



Division of Rehabilitative Services

Employment Service Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC)

Tuesday, January 10, 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, JasonHarper, Jim Fenerty, Stephanie Hoer

Members Participating Electronically: Chuck McElroy (medical) Charlottesville VA

Members Absent: Jan Williams

Committee Vacancies: 2

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

Full Committee Call to Order and Introductions

Joanne Aceto, Committee Chair

Joanne Aceto called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. and welcomed members and guests.

Approve Meeting Minutes from October 11, 2022

Joanne Aceto

The Committee reviewed a draft of the meeting minutes dated October 11, 2022. A motion was made by Chuck McElroy to strike the Table that was included in the draft minutes from the presentation made by Martin Kurylowski regarding number of students served under Pre-Employment Transition Services, due to the Committee not being provided this depth of detail during the October meeting. Chris Lavach seconded the motion. All members present voted to approve the meeting minutes as amended.

Approval of Agenda

Joanne Aceto

The agenda was presented for approval. Anita Mundy requested to add two additional items to the agenda- Update on the LTESS-EES Policy Manual and Impacts of the Elimination of Post-Employment Services on individuals Receiving Services under Long-Term Follow Along. The Committee members present unanimously approved the addition of these Agenda items and accepted the amended Agenda.

Public Comment

Joanne Aceto

The ESOSC offered two opportunities during the meeting for public comment. No members of the public requested an opportunity 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 January 9, 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 reminded Committee members of the requirement to update their annual Conflict of Interest/Financial Disclosures. Members present confirmed that they had been notified by Cecily Slasor, DARS Point of Contact regarding this and have either completed or are in the process of completing these documents. Members confirmed that there has been no further movement by the House of Representatives or Governor's office for official reappointments. 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.

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: 01/10/2023- Anita Mundy reached out to ESOs that had eligible non-completers (62) from Cohort 1 to determine if they would be interested in retaking the course.

- 22 individuals are requesting the opportunity to retake the course
- 26 individuals are no longer employed by their ESO
- 14 individuals are still employed by their ESO but will not be retaking the course
 - 64 individuals initially completed the ACRE training from Cohort 1

DARS worked with VCU to coordinate another supported employment Basic ACRE Certification course. The course will begin on January 23 and run through April 17. As of last week, there are approximately 53 participants registered. Registration is still open.

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: 01/10/2023

Stipends were dispersed to eligible ESOs in December 2022.

07/12/2022 Recommendation 3 (Not Approved)- Will be Removed from Future Updates

The Committee recommends that the DARS Commissioner make a request from the Secretary of Health and Human Services that the balance of LTESS-EES funds at the end of SFY 22 be allowed to carry forward to SFY 23. (Motion put forth by Chuck McElroy, motion seconded by Shirley Lyons, unanimously approved by members present).

07/12/2022 Recommendation 4 (Approved/Completed)- Will be Removed from Future Updates

The Committee recommends that a second provider recruitment, onboarding, and training fund be made available to reimburse LTESS-EES providers for expenses directly related to recruiting, training, and onboarding direct employment services staff (not to include administrative staff), for expenses incurred between the dates of September 1, 2021 – April 30, 2022. Should requests exceed available funds, each provider will receive an equal prorated percentage of remaining funds. Any allocation of funds is contingent on the availability of funds for SFY22 (Motion put forth by Jason Harper, motion seconded by Chuck McElroy, unanimously approved by members present).

07/12/2022 Recommendation 5 (Approved/Completed) -Will be removed from Future Updates

The Committee recommends that in state fiscal year 2023, DARS revert to a 3-Year Rolling Average and base allocation of funds on actual expenses incurred by eligible ESOs. (Motion put forth by Stephanie Hoer, motion seconded by Chris Lavach, unanimously approved by members present).

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 01/10/2023 DARS contracted with Cornell University to fully sponsor the Work Incentives Practitioner Certification (WIP-C). The course will run from February 7 – April 4, 2023. Registration is open. Fifteen out of the 30 slots offered are still available. Upon staff successful completion of the certification, ESOs will be eligible to receive stipends in the amount of \$2,500 for each staff who successfully achieves their credential and is contingent on the availability of funds.

