



## Interagency Employment First Advisory Committee

### Meeting Minutes for July 16, 2020

**Date:** Thursday, July 16, 2020      **Time:** 9:00 am – 12:00pm

**Location:** Zoom Video Meeting

#### **Advisory Committee Co-Chairs in alphabetical order:**

- Natasha Jerde, Director, State Services for the Blind (DEED)
- Lesli Kerkhoff, Human Services Manager, Disability Services Division (DHS)
- Chris McVey, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DEED)

#### **Membership and Stakeholder Representation on page 2**

**Facilitation and Documentation:** Holly Johnson, Lanterna Consulting, Inc. contracted through Management Analysis & Development, Minnesota Management and Budget

#### **Advisory Committee Overview:**

The **Interagency Employment First Advisory Committee** is a voluntary 14-member committee representing diverse stakeholders’ perspectives from around the state including individuals and their families, support professionals, and advocacy organizations. The committee is an important part of a state agency partnership to fulfill the interagency agreement between Minnesota’s Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Department of Human Services that was formalized in the [September 2019 joint memorandum of understanding](#).

The committee’s role is an advisory role established as part of the agreement to assist and inform the interagency partnership in the complex work of creating a more seamless and timely employment support system for people on HCBS waivers seeking competitive integrated employment.

The committee will meet bi-monthly over the next 12-18 months to assist the interagency work in preparation for replacement of the current interim guidance and implementation of enhanced interagency services in summer 2021.

Meetings will be hosted on Thursdays from 9:00am to 12:00pm on the following dates:

- |                             |                      |                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| • May 21, 2020 -<br>Kickoff | • September 17, 2020 | • March 18, 2021 |
| • July 16, 2020             | • November 19, 2020  | • May 20, 2021   |
|                             | • January 21, 2021   | • July 15, 2021  |

#### **Best Source of Information:**

<https://disabilityhubmn.org/hub-partners/work-toolkit/policy-and-practice/dhsdeed-memorandum-of-understanding-mou>



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**Membership attendance in alphabetical order:**

Name	Stakeholder Representative Appointment	Attended	Did Not Attend
<b>Jon Alexander</b>	Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)	✓	
<b>Tim Dickie</b>	Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation (MOHR)	✓	
<b>Jessica Eggert</b>	People receiving services & their families or supports	✓	
<b>John Filek</b>	Deaf Blind service provider		✓
<b>April Ildvad</b>	Broader stakeholder community (Mental health, brain injury specialist)		✓
<b>Danielle Mahoney</b>	University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration	✓	
<b>Alicia Munson</b>	Advocacy organization for people with disabilities (The Arc Minnesota)	✓	
<b>Jillian Nelson</b>	Advocacy organization for people with disabilities (Autism Society of Minnesota / The Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities)	✓	
<b>Julie Peterschick</b>	VRS Community Partners Committee (CPC), formerly known as VRS Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Advisory Committee	✓	
<b>Kristina Petronko</b>	Client Assistance Project (CAP), Minnesota Disability Law Center	✓	
<b>Yekaterna (Kate) Probert Fagundes</b>	Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) Metro Minnesota representative	✓	
<b>Phyllis Reller</b>	Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) Greater Minnesota representative	✓	
<b>Rita Wiersma</b>	Association of Residential Resources in Minnesota (ARRM)	✓	
<b>Barb Ziemke</b>	People receiving services & their families or supports	✓	



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### DEED VRS/SSB and DHS staff attendance in alphabetical order:

Name	Agency and Responsibility	Attended	Did Not Attend
<b>Beth Grube</b>	Benefits Planning Coordinator for Disability Services Division (DHS)	✓	
<b>Amanda Jensen-Stahl</b>	Program Specialist for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DEED)	✓	
<b>Natasha Jerde</b>	Director of State Services for the Blind (DEED)	✓	
<b>Leslie Kerkhoff</b>	Human Services Manager, Disability Services Division (DHS)	✓ first hour	
<b>Chris McVey</b>	Director of Strategic Initiatives for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DEED)	✓	
<b>Ryan Merz</b>	Employment Planning and Resource Coordinator for Disability Services Division (DHS)	✓	

### Meeting Minutes for July 16, 2020

#### Meeting Objectives

1. To share a brief progress update on the interagency staff workgroups efforts.
2. To focus committee discussion and input on the redefinition of waiver exploration services to inform continued efforts by the interagency staff workgroup through:
  - a. a review of the initial PIPEin feedback survey responses, and
  - b. a person-centered example of what it could look like to experience the revised exploration services.
3. To provide an open, respectful forum for committee members to engage in thoughtful discussion and advice to help shape the interagency partnership advancing Employment First and implement the Memo of Understanding.

