



Employment First Committee Meeting Minutes October 20, 2022

Attending Members

Sarah Issacs (DRC)
Michael Luna (DDS)
Steve Ruder (UCD)
Wesley Witherspoon (SA)
Cathay Liu (FA)
Christine T. Moody (UCLA)
Robert Loeun (DOR)
Larry Yin (USC)

Members Absent

Kara Ponton (SA)
Nick Wavrin (CDE)

Others Attending

Aaron Carruthers
Anne De Medeiros
Tania Morawiec
Bridget Kolakosky
Mary Ellen Stives
Veronica E. Bravo
Michelle Cave
Beth Hurn
Lucile Lynch
Stacey Hard

Others Attending

Zac Ford
Kaylee Hard
Tyler Hershey
Caitlin Mueller
Elizabeth Frank

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Wesley Witherspoon (SA) called the meeting to order at 10:37 a.m.

2. **ESTABLISH QUORUM**

A quorum was established.

3. **WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS**

Members and others introduced themselves.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

5. **APPROVAL OF THE JULY 2022 MEETING MINUTES**

It was moved/seconded (Luna/Moody) and carried to approve the July 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes. (All attending members voted in favor.)

6. CHAIR UPDATE

Chair Witherspoon updated the committee on relevant activities since the last meeting. He reminded the group that October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Tara Lynch Design has been nominated as this month's inclusive employer.

7. 2022 TARGET PRIORITY UPDATES

Deputy Director of Regional Office Operations Tania Morawiec spoke about NDEAM and the importance of spotlighting competitive integrated employment (CIE) as achievable by individuals and beneficial for employers. She stated that a recent human services-focused poll shows that a very low percentage of employers consider disability as part of diversity. In response, SCDD will assist employers in their efforts to hire more diverse populations. SCDD will also promote the bottom-line benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities.

Ms. Morawiec spoke about SB 639, legislation which will phase-out subminimum wage in California by 2025. A foundation must be built to meet the needs of those who have more significant support needs, upskill participants, and inform and listen to stakeholders and the community. SCDD held a series of four stakeholder meetings to discuss data collection and pathways for success. These were led by subject matter experts (SME), Amy Gonzalez and Doug Crandell. Additionally, SCDD gathered public input throughout the state with extensive community conversations. Data continues to be gathered through an ongoing letter-writing campaign.

Incentives, a tiered reimbursement structure, clarity around billing codes, disincentivizing things that don't work, and the importance of benefits consultation have been discussed at stakeholder meetings. SCDD is currently working to educate regional center employment specialist staff about work incentives and benefits available throughout the state- to better inform families and persons with disabilities The final report will include the importance of job match/job discovery to identify a person's knowledge, skills, and abilities, and desires to create a customized/individualized employment plan.

Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Bridget Kolakosky drew attention to a link for the letter-writing campaign (https://scdd.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6tJz804hRtUIX5c) which was posted in the chat and available for people to give input on phasing out

subminimum wage Every letter submitted will be included in the appendix of the report to reflect diversity of voice, opinion, and knowledge.

8. **MAKING CIE A REALITY – NOT JUST A GOAL**

Lucile Lynch, President and Co-Founder of Beacons, Inc. and Tyler Hershey, Director of PathFinder Vocational Program within Beacons, gave a PowerPoint presentation on Beacons' success with CIE. Beacons is a provider of vocational, recreational, and social activities to adults with IDD with a goal to improve access to employment. The presentation included a history of Beacons and a description of the PathFinder Vocational program.

Workshops include soft skills, technology basics, PCP planning, disability discussions, and pre/post-employment assessments. Beacons has integrated SSI worksheets into their programs so that jobseekers/trainees can see the impact of employment on their SSI. Some of Beacon's success stories were shared.

9. **STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATES AND EFC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs Bridget Kolakosky provided an update on the status of SCDD sponsored bills and reviewed the statutory responsibilities of the Employment First Committee (EFC). Committee members discussed potential changes in the operations of the EFC, including having shorter, more frequent meetings or using workgroups to ensure the timely completion of projects. Members discussed expanding membership of the EFC to include employers and self-advocates. SCDD staff will create a draft of member recommendations to bring back to the committee.

10. **2023 TARGET PRIORITIES**

Deputy Director of Regional Office Operations Tania Morawiec presented the EFC target priorities of SB 639, "Data, and preventing people from falling through the cracks". Deputy Director Morawiec also presented 2019-2021 EFC report recommendations and led the committee in a discussion about what to prioritize in 2023 and how the EFC can accomplish those priorities, including using these to draft a recommendation letter for SB 639.

Committee members discussed using the information presented to draft SMART goals for the EFC. Members agreed that a small workgroup will meet to draft these goals.

11. **2023 EMPLOYMENT FIRST REPORT TIMELINE**

Deputy Director of Regional Office Operations Tania Morawiec presented the proposed Employment First Report Timeline. Members agreed on the timeline and process, which will be updated to include deadlines and brought to the committee for a vote at the next meeting.

12. **UPDATE ON CIE BLUEPRINT IMPLEMENTATION**

Committee member and DDS representative Michael Luna provided an update on the CIE Blueprint implementation, informing the committee that the blueprint has concluded as of July 1, 2022, and the 5-year annual report is being prepared and will be released in early November 2022. Data from the DDS PIP and CIE surveys will be provided in the report.

13. **MEMBER UPDATES**

Committee member Michael Luna provided an update of DSS CIE activities. DSS received 10 million in one-time funding to release a grant for innovative ways to achieve CIE. DDS is in the process of reviewing applications, which are primarily for projects that focus on employment preparation services and reports and training and implementation. Review panels include DOR, DRC and DDS staff. Grants will be awarded in either late November or early December 2022.

DDS has also restarted discussions on a 3-year subminimum wage pilot program for individuals exiting work activity programs or high school, with a service model focused on the individual. DDS is also implementing the following incentive payments for CIE placements:

- After 4 consumers have been placed, starting on 5th consumer, each CIE placement will receive an incentive funding of \$500 after 30 days and \$1000 after 6 months.
- Providers who place a consumer into CIE as a result of PIP will be eligible to receive \$500 after 30 days and 500 after 6 months.
- Providers will be eligible to receive \$500 after 30 days and \$500 after 6 months for each consumer who exits a subminimum wage program.
- Providers can receive an incentive payment for \$1,900 for each employer that becomes certified or recertified through ACRE.
- Providers will receive \$550 for each employee that becomes certified in CESP training, and \$300 for each employee that is recertified.

Committee member Robert Loewn provided a DOR update, stating that DOR has increased the rate for service providers to align with the DDS rate. He reported that there are 69 individuals in the state internship program of

which 11 have entered employment and 9 more have received non state agency job offers. DOR received 10 million in RSA grant funding, which can be utilized by new businesses to hire people with disabilities.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.