**Olmstead Working Group Meeting**

**January 7, 2020**

**Watha T. Daniel Shaw Neighborhood Library Meeting Room**

**4 pm- 6 pm**

**Members present:** Leyla Sarigol (DHCF), Jonathan Brooks (DBH), Monica Swintz (OCA), Ed Bynum (DDS), Charlotte Roberts (DDS), Vanessa Monroe (DC Advocacy Partners) Denise McNeal (Dreamers and Achievers), Crystal Thomas (DDS), Mathew McCollough (ODR), Kirk Dobson (DDS), Michael Strong (DDS), Adam Mingal (DACL), Jessica Hunt (ODR), Robin Shuffert (Georgetown UCEDD), Mark Miller (Long-Term Care Ombudsman), Tony Cancelosi (Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind), Lynn Dey (ASL interpreter), Brianne Welsh (ASL interpreter), Iris Gomes (Resident), Ron Farris (Resident, Sonja Simons (Resident), Marjorie Gilliard (State Rehabilitation Council), NaQuran Smith (ODR), Jessica Hunt (ODR)

Meeting convened at 3:57 PM.

**Introduction**: Members introduced themselves and provided a brief description of their interest in the Olmstead Working Group.

**Purpose of Meeting**: ODR provided a brief history of the District’s Olmstead Plan, indicating that the purpose of this meeting is to begin development of the next three-year Olmstead Plan. This meeting is the first of at least four community meetings to gather input with the goal of developing a new three-year Plan prior to the end of Calendar Year 2020. Minutes for each meeting will be published on ODR’s website under the Olmstead Plan tab: <https://odr.dc.gov/page/olmstead>. During the development phase for the new Plan, the District will be expected to continue to report using the current 2017-2020 Plan.

**Current Olmstead Plan**: The current Olmstead Plan solidified the District’s person-centered approach to services, and focused on utilizing the NWD funding that the District received in 2014-2015. The agencies who report out on the goals in the current Plan are Department on Disability Services (DDS), Department of Behavioral Heath (DBH), Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL), and the state Medicaid agency, the Department of Healthcare Finance (DHCF).

**Group activity**: Members were asked to discuss as one large group the three proposed priorities for the upcoming Plan: Housing, Employment, and Healthcare. The group was asked to decide what programs and services in these areas are working well and what are some needed areas of improvement.

Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind brought up the need for accessibility and accessibility through technology is important in all of these areas. ODR highlighted the effective communications policy the agency is developing to address the accessibility of websites, social media, and written and online materials.

Georgetown UCEDD brought up the need for language access and culutural and linguistic competency in terms of the way the District presents information to the public. Each agency discussed the current processes and practices it has to ensure language access and culutural competency but it was acknowledged that this is an ongoing process to meet the needs of residents who may not speak English as their primary language.

**Discussion of Priorities—Housing**. Things that are working well: 1) DBH mentioned the initiatives/incentives for first time homebuyers; and the inclusionary zoning program. 2) Housing is included as part of the discharge planning for people at Saint Elizabeths.

Areas of improvement: 1) Renters don’t know about the inclusionary zoning program through Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). 2) Additionally, the lottery process can be confusing, and the price of a subsidized unit can be cost-prohibitive. The problem, the group agreed is, that renters may not be able to afford the price for more than one year. 3) Individuals do not know about the Rental Housing Act (published in 2016). 4) District residents are being pushed out of DC into Maryland for more affordable housing. 5) There is not enough physically accessible housing in DC. 6) People who need nursing home care but may have a history of violence have difficulty finding places to accept them.

**Healthcare**. Things that are working: 1) The DC Peer Specialist program helps people achieve recovery with the assistance of their peers. 2) DC provides PCA hours for those who need them, and home therapy. 3) DC Medicaid has some gap coverage to address things not covered by federal insurance. 3) Residents can work with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman to determine what mix of benefits may be right for them.

Areas of Improvement: 1) Residents feel that they have to choose between healthcare and adequate housing because inaccessibility of housing can affect their health. 2) There is not consistent access to durable medical equipment. 3) Residents have difficulty accessing benefits when using both primary and secondary insurance. 3) People who do not meet the financial eligibility for Medicaid cannot always get the coverage they need. 4) There is a lack of services in the District for the Deaf Blind community.

**Employment**. Things that are working: 1) Aspiring Professionals program provides young adults paid internships with DC government. 2) The PREAPS Program for is for high school students who are blind or Deaf blind, hosted by Catholic University. 3) There are efforts by DDS and ODR to ensure employers comply with ADA. 4) There is a program for seniors who want to go back to work. 4) Ban the Box helps returning citizens go back to work. 5) DBH has a strong supported employment program.

Areas of improvement: 1) There is a high unemployment rate for people with disabilities.2) There needs to be someone from Department of Employment Services (DOES) at the table to help them understand that they are required to work with people with disabilities; that is not just a job for DDS. 3) There needs to be more awareness/campaign around these programs.

**Next meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Saturday, February 29, tentatively at Anacostia Library. The Group is looking to host its March meeting in a nursing care facility to get the input of people currently in long-term care.

Meeting adjourned at 5:52 pm.