, etc.
  - Most training included in the DDA Training Matrix are included

Legislative/Policy Update:

- Actions being taken on the federal level is alarming
- Expected cuts to Medicaid will impact people with I/DD
- Proposed changes about reverting back to the block capita cap which refers to a Medicaid funding reform that would limit federal funding to states. It combines elements of both block grants and per capita caps impacting states' ability to cover Medicaid costs and access to care.
- Maryland passed the Language Access Bill (was modified) requiring state agencies to have language access by 2028
    - Certain requirements will begin in January

Next Steps

- What are the things we should be advocating for?
    - Per Rick Callahan, recommendations were made regarding workforce development
    - Combining the various DSP initiatives to be introduced into high schools
        - Alignment needed to determine how it will flow together
        - Collaboration with Montgomery College
        - Meetings with WorkSource Montgomery to establish tangible items
    - Per Lisa Lorraine, the original DSP proposal was not specific enough and needed more tangible goals.
    - Crystel Britto is recommending utilizing surveys format to find out what is important to people.

Next Meeting

- 5/14/25, 3-4pm, Zoom