

Employment First Committee

Meeting Minutes of April 30, 2013

Sacramento, California

Members Present

Tony Anderson
Lisa Cooley
Kathleen Derby
Dale Dutton
Bill Moore
Andrew Mudryk
David Mulvey
Olivia Raynor
Amy Westling
Barbara Wheeler
Cindy White
Sarah Triano
Victoria King-Watson

Members Absent

Daniel Boomer
Rachel Chen
Robin Hansen
Connie Lapin
Dennis Petrie
Debbie Sarmento
Robert Taylor
Kecia Weller

Others Present

Michael Brett, Staff
Rachel Flores, UCLA Tarjan Center
Eric Glunt, CHIIP/Interwork Institute, SDSU
Tom Heinz, East Bay Innovations
Bryon MacDonald, WID
Mary Agnes Nolan, Staff
Mark Polit, Staff
Cindy Ruder, Area Board 4
Ruby Villanueva, Staff

1. CALL TO ORDER

Olivia Raynor, in the absence of Kecia Weller, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:46 a.m.

2. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Members and guests introduced themselves

3. QUORUM

A quorum was established

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Approve minutes without modifications. **MOTION CARRIED**

MOTION TO ACCEPT: *A. Mudryk*

SECONDED: *A. Westling*

APPROVE: 11

OPPOSE: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were presented

6. INTERACTION OF WORK AND BENEFITS AND SYSTEM REFORM PROPOSAL - PRESENTATION BY BRYON MACDONALD (WID) & ERIC GLUNT (INTERWORK INSTITUTE):

Benefit types:

Means Tested Programs: SSI and Medi-cal (CA name for Medicaid)

Social Insurance: SSDI and Medicare; Childhood Disability Beneficiary (CDB) and Medicare.

Private Sector Disability and Health Care Benefits

Under the Medi-Cal Working Disabled Program, a person with a disability can earn up to \$58,000 per year. However, it is highly recommended that recipients organize their employment/benefits records and notes in a centralized binder. Recipients have a legal and fiduciary responsibility to track income changes that may affect their benefits and being organized may assist the recipient in any future benefits appeals.

Overview of Disability Benefits 101 (DB101): DB101 provides users benefits planning tools to assist in making informed choices about work and benefits. For example, DB101 Benefits and Work calculator can predict how a job will affect a client's total income and health coverage. Additional tools support individuals in different life transition stages (i.e. school to work, stable housing no job, on benefits for some time and no job).

World Institute on Disability (WID) believes the most effective way to reach people is through the use of on-line tools and 1:1 benefits counseling (e.g., live chat or 800 number). Disability Benefits 101 (DB 101) receives about 60,000 visitors a month. States such as Minnesota and Arizona offer visitors to DB101 an opportunity to chat with a qualified "options" counselor to receive immediate answers to their questions, in conjunction with the use of extensive on-line tools/calculators to assist the visitor to explore different ways to balance work and benefits. Minnesota counselors, in particular, are able to access the visitor's personal benefits information to provide even more extensive assistance.

Other DD councils' involvement in benefits counseling include Arizona's grant for 2 years of an 800 number for benefits Counseling and Minnesota hosting the DB 101 on their website.

The ability to have a live chat with a benefits or "options" counselor paired with on-line information intrigued members of EFC, generating a discussion on how to bring 1:1 live chat to CA DB101.

Given the size of California Mr. MacDonald recommended that Regional Center be involved. Barbara Wheeler felt that cross-agency involvement should be considered, with Regional Center providing funding for 1:1 live chat, but ILC staff (trained by DOR) to provide the actual service.

There is no entity spearheading the movement to bring 1:1 live chat to CA DB101. Members of CCEPD, WID, CECY and other interested groups will create a workgroup to

further discuss details and implications of bringing 1:1 live chat to CA DB101 and present its recommendations to the EFC at the September meeting.

Proposed Pilot Project – Test replacing the SSI program with career building ACCESS

Program for youth 18-30: This project proposes that a **12 year test period be implemented through the proposed ACCESS program** enrolling youth who turn 18 and are on SSI at the time, youth 18-28 and not on SSI; and SSI recipients up to age 28. This pilot project is still in the conceptual phase. The actual infrastructure has not yet been addressed as players such as SSA still has to buy in.

WID believes that Federal dollars will be saved in the future through **ACCESS** because as people start working they use less Medicaid. Savings will also be seen across agencies through a reduction of administrative costs, implementation of electronic reporting, use of internet based technologies, and the elimination of month to month reporting procedures.

The Committee focused on the following key concepts of ACCESS:

- (1) On eligibility, retain means testing and qualifying for the program through the current SSA Listing of Impairments. However, the SSI test for “incapacity to work” would be eliminated.
- (2) Program participants must develop and comply with an Individual Career Plan. The plan would be developed from a list of available vocational or employment support services. Non-compliance with the plan would cause the participant to exit the pilot to current SSI benefit rules.
- (3) Participants would receive “life coaching” services on resources for implementing the Individual Career Plan.
- (4) The federal SSI benefit rate of \$710/month would remain whole for participants, no matter what wages are earned, as long as they are in the pilot.
- (5) Online reporting, tracking, and consumer information services in the test states.

MOTION: Ask the Council to support the above key concepts of the Pilot Project (ACCESS) with continued involvement by the Employment First Committee. ***MOTION CARRIED***

MOTION TO ACCEPT: *T. Anderson* **SECONDED:** *D. Dutton* **APPROVE:** 13 **OPPOSE:** 0 **ABSTAIN:** 0

7. UPDATE ON SELF-ADVOCACY INTERVIEWS

Olivia Raynor reports no progress at this time. Kecia Weller remains on medical leave.

