
Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Minutes
November 10, 2020

Call to Order – The meeting was held virtually via the GoToMeeting platform. DART Co-Chair, Joel Cooper called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

Introductions – Attendees were asked to introduce themselves, including the name of the agency/organization they represent.

Members Present:

Sharmese Anderson (Friends w/Disabilities)
Pat Angerman (Goodwill)
Mary Kay Balaguer (MWSW/ES)
Heather Barsy (ISK)
Hank Bostic (Disability Network)
Gary Clark (LEO)
Joel Cooper (Disability Network)
John Fiore (MRS)
Jonathan Groker (MRC)
Sarah Hutchinson-Chee (Goodwill)

Kathy Lentz (ISK)
Ramona Lumpkin (Recovery Institute)
Sharon Meyer (Speedway)
Jill Murphy (MRS)
Kathy Olsen (MWSW)
Christopher Roach (BSBP)
Sheldon Schwitek (Arc Community Advocates)
Lisa Stanley (MI LEO/MRS)
Chad Timmerman MWSW/PATH)

Approval of Agenda

The November 15, 2020 meeting agenda was approved by consensus of members present.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of September 15, 2020 were approved by consensus of members present.

Agency Updates and COVID-19 Service Delivery

As part of the agency updates, members were asked to share how they are meeting customer needs in all areas of service, what COVID-19 related needs exist where assistance is needed, and any other pertinent information and announcements regarding their agency.

Integrated Services Kalamazoo (ISK) – Kathy Lentz reported Integrated Service Kalamazoo is open for business with limited staff on site for face-to-face and walk-ins. Walk-ins are at 615 Crosstown, Kalamazoo. ISK is considered an essential business and although the Health Department is encouraging remote work, staff need to be open and available to help mitigate tragedies and help individuals with emergencies such as suicide, opioid overdoses, etc. She reported the intake process is going smooth and most are same day appointments. She noted that if individual has private insurance, they will most likely be referred to another provider because individuals on Medicare and Medicaid are filling the available appointments. Determinations are made for each case whether the appointment will be an in-person, by telephone or via a video meeting. For individuals with developmental disabilities, staff first make sure they have necessities such as housing, food and medicine; and then focus on mental health. Staff has seen a striking increase for need due to increased stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, isolation, mental wellness, etc.

Heather Barsy reported staff are working with youth and young adults ages 16-18 as part of the supported employment grant. Overall, supported employment opportunities are doing well at MRC and InterAct and both sites have consistent high quality placements.

MRC Industries – Jonathan Groker reported skill building is at less than 50% attendance as quite a few individuals are nervous about coming back. Staff are seeing many opportunities for additional skill building work and MRS is situated well to receive these orders. He also noted there are many job openings for entry level positions and staff are seeing an increase in placements.

MichiganWorks! Southwest (MW!SW) – Chad Timmerman reported the PATH program is engaging clients, either virtually or by phone.

Unique customer need - He reported PATH staff are seeking individuals or agencies in need of volunteers where the work can be done from home or in some virtual capacity, but mainly from home. Some of the types of projects could include craft work, stuffing envelopes, making calls and handling social media for agencies. This opportunity gives the participants hours towards their community service requirements. Individuals interested in learning more about engaging in this opportunity should contact him by email at ctimmerman@miworkssw.org or by phone at 269-716-6877.

Mary Kay Balaguer reported all MW! Southwest Service Centers in Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo & St. Joseph Counties are back to holding virtual and phone meetings, with no in-person meetings. Many workshops are being offered virtually and the workshop information is available at <https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/events/>. Partner meetings are conducted virtually in all four counties. The Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) building on South Street is open by appointment only from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; however, a limited number of individuals can be in the building at any one time. Staff are updating policies and procedures to address the current situation. Staff continue to receive calls from customers seeking assistance with their Unemployment insurance claims. Employers are hiring and individuals are getting jobs. She encouraged members to [subscribe to the Michigan Works! Southwest weekly Jobs Bulletin](#) to stay up-to-date on the latest job openings, virtual workshops, and other workforce development news.

Unique customer need - Staff are currently seeking assistance in locating a shoe size of 14D for one of the youth participants.

Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan – Sarah Hutchison-Chee reported the Goodwill stores and plant are open for business. Pat Angerman reported Vocational Rehab is meeting face-to-face whenever possible and staff are also doing job development.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) – Jill Murphy reported Project SEARCH is operating with 11 students and creative placements are taking place at six locations. The Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) class is finishing up and students will be testing in two weeks. The MRS office on Westnedge is closed and staff continue to work remotely. Staff are not permitted to do face-to-face meetings; however, some partners are able to hold them. She noted that she too is seeing that there are many jobs available.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Business Services - Lisa Stanley reported the Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) is up and running with a reduced number of students on campus.

