

Rhodes to Independence Steering Committee

Summary Minutes

November 15, 2005

In Attendance: Annette Bourbonnierre, Stephen Bowers, Diane Cook, Joan D'Agostino, Susan De Sack, Aleatha Dickerson, Elaina Goldstein, Steve Kitchin, Thomas Martin, Rich Pascucci, Arthur Plitt, Susan Shapiro, Lauren Slocum

Staff: Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Valerie Shore, Nancy Wooten, Dana Wright

- **As there was not a quorum at the beginning of the meeting, the minutes from the 9/20/05 meeting were not approved (there had been no quorum at the 10/27/05 meeting so the 9/20 minutes could not be approved at that time).**

Current Workgroup Updates

Youth in Transition Workgroup

- **The final draft of the youth interview tool is in the design and layout phase.**

Housing Workgroup

- **The Workgroup did not meet since the last Steering Committee**

meeting.

- A final focus group report has been completed.
- A brief overview of Massachusetts' successful housing bond program was given; plans are underway for a similar housing bond initiative in RI.

Transportation Workgroup

- The Workgroup met once since the last Steering Committee meeting. The meeting was shortened by breathing problems caused by the recent flooding in the RTI office.

Diversity Workgroup

- The Workgroup met once since the last Steering Committee meeting.
- A presentation was given on the RI Genesis Center which provides job training and other services to immigrants. The Genesis Center has a liaison arrangement with ORS.
- At the end of the year or early in 2006, a summary of the 2005 presentations that provided the Workgroup's environmental scan will be written with recommendations for bridging the gaps where possible.

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Resource Directory Subcommittee

- The list of 150+ new resources is near completion.

Medicaid Buy-In Regulations: Update

- **There was a response from Senator Gibbs to the letter sent by the Steering Committee concerning the regulations; she indicated that there was no cause for concern.**
- **When the letter was sent, the Steering Committee and stakeholders were under the impression that there was not enough time for the State Plan Amendment to be reviewed and approved by CMS (supposed to be in place by January 2006).**
- **As a result of the letter sent to the Buy-In's sponsors, a meeting was held by DHS on the regulations – a meeting attendees included Steve Kitchin, Bob Cooper, a Disability Law Center representative, Annette and Elaina. The proposed regulations were discussed including the fact that employers' concerns are not reflected in the draft regulations.**
- **There is a comment period up to December 7th. Thus far consumers have been included as a partner in discussions concerning the regulations but employers have not been brought to the table.**
- **Annette Bourbonnierre has been retained to write and conduct a survey directed at people with disabilities who are considering participating in the Buy-In, as well as to help employers to craft comments for the record reflecting their concerns. An ad hoc group of employers must be brought together for this reason as soon as possible.**
- **It was agreed that if private sector employers are not part of the process, the Buy-In will not work. Buy-In legislation would not have passed without broad support and assistance from employers and**

workforce / economic leadership.

Job Fair: Update

- **The netWORKri / Rhodes to Independence Job Fair was held was November 3rd and was successful. Nearly 500 individuals came seeking jobs and 25 employers attended. Initial feedback from the employers was that they were pleased with the quality of job candidates. The percentage of attendees who have disabilities can be determined by the forms that were filled out.**
- **Annette noted that it was difficult to move around the venue in a wheelchair. Parking was also a problem.**
- **A representative from Goodwill attended; the Steering Committee was asked if she (Cynthia Tyler) should be offered a place on the Steering Committee to represent Goodwill –this was approved.**

Emergency Management Meeting: Update

- **A meeting was organized by Rhodes to Independence concerning the current status of emergency management in the state; participants included agency representatives, consumers and emergency management people. Minutes will be sent out as soon as possible.**
- **While Rhodes to Independence is interested in this process, this is**

beyond Rhode's scope – the staff time cannot be afforded. Facilitation might be feasible if the State can provide a legislative grant to fund staff time.

Other Business / Next Steps

- Elaina attended a meeting of the Long Term Care Coordinating Council. There is a new person in charge of Elder Abuse. There needs to be a person in charge of abuse related to people with disabilities – this is an issue that should be addressed.**
- The Steering Committee thanked Susan Shapiro on her years of service and wished her luck with her new business.**
- The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for December 20th. Unless there is pressing business, the Steering Committee will not meet in December. It was left to staff to decide whether there is a compelling need to meet then. It was requested that members keep the meeting on their schedules until this determination is met. The first 2006 meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 17th. 2:30 pm – 4 pm, at DLT Building #73, First Floor Conference Room.**