



Division of Rehabilitative Services

Employment Service Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC)

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

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

Minutes

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

Committee Vacancies: 3 (Jan Williams representing VaACCSES submitted resignation to the Committee today)

DRS Staff Attending: Kathryn Hayfield, Donna Bonessi, Anita Mundy, Dale Batten, Dionca Coleman

Full Committee Call to Order and Introductions

Joanne Aceto, Committee Chair

Joanne Aceto called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m. and welcomed members and guests.

Approve Meeting Minutes from January 10, 2023

Joanne Aceto

The Committee reviewed a draft of the meeting minutes dated January 10, 2023. A motion was made by Stephanie Hoer to accept the Minutes as written. Shirley Lyons seconded the motion. All members present voted to approve the meeting minutes as written.

Approval of Agenda

Joanne Aceto

The agenda was presented for approval. A motion was made by Stephanie Hoer to accept the agenda as written. Jim Fenerty seconded the motion. All members present voted to approve the agenda as presented.

Public Comment

Joanne Aceto

The ESOSC offered three opportunities during the meeting for public comment. No members of the public requested an opportunity to address the Committee at any 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 April 10, 2023. Anita Mundy reported that no members of the public submitted public comment prior to the meeting.

Update on Reappointment Status of ESOSC Committee Members, Conflict of Interest/Financial Disclosure Requirements

**Anita Mundy, DARS Provider
Program Specialist & Staff to
the Committee**

Anita Mundy asked the members of the Committee if everyone updated their annual Conflict of

Interest/Financial Disclosures. Members present confirmed that they had indeed fulfilled these requirements. According to the ESOSC Bylaws, current members may continue to serve on the Committee until they are reappointed, or a replacement is named. Committee terms began July 1, 2022, and will end June 30, 2025. Alan Hargraves and Jim Fenerty reported that they have received their gubernatorial appointments. There has been no notice of reappointments by the House of Representatives. Jan Williams, Senate appointee, submitted her resignation to the Committee. Today is her last official meeting.

Status Update on Recommendations Previously Made by the Committee

Anita Mundy

07/12/2022 Recommendation 1 (Approved/Ongoing)

The ESOSC recommends that DARS use LTESS-EES projected balances to contract with Virginia Commonwealth University to provide a 40-hour supported employment training course to 500 supported employment staff of eligible ESO's, contingent on the availability of funds. (Motion put forth by Jim Fenerty, motion seconded by Chris Lavach, unanimously approved by members present). (This recommendation will include DARS purchasing a block of slots to be used over the next fiscal year.)

Update: 04/11/2023- VCU Cohort 2 began January 23 and ends next week (4/17). Cohort 2 includes 22 non-completers from Cohort 1. DARS will receive a report from VCU once the course is finished and ESOs will be notified which participants successfully completed the certification.

07/12/2022 Recommendation 2 (Approved/Ongoing)

The Committee recommends that a \$1,000 per staff stipend be paid to ESO's whose staff successfully complete the VCU training and obtain an ACRE certification, to cover the costs incurred by ESO's, and contingent on the availability of funds for SFY22 and SFY23. (Motion put forth by Jim Fenerty, motion seconded by Stephanie Hoer, unanimously approved by members present).

Update: 4/11/2023- Once it is determined which of the individuals, who were given a second opportunity to successfully complete the course, received certifications, their organizations will be notified of this and the ESOs eligibility to receive the \$1,000 stipend.

07/12/2022 WISA Training (Approved/Ongoing)

In addition to the five recommendations made at the July 12, 2022, meeting, the ESOSC approved using part of the LTESS-EES projected balances to provide **WISA Training** to staff of eligible organizations. The WISA training is in addition to the recommendations that were voted on and approved by the ESOSC and is contingent on the availability of funds. Seven of Ten current Committee members voted to add WISA Training to the list of recommendations for approval. (McElroy, Lyons, Hoer, Harper, Hargraves, Fenerty, Bergen).

Update 04/11/2023- The classroom training of the WIP-C course was wrapped up on 4/4/23 and the exam for provisional certifications is this week. Those who receive a provisional certification will then have 3 months to complete a case study to receive the full credential. As of last update there are 30 participants participating in the course.

10/11/2022 Recommendation 1 (Approved/Completed)

The Committee recommends that the four organizations currently on the waitlist to receive LTESS funds be allocated \$5,000 each beginning December 1, 2022, to be used for the remainder of SFY23. These organizations will also be eligible to receive the full \$10,000 initial allocation for new LTESS providers in SFY24.

