

## **Meeting summary for ID/DD Member Call (02/14/2024)**

### **Quick recap**

Debbie Jenkins rescheduled the next week's member call to 11 am to allow members to attend a DOD webinar on innovative technology grants. She mentioned the upcoming release of an assistive technology grant for ICF providers and the availability of DOD's Rapid Response Application. Debbie also discussed the challenges of securing funding for technology purchases and the lack of clarity regarding the reporting of costs for technology not funded by alternate sources. Additionally, she mentioned ongoing discussions about technology subscription services and the results of a 2022 DSP compensation survey indicating a high turnover rate within the first year of employment.

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### **Summary**

#### **DOD's Tech Grant and Training for ICF Providers**

Debbie Jenkins announced the rescheduling of the next week's member call to 11 am, a full hour earlier than usual, to allow members to partake in a webinar on innovative technology grants organized by DOD. She shared that the department is set to release an assistive technology grant for ICF providers within the next couple of weeks. Additionally, ICF providers will have access to DOD's Rapid Response Application. This application is designed to connect service planners with technology vendors to help identify technology that can assist individuals in becoming more independent. The department plans to provide training on the use of the Rapid Response Application and the grant.

#### **Technology Funding, Reporting, and Retention Strategies**

Debbie Jenkins discussed the challenges of securing funding for technology purchases and the lack of clarity regarding the reporting of costs for technology not funded by alternate sources. She mentioned ongoing discussions about technology subscription services, with concerns raised by the Department of Medicaid. Debbie also brought up the results of a 2022 DSP compensation survey, indicating a high turnover rate within the first year of employment, and suggested a need to focus on retention strategies for new employees. She also mentioned an upcoming bulletin and a call to discuss these issues.

#### **DSP Apprenticeship Program Proposal**

Debbie Jenkins discussed the possibility of creating a DSP apprenticeship program in collaboration with the Ohio Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (OADSP). The program would require specific elements, including a minimum of 144 hours of training and 2000 hours of on-the-job work experience. Apprentices would also need to have a starting wage, with potential increases upon completion of the apprenticeship. The

program is aimed at new hires and the goal is to reduce turnover and onboarding costs. A call was planned to discuss the program in more detail, with interested parties invited to participate.

### **Grant Funding and Disability Act Updates**

Debbie Jenkins discussed potential grant funding opportunities from the Department of Developmental Disabilities and other national and state sources. She addressed questions about the eligibility criteria for these grants and mentioned that further details would be discussed in an upcoming meeting. Additionally, Debbie shared updates about the bipartisan Disability Community Act introduced in the US House of Representatives, which aims to increase Federal Medicaid funding for services impacting the DD community. However, she expressed skepticism about the bill's likelihood of passing due to the current political climate in DC.

### **Employee Retention Tax Credit Eligibility**

Debbie Jenkins shared her insights from a webinar on the employee retention tax credit, emphasizing that companies should double-check their eligibility for the tax credit and be aware of the voluntary disclosure program offered by the IRS. She clarified that the eligibility criteria involve a reduction in gross receipts each quarter or a full or partial suspension of operations due to an order. Pete van Runkle added that there has been IRS activity in the skilled nursing world regarding this issue, with a significant factor being whether CDC guidelines, backed up by federal regulations, are considered the same as an order.

### **Update, Survey, Scholarship, DOD Webinar Time Change**

Debbie Jenkins led a discussion about various topics. She gave an update on the employment service project, mentioning that there was no new information from the Department. Josh Anderson added that there was a meeting with Keith Banner planned for the upcoming month. Josh also talked about a workforce survey that was developed with the coalition of provider associations, urging everyone to complete it. Debbie encouraged people to take advantage of a scholarship program for educational needs and a certification scholarship program. Finally, Debbie mentioned that the next call would be at 11 AM instead of noon due to a conflict with a DOD webinar.

### **Next steps**

- Debbie will share information about the assistive technology grant and training when it becomes available.
- Debbie will send out a bulletin about the DSP apprenticeship program.
- Attend the Zoom meeting tomorrow at noon to learn more about the apprenticeship program.

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