



COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Disability Services Reform

Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Aging and Disability Services
January 2022

Introduction

During 2019, the Office of Aging and Disability Services (OADS) participated in numerous stakeholder group meetings. OADS used the feedback from those meetings and developed a reform plan with the goal of addressing high priority topics. To accomplish our goals, OADS established four primary Work Groups: Communication, Community Membership, Innovation, and Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement. These Work Groups are made up of a cross representation of individuals who are invested in improving developmental disability services in Maine including representatives from individuals receiving services, agency providers, family members, advocates, and state agency staff at OADS.

The Community Membership Work Group was charged with developing recommendations that focused on four areas: Person Centered Planning, Self Determination, Self-Advocacy and Family Support; Implementation of Employment First Statute and practices, Community Involvement and Membership; The Home and Community Based Rule after 2023 Compliance.

In each of the four topic areas covered in the year of full group and small group work, the members invited speakers to share information, explored other state best practices, brought forward their knowledge from their respective areas and listened closely to group members coming at these topics from different perspectives and engaged in meaningful, respectful conversations with each other.

In drafting the recommendations, the members continued to discuss themes and organization of the recommendations. The group determined the recommendations can also be considered in the following contexts: Information Dissemination and Resources; Skill Development, External Engagement and Quality Outcomes, across the four focus areas.

OADS would like to thank the following participants in this Community Membership Work Group for their enthusiasm and dedication to participating in this work group and contribution to the development of meaningful recommendations for OADS to consider.

Community Membership Work Group Member

Margaret Cardoza (Self-Advocate)

Rachel Dyer (Advocacy-DD Council)

Mike Nealy (SUFU Member)

Janet May (U of Maine Transition-CCIDS)

Jean Youde (Parent)

Lauren Wille (Advocacy-DRM)

Monique Stairs (SUFU Staff)

Cheryl Guimond (OADS)

Amanda Karombo (Provider- Happy Haven)

Lisa Cline (OADS)

Frances Ryan (Provider- Port Resources)

Derek Fales (Co-Chair-OADS)

Linda LaRue-Keniston (Provider-Work First)

Lisa Sturtevant (Co-Chair-OADS)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Membership/Involvement

1. Add Social Role Valorization (SRV) resources and training information to the Office of Aging and Disability Services (OADS) website and determine interest in a Maine SRV group, in conjunction with people who have an SRV background.
2. Provide information, resources and support regarding volunteer opportunities that show how individuals can be supported to be an active volunteer in places that meet their interests with opportunities to build skills and make connections in their communities.
3. Expand the current OADS webpage on Community Involvement by adding more resources, links, and tools. Ensure providers, families, and individuals served know about the webpage and have opportunities to assist in the development of it by making suggestions for new additions.
4. Develop a virtual guide with options for curriculum, resources, tools and shared success stories and best practices that can be used by providers.
5. Create opportunities for individuals, families, providers, and case managers to understand how individuals can be successfully engaged in non-disability specific community places in valued roles.
6. Offer technical assistance to providers of Community Support through training and individualized technical assistance, focused on how to help individuals better access their communities and begin a pathway to employment.

Person-Centered Planning, Self-Advocacy, Self Determination, Family Support

7. Develop, share, and talk about common definitions such as *Informed Choice* and *Independence*, using examples to help everyone more clearly understand the meanings.
8. Develop and share resources and information on Self-Advocacy, Self Determination and Informed Choice in conjunction with self-advocates, including training on Self-Advocacy, Self Determination and Informed Choice to all – individuals, families, providers, case managers, and others.
9. Create plain language tools on facilitating meetings and developing a person-centered plan that allows for varying methods, styles and type of approach.
10. Survey the documents that are required in Person-Centered Planning and remove duplication to streamline the documents to ensure fidelity to the process.
11. Create the capacity to do direct consistent messaging to individuals and families. Everyone involved should understand and be conversant in Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy and sharing positive information and resources.

12. Ensure families have information that they need through multiple methods- subscribed emails, website, and plain language information. Provide an option for families to have an OADS contact if needed.
13. Create, find, and implement discovery tools that can be used to guide and inform the Person-Centered Plan with a focus on valued roles, places in communities, skills, and interests, including Charting the Life Course in 2023.
14. Provide practical, educational, and direct technical assistance opportunities for people-centric engagement through multiple training mediums and direct interfaces for direct support professionals, individuals, families, providers and community members around the areas of self-determination, building interconnected inclusive communities, and supporting a pathway to employment for everyone with a disability in all services
15. Enhance and maintain existing advisory committees that are inclusive of all persons of disabilities, self-advocates, advocates, providers, and community members to address elements of quality improvement within the Home and Community Based Services Waivers (Section 18, 19, 20, 21 and 29).
16. Create an evaluation process to survey the Person-Centered Planning team to provide information on the quality of services being provided, the effectiveness of Department tools and education in ensuring the process results in an individualized, comprehensive, and effective plan.
17. Start the Person-Centered Planning process for individuals while they are still attending high school.
18. Ensure system change includes Self-Advocacy, Self Determination, and Informed Choice as talking/decision points for any changes. Are individuals involved in decision making? Is information shared directly and are individuals and families able to make informed decisions about support and services?

Employment First Implementation

19. Capture and highlight stories of individuals in waiver programs who are successfully employed in various types of employment in Maine. These stories should be widely shared with individuals, families, case managers/care coordinators and others.
20. Work with others including state agencies, individuals and families, agencies, advocates, and system groups to develop and share a consistent vision that employment is possible with a focus on raising expectations.
21. Increase ongoing trainings focused on Community Membership with a focus on employment, that can be recorded and speak to various audiences, evaluate effectiveness regularly to inform topics and needs.
22. Ensure access to employment services for individuals in waiver programs that includes implementation of the Employment First Maine Report 2016 recommendations; including tracking of individuals on a path to work, employment outcomes, joint training and technical support to providers, and access to statewide services both through the state Vocational Rehabilitation programs and through the waiver employment services.

HCBS 2023 Forward

23. Ensure access to available training through OADS website in plain language for families, individuals and self-advocates on Rights and Standards on Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) through a variety of formats, such as videos, fact sheets, and practical scenarios that are accessible and meet 508 compliance.
24. Ensure access for providers through OADS webpage on Rights and Standards with expectations in plain language, with useable examples such as fact sheets by services, templates for self-assessment, easy to use remediation activities, and ability to provide feedback.
25. Create a one stop access point within the OADS website, that is easily identified and available, where stakeholders can receive information such as performance outcomes, unmet needs, waitlists, priority areas being addressed, what's new and important changes.
26. Support a system that goes beyond trainings and offers support for implementation of HCBS, communities of practice or ways of sharing what is working.
27. Design and implement system reforms with clear expectations, cross walks to practical application, use principles of plain language, tools to measure outcomes and an electronic hub to collect and store information that is readily available.
28. Ensure the HCBS monitoring process for assessing settings and individual experience is clear, transparent and allows for alternate ways to collect evidence of ongoing HCBS compliance.