



Division of Rehabilitative Services

Employment Service Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC)

Tuesday, July 12, 2022

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

In-Person Meeting Location: 8004 Franklin Farms Drive Henrico, VA 23229

Minutes

Members Present: Shirley Lyons, Chuck McElroy, Alan Hargraves, Joanne Aceto (electronic participation), Chris Lavach, Jason Harper, Stephanie Hoer, Jim Fenerty, Jan Williams

DRS Staff Attending: Kathryn Hayfield, Donna Bonessi, Anita Mundy, Catherine Harrison

Full Committee Call to Order and Introductions

Jason Harper, Committee Vice Chair

Jason Harper called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m. and welcomed members and guests. Mr. Harper stated that Ms. Aceto, ESOSC Chair, requested to participate via electronic means from her home due to a medical/care giving obligation. Ms. Aceto also requested that Mr. Harper as Vice Chair facilitate the in-person meeting. There were no objections from the Committee members to this request. Mr. Harper welcomed new member, Jan Williams, to the Committee. Ms. Williams represents VaACCSES and is appointed by the Senate on Rules Committee.

Approve Meeting Minutes from April 12, 2022

Jason Harper

The Committee reviewed a draft of the meeting minutes dated April 12, 2022. A motion was made by Chuck McElroy to approve the minutes. Shirley Lyons seconded the motion. All members present voted to approve the meeting minutes.

Approval of Agenda

Jason Harper

The Agenda was presented for approval. Shirley Lyons made a motion to accept the Agenda as written. Stephanie Hoer seconded the motion. The Committee members present unanimously approved the proposed Agenda dated July 12, 2022.

Public Comment

Jason Harper

The ESOSC offered two opportunities during the meeting for public comment. No members of the public signed up to address the Committee at either of these occasions. Public notice was posted prior to the meeting with the opportunity for the public to submit written public comment via a variety of means by July 11, 2022. Anita Mundy reported that no members of the public submitted public comment prior to the meeting.

Review of ESOSC Committee Member Reappointment Statuses

**Anita Mundy, DARS Provider
Program Specialist**

Anita Mundy provided an update on receiving formal reappointment letters for Committee members Chuck McElroy, Stephanie Hoer, and Jason Harper. All were reappointed by the Senate on Rules Committee. The remainder of the members are waiting for notice of reappointment for a second term to the Committee. According to the ESOSC Bylaws, current members may continue to serve on the Committee until they are reappointed or a replacement is appointed. Committee terms began July 1, 2022 and will end June 30, 2025.

ESOSC Electronic Participation & Meeting Policy

**Catherine Harrison, Director of the Division
of Policy & Legislative Affairs**

Ms. Harrison provided an update to the Committee regarding the passage of HB 444 which made changes to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regarding electronic meetings and virtual member participation. A revised version of the ESOSC Electronic Participation & Meeting Policy was presented to the Committee that addressed the changes made by HB 444 related to electronic meetings and member participation. HB 444 as passed allows for electronic member participation if a member's principal residence is more than 60 miles away. There must be a physical quorum present in the posted meeting location. The law also allows for virtual public meetings under certain circumstances and within certain parameters. For example, the public body may hold virtual meetings no more than two times of all meetings held and these virtual meetings may not be consecutive with another all-virtual meeting, effective September 1, 2022. The proposed changes in the ESOSC Electronic Participation & Meeting Policy reflected these changes.

The Committee discussed pros and cons of meeting virtually. Ms. Harrison noted that if a virtual meeting is held, it should be preplanned so that there is sufficient time to post to the public a change in the meeting platform.

Chuck McElroy motioned to accept the revised Electronic Participation and Meeting Policy as proposed. Joanne Aceto seconded the motion. All members approved the motion. The policy adoption date is July 12, 2022 and the policy will go into effect on September 1, 2022. The Committee decided to postpone the development of procedures for electronic meetings until the next meeting.

State Budget Amendment Changes & Responsibilities of the ESOSC

Catherine Harrison

Ms. Harrison provided an overview of the new language that was included in the final biennium budget (SFY 23 and 24) in regard to the ESOSC's responsibilities. The language reads:

Q. The Employment Services Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC), as established in §51.5-169.2, Code of Virginia, shall report to and advise the Commissioner on policy, funding, and the allocation of funds to employment services organizations (ESOs) for Long Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services pursuant to § [51.5-169.1](#), Code of Virginia, **as well as all other services of which ESOs are current or proposed vendors.**

Legislation that was passed in 2019 limited the purview of the ESOSC to only LTESS-EES. This amendment expands the scope of the ESOSC to include other services of which ESOs are current or proposed vendors.

April 12 Recommendations to the Commissioner Status Report

Anita Mundy

Ms. Mundy provided a status report regarding the recommendations provided to Commissioner Hayfield upon the closure of the April 12 ESOSC meeting. Commissioner Hayfield approved all but one of the recommendations that were proposed by the Committee. Additionally, the Commissioner with a majority of the Committee’s input, approved the use of a portion of projected LTESS-EES balances to be used to provide WISA Training to staff of eligible organizations, and is contingent on the availability of funds.

