

DODD HCBS ARPA Projects – OHCA Feedback

Feedback on DODD proposals:

- 1) Can DODD provide clarification on the amount of funds being utilized for the ADS Quality Pilot? During the previous call, Steve Beha said that this was the total to be paid out prior to 3/31/25, but the draft application that was shared had the \$10.6M being annually.
- 2) Did the department discuss the concern with the \$7.5M for Family Care Connections? The concern was that these HCBS ARPA funds are supposed to be used to enhance, expand or strengthen HCBS, but the department was looking to use these funds for people who are not on waivers. While we believe there are people on waivers who have max'd out their budgets or have been denied a prior authorization for items and could utilize these funds, \$7.5M seems like a large amount. We'd like to discuss the reasonability of the amount given the restricted use of the funds for HCBS ARPA dollars.
- 3) We recognize the need for universal changing tables in public locations to increase access to community integration. Can DODD share how many changing tables the \$1M will support and do you have a plan for locations across the state?
- 4) For many of the other items included in the "Supports for People Receiving Services and their Families", can the department share the anticipated reach for these efforts? Will they be state-wide, how many individuals/family members are expected to participate and are there known experts in these areas to provide the education, training, mentorship and other outcomes anticipated by these projects?
- 5) We support the DSP portal project, but caution that it needs to be created in a way that is flexible or it may not have any benefit. It should allow for DSPs or employers to enter training records. It also should be easy to enter information and upload training certificates while also directly connecting to DODD's MyLearning, MAIS, etc. to automatically capture trainings provided through various DODD offerings. If staff are expected to enter their own information, there is not a huge incentive for them to do so, especially if they have to do this during un-paid hours. The key is to have stakeholder engagement in the development of this portal.
- 6) OHCA appreciates DODD revising the intent behind the DSP Support Network to allow for various provider specific projects. Depending on availability of funds, this is a bucket that could use some additional funding to ensure many providers have access to these projects.
- 7) We received split reactions to the ERN funds. We have some organizations who are participating in ERNs who absolutely love them and we have others who feel like they do not provide any benefit. From our conversations, it appears that the success or lack thereof is tied back to the ERN staff and their dedication to really finding solutions to the everyday challenges staff face which keep them from being successful in their role as a DSP. We would suggest considering tying funding for the ERN to outcomes.
- 8) MSY continue to be one of the most challenging segments of our population to serve with the current HCBS structure. OHCA supports utilizing HCBS ARPA funding to identify these challenges and potential solutions which would enable providers to serve people with complex needs. However, it is imperative that providers are included in that conversation. We have members who have either historically served this population and made the decision not to serve any new MSY or have attempted to serve these children and have not been able to do so properly with our current system. Those providers should be involved to share what resources need to be provided to make it feasible for more providers to serve this population.

OHCA Recommendations/Proposals:

- 1) Transportation Related Grants: As we discussed the availability of HCBS ARPA funds, the intent of the funds to be utilized to enhance, expand or strengthen HCBS and the one-time and time-limited nature of the funds, the overwhelming response from members was to utilize funds to assist with transportation. Availability of funds to purchase, modify or maintain vehicles, train staff so they feel confident in driving larger vehicles and the overall sourcing of drivers are having a major impact on the ability for providers to encourage and assist individuals in maximizing their participation in their communities. It is unreasonable to expect DSPs to first own a vehicle, then maintain it and provide insurance and then utilize their personal vehicles to transport the people they serve. Public transportation, especially accessible transportation, is also not always available, timely or reliable. OHCA proposes to utilize \$10M of the HCBS ARPA funds for transportation related grants.
- 2) One of the questions I asked during our previous meeting was if there were any projects that are being funded by the innovative technology grants that we could use these funds to expand. In speaking with Gina Kerman of Rose-Mary, they are doing a project to create short videos with important information about individuals that can be used to assist with training DSPs who will support them. However, Gina stated that it is a time-consuming process and difficult when the expertise needed is not easily available. Taking this information, we discussed Silfies Media as having the expertise needed. Silfies Media provided two proposals that could be funded with one-time HCBS ARPA funds. More in-depth proposals have been provided, but here are short descriptions of the two projects:
 1. THIS IS ME – ISP Profile Project: \$1.44M
 - a. We would be able to do 15 profiles/month or 180 profiles in the span of a 12-month period. I do believe that once we get the process down, we could potentially do more than that/month, but I would rather state what is possible today and not overshoot the expectations.
 2. STATEWIDE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN: \$214K
 - a. We are currently running this exact campaign for the state of Virginia, and it has been an incredible project that will impact local communities across the entire state. I would love to be able to replicate this project for the state of Ohio (the state that I love!)
 - b. If we were able to run this campaign in Ohio, I think it would give us the legs to be able to pitch to connections we have nationally to create a national “Are You In” campaign and Ohio would be seen as the frontrunner and leader in that campaign, which would just be incredible.
- 3) Community Experience Grants: Participating in community activities increases a person’s opportunities to form and maintain relationships with others in their community. While both state and federal organizations have recognized the need to promote community integration for individuals with developmental disabilities, we often forget one of the biggest barriers to enabling individuals to experience their community is the lack of personal funds available for individuals and their support staff to cover the cost of participating in that community event/activity. For example, just the cost of admission for two adults (individual and support staff) and parking at the Columbus Zoo is \$50-60 (depending on county of residence). Most community-based experiences are cost more than individuals can afford and these costs often prevent individuals from trying new things. We propose setting up grants which would allow individuals, families or providers to submit requests for funding of community experiences for people receiving services. OHCA recommends utilizing \$5M of the HCBS ARPA funds for this grant.