



**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary – June 13, 2016**

Sue Hartung, Chair

Present: Lyda Astrove; Larry Bram; David Cross; Rosemary DiPietro; Camelia Fawzy; Claire Funkhouser; Simone Geness; Susan Hartung, Chair; Annette Jolles; Jay Kenney; Karen Lee; Kim Mayo; Venetia McDaniel; Lu Merrick; Seth Morgan; Karen Morgret; Alan Ofsevit; Sarah O'Neill; Margie Parrott; Judith Pattik; Nicole Sheppard; Susan Smith; Eldora Taylor
Staff: Betsy Luecking

Welcome and Introductions

Susan Hartung, convened the meeting and introductions were made.

Employment First in Maryland – Where We Have Been and Where We Are Going – Karen Lee, DDA Public Policy Fellow

PowerPoint: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/DDAC/EmploymentFirst.pdf

Karen Lee has been the Executive Director for SEEC for 26 years. She has been working for a year on loan from SEEC with the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) as a DDA Public Policy Fellow.

She discussed the various barriers individuals with developmental disabilities have when it comes to gaining meaningful employment.

On June 17th, Secretary Beatty and Deputy Secretary Simons will present the draft Maryland Strategic Plan for Employment First.

DDA makes up 1/27th of the State's overall budget.

In July, 2015 DDA and the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) held an Employment First Roundtable that was open to all. The Roundtable brought together interested stakeholders and groups to discuss employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. 150 individuals attended. Various Committees were formed that have been meeting for the last year developing goals and outcomes.

Judy Pattik is the Chair of the Transition Committee. Simone Geness and Margie Parrott are also a part of that Committee. The Committee is developing a pilot project with Howard Community College, Howard County Public Schools, vocational rehabilitation, DDA and provider agencies to demonstrate a best practice for Employment First.

Karen discussed the PROMISE (Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income), Grant which provides funding opportunities for states to improve the education and career outcomes of youth with disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI). MDOD is the lead agency for this initiative and DDA is a State agency partner. Other grants include DD Council grants. The MD DD Council has spent between \$400,000 to \$500,000 on system and organizational changes relating to employment and employment first.

DDA has been hosting [Employment First webinars](#) the 3rd Friday of every month for the last year. Approximately 250 individuals attend each webinar.

Karen spends three days a week meeting with various groups, agencies and organizations throughout the State.

Karen has met several times with the individuals who will be responsible for the new DDA funding system.

On June 27th DDA will be holding an Employment First Quarterly Statewide meeting. If you are interested in attending or would like to receive e-mail updates, please contact Karen.

Employment First will require providers to make organizational changes. Many providers do not have the capacity to institute an Employment First model.

The Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA) provides some funding and focus on employment of persons with disabilities.

Providers have been involved in Supported Employment since the 1980s. Assessments with an individual compares their ability to those in the general population.

Discovery is the first step in customized employment. Staff must identify what an individual is competent at, their skill levels, and what they can contribute in various familiar and unfamiliar environments. Through this method staff can learn the individual's ideal conditions of employment. There are eight people in Maryland who are certified to do discovery and an additional fifteen will be certified within the next two months. Capacity-wise – 11,500 individuals are currently receiving services, of which only 2,500 are employed. The discovery process should also be completed in the school system while readying them to transition.

DDA is applying for another grant that will assist young adults with intellectual disabilities who are attending post-secondary education to advance to employment.

State providers currently do not have the capacity to get everyone a job. The Department of Labor has funded a grant program that provides training and assessment to six community providers to build capacity and transform them to customized employment. Reorganization of these providers is taking a very long time.

In the U.S., it takes 18 months for the average person to find full-time employment. For someone who does not have a degree and minimal skills, this time frame is much longer.

DDA is working to implement a new funding system that would pay providers based on outcomes.

In 2013, DDA began collecting data from providers during the month of May and October. For every person that receives day or employment funding the provider must document how much money that individual has made during a continuous two-week period. Data includes the number of hours, the type of employment (including sheltered, contract, or self-employment), or volunteer work. Data has shown that individuals were working approximately four hours per week. The data system will go public later this year.

Questions:

- **Is there any thinking in regards to employing individuals in jobs that are not the typical 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.?** That is a barrier and has been discussed. There are approximately 12,000 individuals in the DDA day

habilitation system, with a quarter of those in the residential system. Typically, residential providers believe an individual should be out of the house from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Work settings are also changing as more people begin to work from home.

- **How can we advocate for the County to set aside jobs for persons with disabilities with contractors, such as cleaning buses or County garages?** While it may seem like a quick fix to employ individuals, it will not be meaningful or lasting employment if the individual does not want that type of job. They may require continuous job coaching.
- **What about Section 503 which requires a certain percentage of employees to have a disability?** The State of Maryland does have a set aside program, but it is important to reach out to small businesses. Individuals with intellectual disabilities have a common misconception that they will increase health or liability insurance costs, which is not true. They do, in general, decrease turnover rates and human resource costs. Montgomery County has one of the highest small business rates in the United States. There are only approximately 250 businesses that employ more than 250 individuals.
- **How will employment affect an individual's waiver eligibility?** Since they still have categorical eligibility they would qualify for the Medicaid buy-in program. DDA has saved \$1,000,000 this past year by having individuals approved for the Medicaid buy-in program.

DDA is looking to form a non-profit similar to [WISE](#) (Washington Initiative in Supported Employment) in the State of Washington. WISE is an organization that promotes equitable employment for people with developmental disabilities.

DDA will be holding a statewide conference in October.

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