

Developmental Services (DS) Task Force System & Fiscal Reform Workgroup

Workgroup Discussion & Recommendations November 9, 2020

The System & Fiscal Reform Workgroup met on November 9, 2020 to discuss recommendations for improvements to the Alternative Nonresidential Services (Alternative Services) model during the COVID-19 State of Emergency, and recommendations for system improvements beyond the COVID-19 State of Emergency based on common themes from the workgroup's meeting on January 15, 2020. Below is a summary of the discussion and priorities identified by the workgroup.

Alternative Services Model

What is working?

- Innovative services with person-centered focus and individual choice
- Flexibility with staffing ratio requirements
- Offers service providers flexibility to deliver more one-to-one services tailored to individual consumers and their families

What improvements would you recommend?

- Define consumer outcomes
 - Provide meaningful and effective services that support consumers' lifestyles and needs during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Identify what services consumers are receiving and how often
 - Develop qualitative and quantitative outcome measurements
 - Compare indirect vs. direct support outcomes
 - Provide guidance that ties in the consumer's individual program plan (IPP)
 - Help providers come into compliance with the HCBS Final Rule
- Measure consumer satisfaction
 - Consider isolation
 - Identify what is and isn't working for consumers and their families
 - Address unmet needs
- Establish additional guardrails for provider accountability
 - Staff retention and wages – Workforce is changing, and we can no longer expect to retain minimum wage staff; Providers need a more skilled workforce with different sets of traits and skills
 - Establish auditing requirements and guardrails for spending Alternative Services money
 - Make sure providers know what services can be explored/provided

System Improvements

Long-term recommendations for system improvements after the public health crisis:

- Move away from a utilization-based system and toward an outcome-based system
- Improve the community's understanding of service options such as Participant-Directed Services and the Self-Determination Program
- Standardization of service codes
- Develop a sustainable rates system
 - Financial Management Services (FMS) rates are too low; Explore rate structure that incorporates outreach costs
- Reduce administrative burdens through automation
 - Make processes more efficient; For example, minimum wage rate adjustments are labor intensive
 - Link technology with outcomes

Short-term recommendations for system improvements during the public health crisis:

- Focus on maintaining funding during an economic downturn; Consider reaching outside the system for funding
- System funding for rate increases – Consider universal minimum wage rate increases; Many providers do not receive minimum wage rate increases until months later under the current rate adjustment system based on cost sheets; Protect funding to support direct service providers
- Consider alternative payment options that focus on outcomes/person-centeredness
- System funding for both internet and devices for consumers
- Provide incentives for moving consumers out of higher-level homes
- System funding to support staff and regional centers; service coordinators are overwhelmed and essential