Self-Direction Advisory Board

June 1, 2022

Board Members Attending

Nancy Alterio

Jane Ryder

Barbara Pandolfi

Julie Flaherty

Jeff Keilson

Karla Murphy

Leo Sarkissian

Karla Murphy

Liz Fahey

Rich Santucci

Liz Sandblom

DDS Staff

Teryl Smith

Jen Benoit

Ed Wilson

Gail Gillespie

Tim Cahill

Elizabeth Morse

Amy Nazaire

Laney Bruner-Canhoto

Anne Marie Stanton

Guests

Val Bradley

John Agosta

Theresa Driscoll

Materials

Rewarding Work/ TILL, Inc. Power Point

Self-Direction Managers Power Point on the Tool Box

Nancy Alterio called the meeting to order. Liz Sandblom read the roll call.

Nancy asked for motions to accept the 03.02.22 minutes.

First Motion: Rich Santucci

Second Motion: Julie Flaherty

No Discussion

Motion passed unanimously

Commissioner Ryder’s Report

Jane Ryder talked about the FY 23 budget. DDS has fared well in all legislative sessions. The budget is currently in the House Conference Committee. The major issue facing the field now is the staffing shortage that is affecting the capacity of day programs and residential development particularly for individuals turning 22. The real estate market also presents challenges to residential development.

The Department is focusing on staff recruitment and the elevation of the direct care field. Jane Ryder is excited about the presentation today with Rewarding Work. That project is dedicated to staff recruitment.

This year $500 bonuses were given to direct care staff who provide services in the PDP program. If staff are retained, they will receive another bonus this Fall. The bonuses were funded by ARPA funds.

Jane Ryder announced that DDS is working to add an additional support broker to each area office.

Questions/ Comments

Leo Sarkissian- Is there a go-ahead for the bonuses?

Jane Ryder said they are approved.

Liz Sandblom: Bonuses are not yet sent. They will be sent to direct care workers associated with PPL in the PDP program, DESE program, and the children’s autism waiver soon.

MASS Report

Anne Fracht was not present; no report was given.

Updates- Liz Sandblom

Liz Sandblom reported a 2.8% growth in self-direction enrollments this quarter totaling 1,896 participants in PDP and AWC programs.

Liz Sandblom reiterated that each area office will hire a support broker/ service coordinator position. She is also hiring a self-direction coordinator in central office who will report to her. This position will be involved in training, technical assistance, support to the field, and the development of policies and best practices.

The self-direction managers are participating in a nationwide learning collaborative. There are participants from (28) states. Liz Sandblom commented that all states are experiencing similar challenges. Each state sets goals (drivers). Our driver includes the use of a QR code and posting of tools on the DDS website

Questions/ Comments

Val Bradley- The Learning Collaborative supports states in their understanding of self-direction. Val Bradley hopes there is good collective learning.

Nancy Alterio- Who spearheads the Learning Collaborative?

Val Bradley- The National Center for Advancement of Person-Centered Policy and Practices and Human Services Resource Institute among other collaborators.

Rewarding Work- Liz Sandblom and Theresa Driscoll

Liz Sandblom introduced Theresa Driscoll from Toward Independent Living and Learning. Theresa is the manager of Rewarding Work- a tool used to connect staff with individuals/ employers. Rewarding work is not specific to self-direction; but it is a resource for the PDP program.

Theresa Driscoll- (Please see the power point. These are general comments not covered by the power point.)

Rewarding Work was established in 2004 and affiliated with TILL, Inc. in 2018. The website is ADA-compliant and can be accessed by one central login code. That code is given free of charge to individuals and families in Massachusetts. The website allows for an easy search for applicants who meet criteria. Jobs can also be posted; and candidates can apply for jobs.

Rewarding Work is also open for calls Monday through Friday 9:00-5:00. Rewarding Work staff can support families in using the website’s features though the call center. Their staff are working closely with DDS staff to reflect their needs. Currently the site has (250) active employers and (400) job applicants. The goal is to have twice as many applicants as employers. There recently has been an increase in families using the website.

There are new enhancements added or coming to the website and to Rewarding Work:

-Enhanced translation service

-Notifications- Employers will receive notifications when candidates apply to them for jobs..

-Updates required on applicants every three months

-Automated surveys

-Hiring of a recruiter who will recruit staff in non-traditional ways

-User guide being developed

The Rewarding Work project has offered training for potential respite care workers using a grant. There are (10) training modules in the course; and a certificate is awarded upon completion. Twenty staff have been trained.

Questions/ Comments

Rich Santucci- What is the number of staff hired in a year?

Theresa Driscoll- Rewarding Work does not collect hiring information currently. There are plans to collect more data. Anecdotally, approximately 50% of employers have found candidates for jobs.

Julie Flaherty- Does TILL train staff?

Theresa Driscoll- No, TILL does not train or pre-screen staff. There is a disclaimer on the website regarding this.

Liz Sandblom mentioned the screening requirement done/ arranged by PPL before hiring, such as CORIs and National Background Checks.

Val Bradley- How do you reach out to non-conventional groups and cultural communities? Is there a strategy?

Theresa Driscoll- We are developing a strategy but know that outreach is more effective with grass roots efforts.

Liz Fahey- Do you give out the code to all families? Liz said she did not receive it.

Liz Sandblom said that more work needs to be done in this area and hopes to standardize this practice with the new support brokers. Liz and the managers are currently developing a packet of information including the Rewarding Work information for families.

HSRI Update- Val Bradley, John Agosta

Val Bradley discussed themes from family interviews. They included:

<Difficulty in hiring and keeping staff

<Complex hiring process- Families lose staff in the time it takes to process applications.

A report will come out in a couple of weeks to DDS. Val will present recommendations in the next SDAB meeting. She does need more individuals who are directing their services for interviews.

John Agosta reviewed the elements of their current data analysis. They are looking at:

<Who is self-directing (demographics)

<Understanding the support needs of the individual

<Historical spending

HSRI is focusing on a fair way to allocate resources based on assessment of need and will review the draft assessment developed by the DDS group.

HSRI will then request transfer of data for analysis.

Questions/ Comments

Leo Sarkissian- Can you make initial recommendations that can be acted on and implemented by the end of July?

John Agosta- HSRI will have some recommendations. However, there is variation across the state based on years of what were the right decisions at the time. To achieve consistency, these decisions and variances need to be addressed.

Regional Updates

Ed Wilson- The Southeast continues to offer more training to families and has done in-person training.

They are offering six one-hour modules for a “soup to nuts” training.

Amy Nazaire- Amy is getting acclimated to her new role and is also providing more training options.

Jen Benoit- Please see power point. Jen Benoit reviewed the support broker tool box features.

Questions/ Comments

Nancy Alterio commented that the tool box is a great resource.

Leo Sarkissian thanked the managers for their work.

Teryl Smith updated the committee on the replacement for Pam Hickey. That region will announce Pam’s replacement shortly.

There was no public comment.

Nancy asked for motions to adjourn.

First motion: Leo Sarkissian

Second motion: Jeff Keilson

Nancy thanked the committee and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meetings: September 7, 2022, December 7, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Gillespie