
Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Minutes
November 16, 2021 – corrected -

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was held virtually via the GoToMeeting platform. DART Co-Chair, John Fiore called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pat Angerman (Goodwill)

Mary Kay Balaguer (MWSW/ES)

Hank Bostic (Disability Network)

James Cannon (Arc Calhoun)

Sam Dougherty (WDI/MWSW)

Dan Dunn (Comerica)

John Fiore (MRS)

Max Hornick (Disability Network)

Aseel Hussein (MWSW)

Jonathan Kraker (MRC)

Kathy Lentz (ISK)

Kathy Olsen (MWSW)

Jordan Stripling (KRESA)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Kathy Lentz and supported by Sam Dougherty to approve the DART meeting agenda for November 16, 2021. The agenda was approved by consensus of members present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Dan Dunn and supported by Mary Kay Balaguer to approve the DART meeting minutes of September 14, 2021. The minutes were approved by consensus of members present.

AGENCY UPDATES/INTRODUCTIONS

Michigan Works! Southwest – Adult & Dislocated Worker Services – Sam Dougherty reported staff are currently recruiting for another Access for All cohort in Kalamazoo. He explained that Access for All is a pre-apprenticeship training designed to prepare individuals for entering into a construction trades apprenticeship training program.

Michigan Works! Southwest – Employment Services / Youth Services - Mary Kay Balaguer reported Effective November 7, 2021, all new Unemployment claimants must register to work. Individuals need to complete an appointment either virtually or in-person. She reported that a benefit week runs Sunday through Saturday and individuals can enter a claim Sunday night or come into a Michigan Works! Office on Mondays.

Goodwill Industries – Pat Angerman reported Goodwill programs are up and running. There are also multiple job openings at Goodwill locations throughout the counties in Southwest Michigan.

Integrated Services Kalamazoo (ISK) – Kathy Lentz reported InterAct is winding down business operations. They had two employment programs, one being Supported Employment opportunities which is now a subsidiary of Community Living Options at InterAct and some staff from InterAct are now employed at Integrated Services Kalamazoo. The contact information for these staff has not changed. Ms. Lentz further reported on the Supported Employment Grant through SAMSA that began at the beginning of COVID. The grant provides extra funding to serve youth and focuses on addressing youth mental illness or severe emotional disturbances. Disability Network Southwest Michigan has been a great resource and partner.

KRESA Young Adults Program and Project SEARCH – Jordan Stripling reported referrals for the next program year for Project SEARCH are due December 10, 2021. She reported staff have received great feedback from Bronson in regard to this year’s cohort.

MRC Industries – Jonathan Kraker reported the Pathways clubhouse on Vine Street is winding down operations. Skill Building and Art Works are growing and expanding. MRC took on a few community employment participants from InterAct. Case management referrals from InterAct are currently paused due to a couple of open positions at MRC that need to be filled. Chris Ziegler, CEO of MRC has announced retirement no later than June 1, 2022. MRC will be looking to fill that position and it will be posted in a couple of weeks.

Arc of Calhoun County – James Cannon reported he was new to the DART Committee. Although he has worn many hats at Arc since 2015, he is currently the Community Coordinator. He works with the volunteer program and maintains sites and relationships.

Comerica Bank - Dan Dunn reported that since Comerica raised their minimum wage to \$17.00/hour for some entry level positions requiring a GED or a high school diploma, the number of applicants has increased. Some of the more advanced positions continue to be more difficult to fill.

Disability Network Southwest Michigan – Hank ~~Bostik~~ **Bostic** reported Yvonne Fleener has been hired as the new President and CEO of Disability Network Southwest Michigan. She replaced Joel Cooper who has retired. She comes to Disability Network with 25 years of experience and her prior work included Helping Hands Respite Care in Lansing. Disability Network will be making some changes to the [Link](#), their current newsletter and will be adding a new newsletter called [DARE to Impact Change](#). This new publication will be focused on Disability Justice and individuals can sign up on the website to receive it. Training classes scheduled for December are posted on their website and staff are currently planning a schedule of classes for January and February. The Disability Network website has an Advocacy area and he reported there is a bill currently in the Senate to remove ‘handicap’ from State signage. He introduced Max Hornick and reported that Max will provide information on a new Desktop Training module at today’s meeting.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) – John Fiore reported many of the staff have been working in the office. The lobby is not open for walk-in customers; however, staff will meet in the office for scheduled appointments. He reported the number of referrals across the service area has been low and encouraged members to make referrals of individuals with disability barriers who are interested in employment. MRS may be able to assist with employment and training and placement. He also expressed a desire to increase services to students and offered to follow-up with Jordan Stripling at KRESA.

WORK GROUP UPDATES

Curriculum - At Your Desktop Training and Resources

Kathy Olsen highlighted a summary of the desktop training modules that was included in the agenda packet. The summary included hyperlinks to each of the modules. She also 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 other members of their staff and partners, other Michigan Works! Agencies, and the Michigan Works! Association.

Max Hornick from Disability Network Southwest Michigan provided an overview of a new training module on the topic of transportation. Transportation has always been an issue for individuals with disabilities and COVID has had a direct impact on this resource. He reported that he previously taught individuals to use

public transportation in Kalamazoo County and realizes individuals will need updated information on transportation changes in order to access and utilize these resources. The presentation included information regarding key forms of public transportation, the pre-pandemic landscape of services and the COVID-19 impacts on the public transportation system. The training module also included changes in transportation resources in the Michigan Works! Southwest area. Once the module is finalized, it will be sent to members.

Collaboration

Kathy Olsen reported updates were made to the Partner Matrix. Two members, John Fiore and Jordan Stripling reported they had additional updates and committed to sending the updates to Kathy Olsen so that they can be added to the Matrix. Kathy Olsen requested that members send any additional updates to the Partner Matrix to her at olsen@upjohn.org.

Emerging Issues Related to Employment and Advocacy

John Fiore reported that DART is seeking an individual, or perhaps a team of 2-3 individuals to head up this work group. They would be responsible for keeping a watchful eye on policies that may affect individuals with disabilities.

UNIQUE CUSTOMER NEEDS

One example discussed was to identify resources to assist a job seeker who recently experienced a significant loss of two family members.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Disability Network Southwest Michigan – See website for upcoming events <http://www.dnswm.org/>
- APSE Michigan -See website <https://apse.org/chapter/michigan/>
- DART Desktop Training Modules <https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/about/board/> (Scroll down to the heading Disability Awareness Resource Team)

NEXT MEETING

Members agreed to continue to reserve two hours for the meeting with the option to end early if the agenda is finished early. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 8, 2022, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Kathy Olsen will send the 2022 meeting calendar to members.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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