Update on Recruitment, Onboarding, and Training Relief to ESOs

Anita Mundy

Ms. Mundy reported that a total of \$613,557.56 was distributed to 21 ESOs who requested Recruitment, Onboarding, and Training Relief. These funds were offered by DARS to eligible organizations to assist with offsetting expenses associated with hiring staff to meet capacity needs in order to continue to provide services. Requests from ESOs ranged from \$1,130.50 to \$147,245.65. The Committee requested that the relief breakdown be posted to the DARS website.

Update on Supported Employment Course Offering

Anita Mundy

In response to the first recommendation made by the ESOSC and upon approval of Commissioner Hayfield, DARS contracted with Virginia Commonwealth University to provide a 40 hour supported employment training course for up to 500 supported employment staff of eligible ESO’s utilizing SFY 22 LTESS-EES projected balances. The course began on June 13 with just under 150 students enrolled. As of this report 135 students remain enrolled- 22 paid spaces never logged into the course after registration, 9 spaces charged from withdrawn participants. DARS will follow up with VCU until the course ends. As a result of no shows and withdrawals there are 31 paid spaces that can be used in a future session.

LTESS-EES SFY22 End of Year Actual Statistics, Reallocations, and SFY23 Allocation Methodology

**Donna Bonessi, Director
Employment Services & Special Programs**

Ms. Bonessi reviewed the LTESS-EES Fiscal Year Spending Summary, Reallocations, and SFY23 allocation methodology which was based off the three-year rolling average. Below is the YTD Summary that reflects a final balance of \$876,882.43 of unspent funds. Final balances reflect an increased services trend.

| Year to Date Summary | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| | EES | LTESS | Total |
| Expected Expenditure | \$ 2,517,268.00 | \$ 5,856,256.80 | \$ 8,373,524.80 |
| Actual Expenditure | \$ 1,417,341.81 | \$ 4,815,791.00 | \$ 6,233,132.81 |
| YTD balance | \$ 1,099,926.19 | \$ 1,040,465.80 | \$ 2,140,391.99 |
| 1st Qtr EcRF | | | \$ 621,152.00 |
| 4th QTR Recruit and On Board | | | \$ 613,557.56 |
| SE Training VCU Course | | | \$ 28,800.00 |
| Total YTD Balance | | | \$ 876,882.43 |

DARS Rate Adjustment State Fiscal Year 2023

Donna Bonessi

DARS has approved a 5% rate increase for State Fiscal Year 2023. This rate will be implemented for most services provided by ESOs effective on July 1, 2022. As of this meeting, there are currently no updates for WISA rate increases.

Use of LTESS-EES Projected Balances Discussion & Recommendation

Jason Harper/Committee

Discussion by the Committee included conversation about using projected balances to offer stipends to ESOs whose staff successfully complete WISA training, similar to the stipends previously approved in Recommendation 2, for ESOs whose staff successfully completed the Supported Employment training course offered by Virginia Commonwealth University. The ESOSC will review if there is an outstanding available balance to offer stipends after the first quarter of the year. No additional recommendations were made by the Committee regarding projected balances at this time. The Committee will review progress of all previous recommendations as well as potential for additional recommendation for any SFY 23 balances at the next scheduled meeting.

Commissioner's Update

Kathy Hayfield, DARS Commissioner

Commissioner Hayfield participated throughout this meeting as updates were provided and discussion occurred about the role of the Committee. The Commissioner reported that out of all of the services provided in 2022, VR services accounted for 70% of case service funds spent. Approximately 10.8 million dollars was paid to ESOs for services provided to DARS clients, and an additional 5.8% of case service funds were spent on Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS). Commissioner Hayfield requested that the Committee be available to assist her on occasion by providing feedback on topics that come up throughout the year that may affect DARS services and ESOs. She may be requesting assistance for things such as analyzing gaps in access to services in order to make services stronger with less of a wait to obtain services provided by ESOs, along with building and maintaining relationships with the school system, especially during times when there is such a high turnover rate with teachers.

Upcoming Agenda Items, and Other Business

Jason Harper, Vice Chair

The next meeting of the Employment Service Organization Steering Committee is scheduled for October 11, 2022. The Committee approved the following 2023 meeting dates: January 10 2023, April 11 2023, July 11 2023, and October 10 2023. Meeting times will remain the same (10:30 am – 1:30 pm).

The Committee will review progress made in regard to the April 12 recommendations approved by the Commissioner.

The Committee will discuss gaps in service areas and the associated needs (such as outreach and marketing) with these to support individuals receiving services from DARS.

The Committee requests feedback on the capacity needs for PreETS services and IPS services so that they may support these efforts.

The Committee will review service needs of individuals with serious mental illness and how this Committee can work with DARS to improve services for these individuals.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Chuck McElroy to adjourn the meeting. All members were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m.