#### Agenda Topics

1. Brief Progress Update on the Interagency Work in Progress
2. PIPEin and Redefining Waiver Exploration Services
3. Experiencing Redefined Waiver Exploration Services

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### Welcome and Opening

The meeting was called to order at 9:00am by facilitator Holly Johnson who provided an overview of the meeting agenda as well as a brief review of the committee’s purpose and meeting guidelines.

### Discussion

Agenda Item #1: Brief Progress Update on the Interagency Work in Progress	
15 minutes	Beth Grube and Amanda Jensen-Stahl

Beth and Amanda provided a brief progress update on the interagency staff workgroups composed of staff from DEED/VRS, DEED/SSB, DHS and MDE.

Workgroup 1 Service Process and Experience is working on the following:

- A full process map for a more seamless and timely standard experience for ‘out of school’ individuals on HCBS waiver services who are interested in competitive, integrated employment. The workgroup has also begun work on a process map for ‘in school’ youth to explore competitive, integrated employment.
- A document to identify the primary responsibilities for each of the key roles involved in the process to help clarify who does what and how services are transitioned between the different agencies and providers.
- An online tool and products for individuals participating in the services. The online tool would allow people to store and share their information with support professionals and other people supporting their employment goals. The products include an employment profile, sample application(s) and resumes, and a benefit look up report.

Workgroup 2 Service Provider Alignment is working on the following:

- Gathering statewide information on existing employment services including service gaps with gaps primarily defined as limited/lack of geographic service access to service providers as well as disparities in services equity and communities served.
- Exploring strategies for increasing Minnesota’s network of employment services for people with disabilities to improve access, expand choices, and support seamless transitions. This includes strategies to encourage and increase the number of employment services providers who are currently enrolled in one program (DHS 245d waiver programs, DEED VRS, and/or DEED SSB professional and technical contracts) to become dual enrolled providers.

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### Agenda Item #2: PIPEin and Redefining Waiver Exploration Services

60 minutes

Ryan Merz

In June, DHS and DEED-VRS/SSB used an online PIPEin survey to gather ideas for improving HCBS waiver exploration services. Respondents were asked to read a document of the proposed changes to waiver exploration services before answering a series of questions. The survey had a high participation rate (61%) and provided helpful insights and suggestions for improvements.

A summary of the survey results is available for viewing at:

<https://disabilityhubmn.org/media/1104/pipein-activity-1-summary.pdf>

At a high level, the PIPEin online survey findings are:

- Overall, respondents understood the proposed changes to the service and thought the products would be useful.
- Respondents indicated higher uncertainty and a need for more detailed information about the Vault online tool and the navigator service.
- The range of qualitative responses included conflicting feedback across responses.
- There was a high level of response to open ended questions which included ideas, questions, excitement, concerns, and suggestions for all parts of the waiver exploration service.

The advisory committee recommended that the proposed navigator service be listed as part of the full array of services available under exploration services rather than a separate service. Members also noted the importance of clear guidance and training to clarify the roles and responsibilities for waiver case managers and employment service providers to minimize confusion on the navigator service.

The committee also supported training demonstrating the use of the online tool called the 'Vault' for various intended users including individuals, families, providers, waiver case managers and agency staff. Committee members noted past overview sessions specifically designed for families that included live demonstrations using the Vault were received positively and suggested that a similar session could be recorded as a training module and made available through Disability Hub in accessible formats.

Feedback from both the PIPEin survey and the Advisory Committee discussion will be used in guiding further redesign of waiver exploration services and in communications and training for the revised service.

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### Agenda Item #3: Experiencing Redefined Waiver Exploration Services

60 minutes

Beth Grube

At the May kickoff meeting, the advisory committee said it would be helpful if proposed service changes could be shared using ‘real life’ scenarios of how services might be experienced by people. In response, the interagency staff supporting the committee created an initial scenario focused on waiver exploration services.