8. EMPLOYMENT DATA REQUEST

Mark Polit reports that as part of the CECY consortium, a data workgroup called the “Data Nerds” has been established. The charge of this workgroup is to create an employment data dashboard with key statistical indicators so the state can track its progress on employment outcomes as an aid to developing effective strategies. Ten key statistical indicators have been identified by the workgroup and all can be obtained through existing data maintained by different agencies. .

An MOU currently exists between DDS and EDD to share certain data elements. EFC wishes the MOU to be expanded to allow for deeper analysis.

MOTION: To recommend to the Council to request that DDS and EDD expand their current MOU to include: 1) The distribution of annual average earnings, such as in 20 percentile ranges; 2) Average hourly wages and their distribution, such as in 20 percentile ranges; 3) DDS to provide SSNs for subgroups to receive the analysis for the percentage of people receiving wages and their earnings, as discussed under #1 and #2.

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION TO ACCEPT: A. Mudryk **SECONDED:** D. Mulvey **APPROVE:** 10 **OPPOSE:** 0 **ABSTAIN:** 1 (B. Moore)

9. REVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION

SB 577 – Tom Heinz from East Bay Innovation discussed: Currently the rate structure for Supportive Employment services does not provide sufficient pre-employment services to allow in depth exploration of the individual’s interests and potential. Additionally, the funding structure does not allow the employment provider to do sufficient targeted outreach and job analysis with potential employers. Under the current structure, SE agencies would have to place 40 individuals a year in order to maintain a job developer component. Eventually SE agencies find they cannot afford a job developer. However, the job developer component is the core service to help the individual to achieve the next level of career opportunities.

SB 577 has essentially two parts to the bill. Part 1 will be a pilot project at 6-8 regional centers. It will create a new model for providing pre-employment services (ex. job preparation, job search). It is not yet clear of the cost benefit for Part 1 because of the need for up-front money, but it is believed that in the long run the new service model will be cost neutral. This part of the bill is modeled after services being provided by “Aim Higher” an agency vendored by GGRC.

PART 1 of the bill will:

1. Establish a new model of service, “**Job Exploration and Discovery Services**”
2. Require that a Job Exploration and Discovery plan be created for individuals
3. Establish a rate of \$40.00/hour for Job Exploration and Discovery Services, with a maximum of 75 hours per calendar quarter.

Part 2 of the bill will:

1. Establish the “**Employment Growth Fund**” administered by DDS

The “Employment Growth Fund” is intended to give agencies an incentive to find real work for individuals. This piece is believed to be cost neutral due to the reinvestment of funds that would be saved as a result of the reduced amount of support payments made to individuals who find gainful employment through the pilot program. DOR will also be able to bill Social Security for services they provide to any client who works 9 consecutive months. This reimbursement can add up to \$19,000 per individual.

The “Employment Growth Fund” would accumulate with State savings generated when the individuals covered in the bill: a) move onto employer paid health benefits and/or, b) earn regular wages over the SGA (Substantial Gainful Activity) level and, c) the employment services the individual receives are less costly to the State than traditional non-work services. Agencies would only receive money from the “Employment Growth Fund” as the individuals they support achieve either employer paid health benefits and/or wages above the SGA level.

AB 1041- Mark Polit announced that the analysis from Appropriations came out this morning citing the following anticipated fiscal effect: ***“Unknown, potentially significant costs, to the Developmental Disabilities Services Act (Lanterman Act) to include an entitlement that all working-age consumers receive a prevailing wage job...”***

With this analysis, it is expected that the bill will be sent to the suspense file when it is heard at the Senate hearing tomorrow, May 1, 2013. There is no opposition on record to this bill.

AB 954 – Mark Polit indicated that part of this bill would raise the job coaching rate by 10% and asked for any feedback. David Mulvey shared that he liked the bill, but hopes it is not a substitute for the Pavley Bill.

10. EMPLOYER EDUCATION – NEXT STEPS

Discussion focused on listening to and addressing employer needs as well as the effects of the Affordable Care Act on employers.

Bill Moore shared concern from DOR that when employment is found, a person needs to be identified immediately to fill the vacancy. Employers are not interested in waiting for the paperwork to be processed or for the job coach or counselor to be consulted.

Eric Glunt recommended looking at Talent Knows No Limits Campaign website located at <http://talentknowsnolimits.info/index.html>. This is a public education resource for the employment of people with disabilities. There is useful information for employers as well as job seekers and service providers.

Before opening a formal dialogue with employers, Olivia Raynor asked if the EFC should put a small panel together to educate ourselves on what we want to educate the employers about. What will be our questions? How do we engage employers? After we know what we want to share we can move forward. Eric Glunt shared that he was

already part of a focus group that generated questions for employers. He will return to the September ECF meeting to further discuss employer relations.

David Mulvey recommended that we start partnering with Chambers of Commerce.

11. PLANNING FOR NEXT MEETING

Bill Moore recommends that the agendas are established to connect our progress to our goals. This would allow members to clearly see the progress and steps being taken to accomplish our stated goals.

Olivia Raynor expressed her desire to get the EFC Annual report back on schedule. Our annual report is due on July 1st. Since the last Annual Report that was submitted in January 2013 was inclusive of activities through that date, Olivia recommends that we submit a supplement to report on recent activities.

Because the EFC committee as well as the Council needs to approve the report, the EFC will schedule a teleconference for **June 19th at 11am** specifically to review a draft of the report.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Olivia Raynor adjourned the meeting at 4:00pm