



**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities  
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary – December 12, 2016**

**Sue Hartung, Chair  
Larry Bram, Vice-Chair**

**Present:**

**Parents:** Betty Bahadori; Debbie Fickenscher; Susan Hartung (Chair); Monica Herring; Larry Bram (Vice Chair), Easter Seals; Reda Sheinberg;

**Organizations:** David Cross – retired MCPS; Rosemary DiPietro – Community Support Network; Susan Ingram – Community Support Services; Shawn Lattanzio -DHHS, Behavioral Health; Kim Mayo –Community Support Network Administrator; Venetia McDaniel – Total Care; Delverene Mills – Total Care; Lu Merrick – Ivymount School; Seth Morgan – Commission on People with Disabilities, Chair; Karen Morgret – Treatment & Learning Center; Sara O’Neil - MMARS; Margie Parrott - MCPS; Judith Pattik- DDA;; Marcia Rohrer – Division of Rehabilitation Services; Susan Smith - HOC; Kathryn Kersey – Support Broker; John Whittle, Service Coordination, Inc.

**Staff:** Betsy Luecking

**Welcome and Introductions**

Susan Hartung, Chair, convened the meeting and introductions were made.

**Montgomery County Internship Program for Individuals with Disabilities – Marie Parker, Montgomery County Public Intern Project (MCPIP), Transcen / WorkSource Montgomery**

**Brochure - Montgomery County Customized Employment Public Intern Project Description Q&A:**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Resources/Files/Staffing/Customized1.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Resources/Files/Staffing/Customized1.pdf)

Marie Parker explained that the Montgomery County Public Intern Project (MCPIP) initiative began in 2007 and was created based on the County’s knowledge that people with significant disabilities often have difficulty accessing County government positions. Since then, over 105 public intern positions have been created. All public intern positions are temporary and part-time (anywhere from 1 to 18 hours/week for 50 weeks (not to exceed 900 hours within one year) and can last for a period of no more than 2 years. The number of hours for each position will be determined by the individual needs of each department and the individual abilities/interests of each applicant.

Positions are created based on the needs of the various departments and are matched with individuals with those particular skills. Positions are announced to a large distribution list. Marie holds working interviews so applicants can show their skills and she assesses if they are the right fit for the position. Job coaches are invited to the interview.

County funding for the program is \$100,000 per year, which covers the salaries of the public intern participants. In 2007, public interns were receiving \$7.25 an hour. With the increases in minimum wage, that amount is now \$10.75 an hour and is expected to increase to \$11.55 when the minimum wage is increased again. Marie works with Karen Hochberg, Targeted Recruitment Specialist, Office of Human Resources, to assist public interns in finding permanent employment. Ten public interns have been able to secure permanent employment with the County through merit positions, direct voucher contracts, or existing contracts with temp agencies. Public interns may apply for internal only County positions for up to two years after exiting the intern program. Marie continues discussions with the intern’s Supervisor to make them aware when the position will be ending and if there is a possibility for permanent placement, which depends on the individual budget of the department. It also depends on the County’s current hiring. Between 2009 to 2011, the County had a hiring freeze and many Reduction in Force (RIF) were given job preference.

While positions do allow for interns to build skills, the applicants must meet the eligibility requirements of the advertised position. Marie will mark required skills with an asterisk. Skills not marked have flexibility to be learned on the job. The announcement explains the position and the requirements so applicants have time to practice prior to the working interview. The demand for employment far exceeds the supply of positions and there is still competition for persons with disabilities for intern positions.

Howard County Government was able to secure grant funding for an employment program that was managed by Humanim, a not-for-profit organization that serves individuals with disabilities. Susan suggested looking at grant funding to create similar programs in Montgomery County.

Several years ago, Marie approached Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) about replicating the public intern program within the school system, but they have a different hiring system than the County. MCPS decided to use funds to create a smaller program within MCPS.

In terms of creating awareness of hiring persons with disabilities and educating employers, Marie suggested engaging with private employers in the private sector. Each year, a business breakfast is held and at least 50 companies are invited to learn about the customized employment project. Customized employment can take a long time. She also noted that individuals without disabilities are also searching for employment, which increases competition for jobs. While employers may be hiring a diverse workforce, including persons with disabilities, oftentimes those individuals are placed into low paying jobs, which is a national and international issue.