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) – Christopher Roach reported BSBP is receiving a lot of referrals. There are no in-person meetings for BSBP staff; thus, they are conducting meetings virtually. Some partners are able to meet with employers. Staff at the Oakland facility are being trained on providing virtual services. Staff are hoping that the BSBP facility can open soon for some one-on-one meetings with social distancing.

Recovery Institute – Ramona Lumpkin reported the Recovery Institute is hosting online virtual meetings with various groups as well as holding some one-on-one meetings at the library or with the court. Staff are finding virtual/remote meetings to be difficult for customers.

Arc Community Advocates – Sheldon Schwitek reported due to the most recent Executive Orders issued by the Governor, staff have moved back to remote work with only one person in the office at a time to limit exposure. Face-to-face meetings with customers are limited. Staff are packing up the office for a move back to the Vine Street area.

MI Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity – Gary Clark reported staff have been out of the office since March. Their building lease expired and it will be at least 18 more months before a bid for a new location will be released. There is \$28 million available for Going Pro Training Fund grants. Businesses cannot use last year’s submissions because the scoring changed and therefore, they must submit a new application. He further reported the Clean Slate Laws most likely will not go into effect for a couple of years. In the interim, LEO-WD has \$4 million available for pilot programs in all MW! areas to help customers who would be affected by these new laws (e.g. expungement, attorney fees, etc.). Staff are not seeing any changes for the Trade (TAA), TANF and WIOA programs. Michigan Works! offices around the State are working remotely.

Speedway – Sharon Meyer reported Speedway is hiring all over Southwest Michigan and Northern Indiana. Interviewing has been challenging and to connect with applicants she uses texting and has conducted both drive-thru and virtual interviews. Speedway has been promoting their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) with their employees.

Friends with Disabilities – Sharmese Anderson reported customers are having a hard time connecting on Metro Connect. To help address this barrier, Friends with Disabilities staff are assisting customers with gift cards for Uber rides; however, they are encountering some problems with Uber availability as well.

Disability Network of Southwest Michigan – Hank Bostik reported he has been assisting veterans with benefits planning. Many of the veterans are reaching out to Disability Network, while others are referred by partners. Professional development available during November and December through Disability Network Southwest Michigan include Web movies and discussions on November 18 and December 8 and Ableism 101 workshops on December 10 and 16. More information is available at <http://www.dnswm.org/events/>.

Unique customer need - Staff are working with Veterans in need of employment opportunities that they can try-out a few hours a week. Members asked Hank to share the skills, strengths and interests of the veterans in need and partners may then be able to assist with referrals.

Veteran Services – Carrie Headworth was not able to attend the meeting; however, she sent information via email and requested that it be shared with members. “If you are a veteran out and about on Veterans Day (Wed, Nov 11) or wish to order in/shop to celebrate Veterans’ Day, check out these links:”

- <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/80347/veterans-day-2020-discounts/>
- <https://militarybenefits.info/miscellaneous-discounts-veterans-day-deals-veterans/>

Work Group Updates

Curriculum - At Your Desktop Training and Resources

Mary Kay Balaguer reported staff are tracking which of the At Your Desktop training modules they complete. Kathy Olsen reported the Desktop Training modules are posted on the Michigan Works! Southwest website. To access the training modules, viewers should select the About tab, then select Board,

then scroll down to the DART heading <https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/about/board/> She encouraged members to share the modules with staff and partners.

Collaboration

Kathy Olsen requested that individuals send updates to the Partner Matrix to her at olsen@upjohn.org.

Emerging Issues Related to Employment and Advocacy

Joel Cooper reported the workgroup summary for LARA’s Implicit Bias Training Stakeholder Engagement is now available. The PDF of the report was emailed to members following the meeting. He shared information regarding an article pertaining to [ending labor exemption that permits paying sub-minimum wages to people with disabilities](#) and the link to the article was emailed to members following the meeting. He also shared that the [Sub-minimum Wage Report](#) from U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is available. Following the meeting, the link to the report was sent to members.

Unique Customer Needs – Resources Needed

Members in attendance shared unique customer needs as noted above, during their agency updates. Members were reminded that if they encounter a customer with unique needs between DART meetings, or if they just need additional information and/or resources, they can send the request to Kathy Olsen at olsen@upjohn.org so that the request can be shared with the full DART membership.

Additional Agency and Guest Updates – No additional updates.

Professional Development Opportunities

It was noted that professional development opportunities could be found on the websites listed below. Some opportunities may offer continuing education credits.

- Disability Network Southwest Michigan – See website for upcoming events <http://www.dnswm.org/>,
- APSE Michigan -See website <https://apse.org/chapter/michigan/>

Next Meeting

The co-chairs will confer with Kathy Olsen and set a schedule for 2021 meeting dates. Kathy Olsen will email the calendar to members.

[Following the meeting, it was determined that the next DART meeting would be held on Tuesday, February 9, 2021 from 2:00-4:00 p. m.]

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kathy Olsen, Project Coordinator / WDB Liaison
Michigan Works! Southwest