Update 04/11/2023- New organizations have been allocated LTESS funding and system training was offered to all. New organizations now have access to the LTESS-EES Requisitioning system. This recommendation will be removed from futures updates.

10/11/2022 Recommendation 2 (Approved/Ongoing)

The Committee recommends that DARS complete a midyear reallocation and pay \$1,000 stipends to ESOs for the 67 staff who registered in the Fall of 2022 for the Supported Employment course through Virginia Commonwealth University but who will not complete the course until Winter 2023, contingent on the availability of funds. (Motion put forth by Shirley Lyons and seconded by Chuck McElroy. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried).

Update 04/11/2023- The VCU Basic ACRE course ends 4/17, at that time DARS will know who from the initial cohort successfully completed the cohort and whose organization is eligible to receive the \$1,000 stipend.

10/11/2022 Recommendation 3 (Approved/Ongoing)

The Committee recommends that DARS use projected SFY23 LTESS-EES balances to fund tuition and stipends for 150 new slots in the VCU Supported Employment course. This recommendation includes increasing the ESO stipend to \$1,500 per staff successful course completion to compensate ESOs for lost revenue due to staff time away from billable activities and is contingent on the availability of funds. (Jason Harper initiated this motion. Shirley Lyons seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried).

Update 04/11/2023- As reported previously, the VCU Basic ACRE training course ends on 4/17. This second cohort had 50 new individuals enrolled, in addition to the 22 individuals who carried over from the first cohort. Once DARS receives a final report from VCU, DARS will be able to identify who completed the course. At that time DARS will determine which organizations are eligible to receive the \$1,500 (or \$1,000) stipends. Due to the high volume of participants who have dropped from the course, DARS will re-evaluate how future payment for enrollment will be conducted, potentially having ESOs pay upfront costs for staff training with DARS to reimburse upon successful completion of the course. DARS may also determine if available funds are better spent elsewhere.

10/11/2022 Recommendation 6 (Approved/Ongoing)

The Committee recommends that \$85,000 of the projected LTESS-EES balances be used to fund 60 ESO staff to complete WISA training offered by Cornell University and is contingent on available funds. (Motion put forth by Shirley Lyons and seconded by Jason Harper. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried).

Update 04/11/2023- The WIP-C course ran from 2/7/23-4/4/23. 30 slots were filled. Exams should be taking place this week and those who pass the written test will receive a provisional certification of completion. From there, they must complete a case study to receive the full certification. Participants have 3 months to complete the case study.

10/11/2022 Recommendation 7 (Approved/Ongoing)

The Committee recommends that stipends in the amount of \$2,500 each be paid to ESOs for each staff member who successfully completes the WISA training to compensate ESOs for lost revenue due to staff time away from billable activities and is contingent on the availability of funds. (Motion put forth by Chris Lavach and seconded by Shirley Lyons. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried).

UPDATE 04/11/2023- Stipend disbursement will be determined once participants complete the full course.

01/10/2023 Recommendation 1 (Approved/Ongoing)

The Committee recommends that DARS offer grants of up to \$50,000 per organization, up to \$1,000,000, to be used for capacity building for employment services personnel. The application process should be simple and justify how the funds will be used for capacity building. Outcomes will be reported at the end of 6 months. Additionally recommended that a second round of disbursements if funds are available. The first round to be paid out by April 30 and second round to be paid out by June 30, 2023, pending the availability of funds. (Recommendation made by Shirley Lyons, seconded by Jim Fenerty. All members present voted in favor of this recommendation-Lavach, Harper, Hargraves, Fenerty, Aceto, Lyons, Hoer, and McElroy.)

UPDATE 04/11/2023- This recommendation was approved by Commissioner Hayfield on January 30, 2023. DARS sent out offers to eligible LTESS-EES organizations on March 30. The deadline for ESOs to apply for capacity building funds was April 10. Twenty-four (24) organizations have applied for these funds. Estimated total of funds requested is \$1,250,000. DARS will review applications and intends to allocate the first round of funds by April 30. Since there is expected projected balances and initial ESO applications are estimated exceed the limit, Shirley Lyons motioned to amend the \$1,000,000 capacity building cap and raise it to \$1,300,000 to cover the initial requests. Jim Fenerty seconded the motion. All members voted in favor and motioned passed.

