



St. Louis Office for Developmental Disability Resources
Minutes of the Program Committee
October 29, 2020

Board Members Present:

William (Bill) Siedhoff
Nina North-Murphy

Cynthia Mueller, Committee Chairperson

Board Members Absent:

Sherry Wibbenmeyer

Staff Members Present:

Shaelene Plank, Executive Director
Nate (Nathaniel) Head, Senior Agency Relations Representative

Rachel Shapiro, Executive Assistant
Ebony Young, Agency Relations Representative

Guests Present:

None

The meeting was called to order by Cynthia Mueller at 4:03pm.

1. Partner Review Meetings

Nate Head reported on progress with the partner review meetings (annual meetings with the agencies to make sure they are meeting our standards).

- a. Due to the alliance, jointly funded agencies meet with all the funders at once. Format is working well. Lots of positive feedback from the agencies on the process:
 - i. Prior to the meeting we give them a guide.
 - ii. Agencies upload to the portal the requested policies and procedures and a project update for each funded project. In their update, they respond to several questions about their project.
 - iii. The team reviews the submitted policies against our standards in the funding manual and discuss project updates in Zoom meetings. The team provides feedback about whether policies meet our standards. They also get into curiosity questions (based on project update - what we want to know about the project).
 - iv. After meeting, we provide feedback in summary report. We ask agencies to fill out a survey to provide feedback on the process. So far, we have met with seven agencies and received 30 survey responses. The longest meeting has been 5 hours; the shortest has been 1.5 hours.
- b. 100% agree or strongly agree that scheduling and preparing for the meeting is easy. We integrate our guiding principles throughout. Content is beneficial to the agencies. Appreciate having all funders present. Reduces administrative burden.
- c. The agencies feel like it's a partnering process. They like being able to share personal stories and hear immediate feedback. Alliance is getting more out of the meetings than they have in the past. Can hear about other projects that we/they don't fund.

2. Plans for FY22

- a. Return to POS (Purchase of Service)
 - i. Recently we have begun discussions about when we can return to POS as well as revising the funding manual for FY22. We concluded that we cannot ask agencies to submit the same kind of funding request they did last year when they don't know what their services will look like (due to coronavirus). Last year we approved requests in May. We funded with the understanding that

agencies would do the best they can and return to regular services asap. They have not been able to return to normal services so we need a better idea of what the provided services look like.

- ii. Right now, there are two parts to how agencies ask for funding: 1) the service profile (not supposed to change) and 2) the funding application. It is likely that the funding application could look different and be due later.
 - iii. Agencies will need to provide budget details about how the funding is being used. We are in the beginning stages about how this could look different.
 - iv. May push the application deadline to April to give agencies more time to figure out how they are going to provide services beginning in July. Whatever we decide to do, we will report back to committee. Want it to be as simple as possible for agencies, be able to transition back easily, and make it portal driven. We are open to new ways of doing things. So even though we are asking the committee to look at the partner funding manual, be aware there may be changes in the information we are asking from them.
 - v. Anticipating a return to POS. We want to stay aligned with the other boards. May keep some agencies as grants who were not originally as grants. Still too early to make a recommendation.
 - vi. All boards are staying with grant funding until the end of the year at least.
- b. Capacity building
- i. Looking at setting aside funding for capacity building. Will there be requests for technology, trainings? Want to be thinking ahead as to how we might be able to support agency requests.
- c. Revenue
- i. ILAF (Independent Living Assistance Fund – once known as ISLA Startup). Offered in St. Charles and St. Louis county. Pairs with ISLA (supported living services). It is a change to the partner funding manual. Not sure what budget impact it will have. Could be an increase or we could look at unused funds and carve out the funding we would need for ILAF. Thinking \$15,000 for FY22. We created some guidelines as to how we can do this. Start conservatively. See what it looks like. Agencies would have to manage it like their current awards. Can use the funding to pay a client's utility bill or put a deposit on an apartment. New or existing clients will be differentiated. Agency could submit up to 6 months of receipts for reimbursement. We think it will relieve some of the burden. The agencies are out there every day and see the need. The committee agreed that it makes sense to consider something like that. The funding supplements when unexpected things come up.
- d. No new funding
- i. Nate spoke to Lisa about revenue, and there are no firm numbers, but she does not anticipate a decrease. May be a little bit of an increase.
 - ii. Not proposing new projects. Will keep things as is for now. Interested in seeing how the new projects are doing (family support and transition age projects). Also following family navigator project – started in St. Louis county and are doing great things
- a. Bill asked what Lisa based her projections on. She may be thinking that there are no new assessments done this next year. Her concern would be with the following year, if property assessments go down.
- b. Committee was ok with not proposing new funding.

3. Mid-year adjustments

- a. There is some funding we know will go unspent in FY21 – due to Family Forward ending their program and contract with us (\$20K). Easterseals Midwest's Project Search high school employment training program has also been discontinued. Host is VA hospital and cannot get in there to do the program.

