Autism Commission

14-22 years of age/Employment Sub-Committee Meeting

January 7, 2019 - 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

500 Harrison Avenue – Boston, MA

Present: Judith Ursitti (Co-Chair), Carolyn Kain, Dianne Lescinskas, Janine Solomon, Jennifer Stewart, Diane Bohannon, Terri Farrell, Kathleen Kelly, Jeanne Hoerter, Lea Hill, Ilyse Levine, Michelle Brait, and Margaret Van Gelder

Remote access: Amanda Green, Pamela Ferguson, Michael Plansky, Ann Guay and Michael Stephansky

Diane Bohannon stated that the meeting was subject to the Open Meeting Law and that the Sub-Committee members present would need to vote to approve the remote participation of some members because of their geographic location, whenever any members were utilizing video and/or teleconferencing. Remote access was approved unanimously by the subcommittee members present.

The minutes from the 14-22/Employment meeting on November 5, 2018 were reviewed and approved unanimously.

**Presentation from Work, Inc.**

Bob Putnam and Nancy Gajee from the May Institute and Sharon Smith from Work, Inc. presented their Meaningful Jobs Initiative to the subcommittee. The May Institute, National Autism Center and Work, Inc. were awarded a $250,000 grant from the Kessler Foundation to employ individuals with HF-ASD in the security field on January 1, 2016.

*Power Point Presentation*

* There were 80 applicants for this grant and only 5 recipients
* Goal – to employ individuals with high functioning ASD and improve employment outcomes
* Goal – to screen 100 individuals
* They are working on a “Tool Kit” for replication of this program
* They started looking at TSA positions – there is only a 34% turnover rate but the requirements are very rigorous
* There is integrated teamwork between Clinical Services and the Employment Services (career navigator)
* The clinical piece is key to success – it helps with anxiety management, builds on coping skills, social skill, training to read facial expressions
* Career Navigator is also critical with helping to engage and train employers, job coaching and interview prep., working on the relationship between employer and employee
* Job Fairs are a good way to practice interview skills
* Students in transition programs in schools are not getting enough “experiences” that help to develop independence.
* Individuals sometimes resent their parents for the lack of independence

*Questions/Comments*

* TSA does hire people with disabilities but certain medications and diagnosis’ will rule you out
* The program will assist with travel training individuals but will not provide transportation – most participants have been able to travel independently
* The Tool Kit should be ready in the next 3-4 months and will be made available publicly
* Benefits specialists from MRC do engage with the individuals
* When there are challenges with co-workers, they are able to step in and do disability awareness discussions (almost all participants have experienced some issues with co-workers)
* Sustainability – they are looking at funding sources to continue the program – Medicaid is helpful with some of the clinical support but it is not sufficient
* It was suggested to look at DDS and their behavioral supports as a billing code to see if this would work for a funding source

**Update on MRC RFR for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)**

Jennifer Stewart gave an update on the status of the RFR and also on MRC’s Priority for Services. She provided the subcommittee with handouts (2 draft marketing sheets for Pre-ETS and a memorandum for Priority for Services) and discussed that the Priority for Services was going into effect on January 8, 2019.

* There are no specific details on the RFR but Ms. Stewart should be able to share more information at our next meeting
* Biggest change on Pre-ETS is that you do not have to apply for services and can be “potentially eligible” to receive services
* The goal of Pre-ETS is to help prepare for employment
* Once the marketing material is ready for distribution, it will be online and sent to the field for distribution – MRC still has liaisons working with schools
* MRC looked at data from ESE to map out the students across the state – looking at student to dollars
* Students will be connected to a provider and the provider will develop the service plan
* Providers are required to work with a range of disabilities
* There are currently 34 providers and ILC’s will be applying as well – some individual schools may apply
* We will review the RFR at the next meeting
* Priority for Services – Priority 1 and 2 are open so there should not be a large difference on how MRC is operating
* The area office will use a new tool to determine eligibility for prioritization

**Announcements**

On 1/22/18 at the State House – Supported Family Day – Ms. Ursitti will send out the information to the subcommittee members.

Autism Speaks Grant Cycle is open to providers until March 1st and Ms. Ursitti will send the grant link

Ms. Kelly handed out information on an ASD study at BU – she will send the direct link to subcommittee members.

There will be a DDS Employment Conference on June 11th and will include specialized topics on ASD.

**Working Group Update**

Ms. Hoerter updated the subcommittee on the gap analysis work. She has shared a Google doc. with the working group members to continue to update.

*Questions*

* Look at the level 1-2-3 - these need to align with the language that the state agencies are using
* Who will update/manage this annually
* Where will the document live
* Who is the audience
* What is the purpose

This will be added to the agenda for next meeting

There was also a quick review of the DDS training and the changes that were made – it was asked that members send in any comments to Dianne Lescinskas. The updated PowerPoint was sent to all members.

There was a brief review and handout on the survey questions for Pre-ETS providers – this will be discussed at a later meeting.

The chairs of this subcommittee will email the members on the date of the next meeting in February.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.