01/10/2023 Recommendation 2 (Approved/Ongoing)

The Committee recommends that DARS create a service specifically for EES services to support activities for individuals transitioning from Group Supported Employment, center-based, or facility-based employment, into community-based employment. (Recommendation made by Stephanie Hoer, seconded by Jason Harper. Members in favor: Lavach, Harper, Hargraves, Fenerty, Aceto, Hoer, and McElroy. Lyons abstained.)

UPDATE 04/11/2023- Commissioner Hayfield approved this recommendation. DARS has developed a Service Description and attached the service code E1200 to it. DARS has been testing the code in the LTESS-EES requisitioning system and is close to adding the availability of the code in the live system.

01/10/2023 Recommendation 3 (Approved/Ongoing)

The Committee recommends that DARS research how LTESS funds could be used to fund ESO staff travel to support individuals served using Medicaid Waiver. Staff travel time is not compensated by Medicaid waiver. This is specifically to provide LTFA services for individuals whose services are funded by Medicaid Waiver in rural areas. Criteria of eligibility will need to be determined. (Recommendation made by Chris Lavach, seconded by Jason Harper. Members in favor: Lavach, Fenerty, Lyons, Hoer, Aceto, Hargraves, and Harper. McElroy opposed.)

UPDATE 04/11/2023- Commissioner Hayfield approved this recommendation. DARS connected with DMAS through DBHDS and it was determined that there is no conflict for DARS to reimburse ESOs for staff travel when providing long-term follow along services to individuals who are funded through Medicaid waiver. DARS will begin to develop a Service Description and is

requesting input from the Committee on examples of what they believe to be important to include.

The Committee is interested in how DARS will determine “rural areas”. DARS will seek to clarify this and will begin to research how the census defines these designations. DARS will also connect with DBHDS to learn what ESOs are approved to provide waiver services.

LTESS-EES SFY23 Third Quarter Spending Report, Comparisons, Projected Balances and Mid-Year Reallocations

**Donna Bonessi, DARS Director
Employment Services and
Special Programs**

Ms. Bonessi reviewed the LTESS-EES SFY23 Third Quarter Spending Report, Comparisons, and Projected Balances. Below is the YTD Summary that reflects the third quarter balance of \$1,620,783.62

Third Quarter Ending February 28, 2023			
	EES	LTESS	Total
Expected Expenditure	\$ 642,784.00	\$ 1,546,892.00	\$ 2,189,676.00
Actual Expenditure	\$ 321,752.07	\$ 1,295,512.14	\$ 1,617,264.21
3rd QTR Bal 02/28/2023	\$ 321,031.93	\$ 251,379.86	\$ 572,411.79
YTD bal 3rd QTR			\$ 1,652,283.62
VCU SE /Cornell WISA			\$ 31,500.00
Final balance after 3rd Qtr			\$ 1,620,783.62

Commissioner’s Update

Kathy Hayfield, DARS Commissioner

The Commissioner announced that there will be a new Workforce Development Agency beginning July 1, 2023. This new Agency will not include DARS or DBVI. The new Commissioner for Workforce has not yet been appointed. The Virginia Employment Commission will narrow its focus and concentrate specifically on unemployment services. Eliminating 14c received a lot of attention this year. The Governor submitted amendments to proposed legislation and they are expected to pass. HB2153 regarding Alternative Hiring Practices was signed by the Governor. The Commissioner thanked all the members for their involvement with the General Assembly this year.

SYF23 Projected Balance Discussion & Recommendations

Committee

Discussion took place regarding the second round of projected funds that DARS may make available in June to aid ESOs with supported employment organizational expansion and capacity building. Committee members were concerned that ESOs did not completely understand how capacity building funds could be utilized and therefore did not fully take advantage of the first round of available funding. The Committee suggested that DARS host a Question & Answer session with ESOs to clarify how funding may be used. No formal recommendations were made at this meeting.

Other Business

Joanne Aceto, Chair

The Committee asked that DARS investigate how Pre-Employment Transition Services is guiding students involved in work experiences regarding earned income. It was reported that some students owed

unexpected taxes. The Committee asked for a response on whether DARS has been or can offer resources to educate individuals and families on this as it pertains to paid work experiences.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

The next meeting of the Employment Service Organization Steering Committee is scheduled for July 11, 2023. The Committee will meet from 10:30 am – 2:00 pm or until all business has been conducted.