They had some project admin expenses for first month of this fiscal year. They are done for the rest of the year.

- b. Remaining projects – too soon to say what award usage will remain. May need to meet again in a couple of months and make a recommendation.
- c. St. Louis ARC Parents Learning Together program – They came to us and asked for an increase to their unit rate a few months back. The unit rate they receive from us is well below their audited unit rate. Also missed out on several large fundraising events because of the pandemic. Asked if we would increase their unit rate closer to their audited unit rate. We said we would meet with the committee and revisit mid-year.
 - i. Cindy asked what created that deficit. We never fully funded that program. They lost out on a lot of their fundraising opportunities. Cindy emphasized that it is a critical program.
 - ii. Will try to schedule a January program committee meeting. Can invite ARC to present about the program – how they are doing, where they are. The committee were all in favor of that idea and will go forward with it. Shaelene will reach out to Mark and get a date scheduled for that meeting.

4. Program Updates

- a. Success stories. St. Louis ARC Parents Learning together was recently nominated for a “What’s Right with the Region” award from Focus St. Louis for diversity and inclusion efforts.
- b. Pathways to Independence and Lifebridge have worked together and have been trend setters in collaboration. They were one of the first agencies to deliver virtual services. Have a plan that other agencies are using.
- c. AADD secured several grants for tablets and Wi-Fi access for their participants and helped set it up for them. Simplified the icons - made them accessible. Has been “life-changing”. Two participants had experience with technology and helped others use their devices.
- d. FACT – Pandemic has had an impact on their recruitment. Supported five families in the 1st quarter. Goal is to support 50 by the end of the year. Nate and Ebony will reach out to help them.
- e. Best Buddies is working with schools to launch their service. Typically, activities start in November with their Leadership Conference. Have not served anyone yet, but by January should have people in the program.
- f. St. Louis ARC Launch in the City has had a successful start. Nine people served. Six people in their family support group. Engaged 20 families through their family navigation service.
- g. Delta Gamma and Down Syndrome Association – Nate has had conversations with them. They are serving city residents, but we don’t have numbers yet.
- h. Employment programs are having a hard time.
 - i. Easterseals high school program is on hold. They work with the VA and have several internship sites spread throughout the hospital - Nutrition services, patient transport, etc. They are at John Cochran. Nina asked if Destination Café could partner with them since they seemed to need people. Nate will reach out to Donna.
 - ii. Preferred Family Healthcare’s youth employment is struggling –The organization is experiencing transitions. They had a lot of turnover. They submitted only July billing. Have not asked for anything else. They have three programs with us. Their other two programs are ok. They have people in those programs. Long-term consumers have been getting services from them. Relates to this committee’s earlier discussion – why we might need to modify the funding process. We don’t want agencies to close their doors, but we want to be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars.


- i. UCP Heartland facility-based support – The Oak Tree respite facility normally supports up to eight people overnight. In their efforts to stay open, provide services, keeping social distances, etc. they reduced their capacity to four people at night. Two of those four are somewhat permanent residents until DMH can place them. Projected they would serve twenty residents. Based on usage, will probably serve ten by the end of fiscal year. On pace to spend approximately 80% of their award. Not a red flag, but something we are continuing to monitor. The expenses remain the same, but they can't support as many people. Important service to maintain.

5. Partner Funding Manual for FY22

- a. Proposing some minor revisions. Notable changes are on page 2 of the meeting materials.
 - i. Aligned in new areas – Independent Living Assistance Fund (ILAF) – new name for ISLA Startup to align with PLB and DDRB. DDR will start funding FY22.
 - ii. Aligned in existing areas – Emergency Funding. No longer in the appendices – it is in the funding manual.
 - iii. Revised program expectations and service guidelines based on agency feedback and the pandemic – Allow virtual supports. Now a majority can provide virtual supports at their own determined levels.
 - iv. PLB and DDR consolidated In-Home/Facility-Based Support (respite) services to provide more flexibility to families.
 - v. Revised outcomes based on observations from first aligned funding cycle process. Separated out youth and adult employment training outcomes.
- b. Bill complimented them on the Partner Funding Manual.
- c. Nina asked if we had issues with client/customer having internet access. Some tablets we funded had data plans (e.g. through Rec Council). That was a very successful project. Individuals benefitted from those tablets. AADD got devices for their participants through grants. It comes up in committee / coalition talks. A lot of CARES Act funding has been utilized for that. May be why we are not hearing a lot about it yet. Ebony has asked agencies who have had virtual programming about issues of access. Issues have been mostly about operating the tablet.

Nina North Murphy **moved to adjourn the meeting. Bill seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed. Passed.**
The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 pm.


Cynthia Mueller, Secretary


Date Approved