10/11/2022 Recommendation 1 (Approved/In Process)

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 01/10/2023 DARS has added these new organizations to the LTESS system and is in the process of allocating funds.

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 01/10/2023 Stipends are on target to be paid to those organizations whose staff successfully complete the Basic ACRE Certification in April 2023. Currently there are 22 participants whose ESO is eligible for stipend reimbursement.

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 01/10/2023 Motion approved to increase ESO stipend to \$1,500 per successful staff completion. Registration is open for the course.

10/11/2022 Recommendation 4 (Approved/Completed) - Will be removed from Future Updates

The Committee recommends that existing LTESS providers who expand to either the Northern Virginia District or Rest of State may utilize a portion of their existing LTESS funds for the new vendor number until they are allocated an initial allocation for the new service area. (Motion put forth by Jan Williams. Jim Fenerty seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried).

UPDATE 01/10/2023 Approved

10/11/2022 Recommendation 5 (Approved/Completed) - Will be removed from Future Updates

The Committee recommends a mid-year reallocation based upon percentages of ESO projected balances at 6 months. (Motion put forth by Jim Fenerty and seconded by Jan Williams. All members present voted in favor. Motion carried).

UPDATE 01/10/2023 Mid-year reallocations are complete.

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 01/10/2023 Approved. Registration is in process. 15 slots are filled.

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 01/10/2023 Approved and will be paid contingent on successful completion and availability of funds.

**LTESS-EES SFY23 Second 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 Second Quarter Spending Report, Comparisons, and Projected Balances. Below is the YTD Summary that reflects the second quarter balance of \$1,079,871.83

Second Quarter Ending November 30, 2022			
	EES	LTESS	Total
Expected Expenditure	\$ 642,784.00	\$ 1,546,892.00	\$ 2,189,676.00
Actual Expenditure	\$ 340,628.60	\$ 1,266,253.72	\$ 1,606,882.32
2nd QTR Bal on 11/30/22	\$ 302,155.40	\$ 280,638.28	\$ 582,793.68
Mid year Balance			\$ 1,079,871.83
Final Balance after 2nd Qtr			\$ 1,079,871.83

Commissioner’s Update

Kathy Hayfield, DARS Commissioner

The Commissioner reported that applications are increasing and DARS is working to keep the pipeline flowing even through staff shortages. The Commissioner participated in discussion regarding EES funds and usage of projected balances and how they could be allocated differently to be better used. The Commissioner suggested that these are discussions that may need to take place within the Committees represented organizations and work with DARS to develop language to rewrite the Code to present to legislation for approval. Short term goals may include relief funds to ESOs to hire staff. Long term solution would be to work on changing language in the Codes.

SYF23 Projected Balance Discussion & Recommendations

Committee

Projections are trending to have a large balance; however, data shows that services provided through LTESS funds are trending up and services provided through EES funds are trending down. Organizations utilizing EES funds are decreasing which leaves the higher projected balances. The Committee discussed generating a statement in support of how to use the EES funds differently, to be provided to Advocate Groups in support of the use of these funds. The Committee suggests that these funds were allocated under an antiquated system and need revision. Discussion took place about combining EES and LTESS funds and finding alternative ways to utilize the dollars.

The Committee made the following recommendations and is requesting the Commissioner’s approval.

01/10/2023 Recommendation 1

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 be offered 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.)

01/10/2023 Recommendation 2

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.)

01/10/2023 Recommendation 3

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.)

Recommendations will be presented by Anita Mundy, Staff to the ESOSC, to Commissioner Hayfield for review and consideration.

Other Business

Joanne Aceto, Chair

Anita Mundy provided an update on the steps being taken to revise sections of the DARS LTESS-EES Policy Manual. Since the manual is scheduled to go out for public comment prior to the next ESOSC meeting, Ms. Mundy plans to share with the Committee outside of the meeting, the most updated draft, and is requesting feedback on the revisions made.

Ms. Mundy requested that the Committee members review the long-term follow-along allowable activities section and note how the removal of Post-Employment Services has/has not impacted individuals who utilize LTESS-EES funds.

Donna Bonessi gave a brief update on the EPIC Grant. DARS is beginning to meet with partners and is hosting a two-day planning retreat February 1-2, 2023. DARS continues its work ramping up activities and will provide updates as the grant moves forward.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

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