The initial scenario was developed to gather advisory committee reactions and ideas on waiver exploration services to bring back to the interagency staff work groups who are creating the ‘behind the scenes’ roles and responsibilities, processes and tools to support a more coordinated, person-centered experience. Due to meeting time constraints the scenario was only developed for the first phase of a potential jobseeker’s ‘journey’ starting with exploration services, however future meetings might include scenarios that look at other phases of the journey such as the referral to job development services, job development to securing a new job, and stable employment into ongoing waiver support services.

In the initial scenario focused on exploration services, Jordan is an adult who is referred to exploration services by his waiver case manager. While the scenario was designed to show how the redefined waiver exploration services could work, Beth emphasized that no single scenario can capture all the possible aspects of the services because each person’s situation will be unique therefore the scenario is meant to walk through how a ‘typical’ process might be experienced and the steps along the way.

After walking through the exploration services scenario, Beth asked the committee for their thoughts on the initial scenario content as well as the scenario format in general to evaluate its potential value for future use with the committee and/or other stakeholders.

Committee members discussion and questions generated by the initial scenario included:

- Exploration services in the scenario highlights an emphasis on a person-centered approach and process that is directed by the person’s goals, skills, and interests. Members also noted the importance of recognizing the level of formal and informal supports.
- While the scenario focused on an adult, the committee discussed the benefits of future scenarios to show how services to individuals in high school could be transitioned as the person becomes an adult through strong relationships and more connected processes so they don’t have to ‘start over’ in the system.

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- There is a wide variation in how transition services are experienced today depending on the school and the county. Committee members voiced strong support for more unified and consistent expectations and delivery for transition services.
- Members suggested that schools support individuals in setting up online Vault accounts while students are still in school in order to help the person access and share documents developed while they are doing work in school rather than having to start over again as an out of school adult. Committee members from service provider organizations shared that they rarely receive transition information from schools however, when they do it is helpful.
- Committee members stressed the importance of effective, ongoing training to facilitate consistent, high quality services that help individuals and families get the information they need about services and provider options to make good decisions:
  - Training includes clarifying roles, terminology, and definitions using plain language.
    - Example in the exploration scenario: clarifying that “navigator” is not necessarily a role but a service available as part of work exploration.
  - Given high staff turnover levels for case managers and employment service providers, exploration services training will be especially critical for both successful implementation and ongoing delivery of services.
  - Everyone connected to the person’s team should have access to training on the Vault tool and its uses.
  - A person-centered approach is realistic when people receive quality training which can be especially challenging for some smaller providers with more limited resources.
  - Providers may also need training and technical assistance to develop as well as deliver an exploration service. Training should also address cultural competency around disability culture.
- Members suggested that state agency partners consider some type of service quality certification for both service providers as well as contracted case managers:
  - Contracted case managers receive different levels of support and training depending on the county. There is also a wide variation in average caseloads per case manager which can impact the case manager’s ability to provide more consistent services.
  - Licensing requirements on employment staff competencies could be an effective way to provide clear expectations and hold employment service providers accountable to ensure that staff are trained and providing quality services.

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### Meeting Recap

**Topic 1:** Interagency staff workgroups have been hard at work in 2020 to develop the internal infrastructure needed to support a more seamless and timely employment support system for people with disabilities. This includes drafting processes, service transitions, products, and tools.

**Topic 2:** The initial PIPEin opportunity in June focused on gathering insights and suggestions for improvements to waiver exploration services. Overall, survey respondents understood the proposed changes to the service and thought the outcomes products would be useful. Respondents indicated higher uncertainty and a need for more detailed information with Vault accounts and the navigator service. Feedback from both the PIPEin survey and the Advisory Committee discussion will be used in guiding further redesign of exploration services and in communications and training for the revised service.

**Topic 3:** The committee reviewed a scenario showing how an adult might experience waiver exploration services. Overall, members appreciated the person-centered and team-based approach depicted in the scenario. There was a high level of interest in how transition programs could be strengthened for more seamless services into adulthood. The committee discussed several ideas to improve implementation of waiver exploration services including use of plain language, clear roles and responsibilities, a service quality certification process, and training and technical assistance on the exploration service and tools such as the Vault.

### Next Steps

1. Starting with July, monthly updates on the MOU work will be posted on the Disability HUB website <https://disabilityhubmn.org/hub-partners/work-toolkit/policy-and-practice/dhsdeed-memorandum-of-understanding-mou>
2. The next meeting of the Interagency Employment First Advisory Committee will be on September 17, 2020.

### Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00p.m.

*\* End of document*