



Division of Rehabilitative Services

Employment Service Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC)

Due to the active state of emergency, this is an electronic meeting pursuant to Item 4-0.01 of the 2020 Appropriation Act.

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Minutes

Members Present: Shirley Lyons, Chuck McElroy, Alan Hargraves, Joanne Aceto, Megan Bergen, Chris Lavach, Jason Harper, Robin Metcalf, Teresa Hall, Stephanie Hoer, Jim Fenerty

Members Absent: No members absent

Guests Attending: The ESOSC meeting was streamed live to You Tube for public viewing.

www.youtube.com/vadrs/videos

DRS Staff Attending: Kathryn Hayfield, Dale Batten, Donna Bonessi, Anita Mundy, Dionca Coleman (YouTube monitor)

Full Committee Call to Order and Introductions

Shirley Lyons, Chair

Chair Shirley Lyons called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. and welcomed members and guests. Shirley asked members and expected guests to acknowledge they were present when called.

Approve Meeting Minutes from January 12, 2021

Shirley Lyons, Chair

The Committee reviewed a draft of the meeting minutes dated January 12, 2021. The Minutes were approved with two corrections. In regard to approval of the October 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes section, notes were amended to read that the motion was made by Chuck McElroy to approve the minutes as written. Jason Harper seconded the motion.

A second correction was made to show that the motion to table the discussion of the 70 Hour Minimum EES Work Requirements was made by Chuck McElroy. Stephanie Hoer seconded the motion.

Approval of Agenda

Shirley Lyons, Chair

The Agenda was presented for approval. Joanne Aceto made a motion to accept the Agenda as proposed. Chris Lavach seconded that motion. The Agenda was unanimously approved by the Committee members with no changes.

Public Comment

Shirley Lyons, Chair

Public notice was posted prior to the meeting. Public comment was solicited and requested to be submitted by April 6, 2021. Employment Service Organization (ESO) Executive Directors, LTESSE/EES Vendor Admins, and those who had previously requested to be on the email distribution list were

notified that public comment was being accepted. Anita Mundy reported that no members of the public submitted public comment.

Emergency Relief Funding Update

Anita Mundy, DARS Staff

During the January 12, 2021 ESOSC meeting, the Employment Service Organization Steering Committee reconfirmed its recommendation to Commissioner Hayfield for DARS to allocate an additional round of emergency relief funding to ESOs from the Second Quarter of LTESS/EES FY21. Commissioner Hayfield accepted this recommendation and made available \$867,526 to eligible ESOs as COVID-19 relief funds for expenses associated with employment related services incurred during the second quarter (September-November 2020) of the 2021 LTESS/EES Fiscal year.

Funds were awarded based on the number of LTESS/EES individuals served by an organization from September 1, 2020 to November 30, 2020. During the months of September through November 2020, 3336 individuals received services from 57 Employment Service Organizations using LTESS or EES funds. Six organizations out of the fifty-seven did not accept relief funding and one organization out of the 57 was ineligible to receive an offer due to not submitting their Spending Report from Quarter 1. The funds were distributed on a per person basis, \$260.05 per person served in the Second Quarter (\$867,526/3336=\$260.05). Emergency Relief Funding totaling \$35,886.90 for Quarter 2 went unclaimed.

Third Quarter Spending Report with Breakdown by Organization & Projected Balances

**Donna Bonessi
Deputy Director, ESSP, DRS**

Donna Bonessi provided an update on LTESS/EES Third Quarter Spending for FY21 with breakdowns by organization. As of November 30, 2020, there is a combined projected balance for Fiscal Year 2021 of \$3.3 million for LTESS/EES funds. The significant balance seems to be a direct result of the COVID 19 pandemic and the job losses, layoffs and furloughs experienced by many people receiving services through both funds. A full detailed report and summary can be found on the DARS website at <https://www.vadars.org/essp/eso.htm>.

Year to date summary:

Year to Date Summary			
	EES	LTESS	Total
Expected Expenditure	\$ 1,918,646.25	\$ 4,565,676.26	\$ 6,484,322.51
Actual Expenditure	\$ 759,092.01	\$ 3,251,718.22	\$ 4,010,810.23
Balance as of 02/28/21	\$ 1,159,554.24	\$ 1,313,958.04	\$ 2,473,512.28
1st Quarter COVID Relief			\$ 758,661.74
2nd Quarter COVID Relief			\$ 795,753.00
Total YTD Balance			\$ 919,097.54

Use of LTESS/EES Projected Balance Discussion

Shirley Lyons, Chair

Discussion took place regarding projected LTESS/EES balances for FY21 and how these projected balance could be utilized. Discussion included the impacts of COVID-19 on the 3-Year Rolling Average that is used for determining ESO LTESS/EES funding allocations as well as how the projected balances could provide technical assistance to struggling organizations who have been impacted by the pandemic. DARS stated that technical assistance provided by DARS can be done

without any cost to an ESO and that the Agency will be conducting a technical assistance (TA) needs analysis of ESOs.

Prior to the next meeting, DARS will look at various scenarios regarding the 3-Year Rolling average and will share these with the Committee for recommendations. A motion was put forth by Joanne Aceto that DARS allocate a fourth round of Emergency Relief funds using the \$919,097 YTD balance. These funds will be distributed to ESO's based on number of people served using the current methodology. Chuck McElroy seconded this motion. A Roll Call vote was taken and all members voted unanimously to approve this recommendation.

The Committee unanimously agreed that DARS will contact all Active/Eligible LTESS/EES ESO's that have not utilized previous relief offers to determine if they plan to use the upcoming relief funding. If these organizations refuse the relief funding, the remaining funds will be divided by the ESO's who request this emergency relief.

LTESS/EES ESO Rate Discussion

Shirley Lyons, Chair

Donna Bonessi reported to the Committee that DARS is currently involved in discussions about ESO rate adjustments in general and that there will be more information coming out in May regarding this. The Committee discussed possible impacts to organizations in regard to the increases in the federal minimum wage and also how available overages could be used to bring organizations that have below normal rates, in-line with other organizations, so that their rates are more competitive. A motion was made by Chuck McElroy to put on record that the ESOSC is in support of rate increases for ESOs and that this overall increase in rates will help with utilization of LTESS/EES funds. Teresa Hall seconded this motion. All members voted in favor. Motion carried.

Commissioner's Update

Kathy Hayfield, DARS Commissioner

The Commissioner thanked the Committee members for their continued participation on this Committee and stated how much she has seen the benefits of their input, especially as everyone has tried to navigate the pandemic this year. The Commissioner stated that although VR Applications are down, this is similar to the entire country, and DARS is ramping up to begin referrals. She encouraged organizations to begin ramping up as well. Discussion took place about helping those customers who want to obtain vaccinations and who need assistance. DARS is asking clients if they want to be vaccinated as part of the Intake process (Vaccinate and Vote). Furthermore, they will assist individuals that need to secure their vaccination. She encouraged ESOs to support their clients to become vaccinated and to work with DARS to determine the best way to support each individual receiving services.

Upcoming Agenda Items, and Other Business

Shirley Lyons, Chair

The next meeting of the Employment Service Organization Steering Committee is scheduled for July 13, 2021. DARS will determine closer to the meeting date if this meeting will be held electronically or in person. Agenda items recommended for this meeting include: Q3 Spending Reports, Projected Balances, End of FY2021 Report, Recommendations for 2022 allocations, Emergency Relief Funds, and Roll-off of Committee member Appointments.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:21 p.m.