WorkSource Montgomery's [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Youth Program](#) takes a customized approach for assisting eligible young adults ages 17 to 24 to gain the skills needed to succeed in today's workforce. Available services include: career development; job preparation skills; apprenticeship opportunities; interview coaching; training opportunities; and resume building.

There was a suggestion to maintain a database of employers would be interested in hiring persons with disabilities.

Betsy Luecking, Staff, has contacted Dr. Ellie Giles, CEO, WorkSource Montgomery, about the annual breakfast previously held by the Department of Economic Development that awarded employers that hired persons with disabilities. She has not heard back from her as yet.

It was asked if there were enough skills training available to individuals with disabilities to make them attractive to employers. Marie said individuals need to take a real life approach on how to learn skills. For example, applicants should practice the skills needed for a position prior to applying. Marie's job is to expose individuals to options they may not have thought they could perform.

Marie's office is located at the One Stop Center, which serves over 200 individuals per day, including people with disabilities. She noted that competition for jobs in general is very high.

It was asked if the low employment rate for persons with disabilities was correlated to lack of a high school diploma. Marie said this is not an issue as most employers, including Montgomery County Government, will accept a GED or certificate of completion as well as work experience in lieu of a high school diploma.

Marie reported that TransCen is starting to provide direct services. They have applied to be a vendor through DORS and also accepts private pay. She added that TransCen has worked with DORS since 2011 assisting eligible youth in Maryland gain work experience and explore career opportunities through a six-week paid summer internship. Needs to be more programs for the older adult groups. Marie offered to come and update the group anytime.  
[marie.parker@worksourcemontgomery.com](mailto:marie.parker@worksourcemontgomery.com).

Larry Bram, Vice Chair, reported that EasterSeals is developing a new internship program for persons with disabilities by forming a partnership with a provider that does hospitality training and certification.

EasterSeals also has an employment program for Veterans. As there have been some instances where there are not enough Veterans to fill the open position(s), some employers have been very open to hiring people with disabilities. These employers prefer working through one contact. While they accept job coaches on site, they do not want to be contacted by job coaches for positions.

It was asked if new businesses that register with licensing be given incentives to hire persons with disabilities.

**Update - Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) – Judy Pattik, Regional Director, Southern Maryland Regional Office (SMRO)**

Three more Transitioning Youth (TY) have been placed since last month bringing the total to 101 placed. There are 27 TY's that are still in need of placement – some have waiver issues, some have their service funding plan in process, 8 have not chosen a provider, and some may be refusing services. There are 96 current students preparing to transition for TY17.

SMRO is in the final stages of hiring new employees.

A 'meet and greet' event for individuals and families will be held at SMRO in Laurel on January 19<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. They will consider scheduling 'meet and greet' events in other counties if there is interest from the families. Event Flyer: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/SMROOpenHouse.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/SMROOpenHouse.pdf).

JVGA, a company that has been contracted by DDA to conduct a rate study, is expected to submit their report in March 2017. JVGA has cited poor provider response for their extended submission deadline.

There is no information regarding a post date for the 30-day public comment period for the draft of the Waiver Amendment #2.

**Update – Transitioning Youth (TY) – Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)**

Margie Parrott reported that MCPS continues to work with DDA and will meet with them next month to discuss TY.

MMARS reported that 14 TY16s still do not have placement due to some individuals being denied by providers or families not pursuing services. There are currently 44 TY17s for Montgomery County. 32 of those individuals have sent their choice letters.

**Update - Coordination of Community Services (CCS)**

**Total Care:** No update.

**MMARS:** No update.

**Montgomery County HHS:** No update.

**Chair and Vice-Chair Update:** None

**Upcoming:** Monday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The Committee will be meeting at the Rockville Memorial Library until May 2017. Address: 21 Maryland Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Rockville, MD 20850.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

Carly Clem, Administrative Assistant  
Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager  
Commission on People with Disabilities