



*Seeking Employment, Equality and Community for
People with Developmental Disabilities*

SEEC E-News

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SEEC is a First Round Winner in Workforce Solutions Challenge!



SEEC is proud to report that we have been selected as one of five semi-finalists in The Blazing Trails for Community Based Direct Support Professional competition sponsored by The Administration for Community Living (ACL), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This three-tiered national contest gives financial awards to inspire agencies to create innovative strategies to elevate the profession and increase socioeconomic well-being of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) nationwide.

As part of this competition, SEEC offered solutions through our proposed pilot: Building Tomorrow's DSP WorkFORCE (Fostering Opportunities, Recognition, Competencies, and Excellence), offering a dynamic, innovative, results-oriented strategy for addressing the current pressures faced by DSPs. Through intentional overtime, trainings, credentialing, and peer-to-peer mentoring, DSPs will attain a higher standard of living, improved quality of life, and stronger competencies to perform at their highest level to effectively support a diverse IDD population.

The Blazing New Trails Competition aims to strengthen the (DSP) workforce and overall stability of home and community-based services for people served. The challenge seeks to engage the disability community to innovate, pilot, and expand initiatives that will transform the DSP workforce to a sought-after profession with opportunities for career growth, increased job satisfaction, improved quality of life, and higher wages.

The second round of the competition will be held later this month, with the five semi-finalists making presentations to the ACL awards committee. Three winners of that round will receive \$30,000 each to continue their programs. A final award of \$120,000 will be given to a single winner in late summer.

Inside This Issue

- Administration for Community Living (ACL) Announces SEEC as First Round Winner
- What's Up with Services?!
- SEEC is an Early Adopter
- A New Database Called iCareManager
- SEEC Night of Stars a Success
- How Mentorship Can Lead to Employment

- Congratulations to Our Newest Mentors
- Volunteer Corner

What's Up with Services?!

A monthly update on re-envisioning SEEC services post pandemic

By Sherry Beamer, Director of Services



In July 2015 Bernie Simons, the Deputy Secretary of Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration, announced a system transformation of policies and funding processes to create a flexible, person-centered, family-oriented system of supports so people can have full lives. This system commits to doing business efficiently, effectively, and professionally by strengthening the community and enhancing service delivery across the state.

As of July 1, SEEC will be assisting the State of Maryland as an early adopter in the new service management system named “LTSS” that is part of this transformation. With this change come new Service Definitions that provide an assortment of opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Maryland to receive support in pursuing their life goals. This article provides a basic beginning introduction to the key changes of those definitions described by SEEC’s tagline Live, Work, Thrive.

Live – Supported Living and Personal Supports

These services were moved into the LTSS system in November 2020. This change necessitated that Personal Supports required Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) where staff clock-in and out through LTSS for work from the person’s home.

Work –

These new definitions will assist Maryland to further become an Employment First state. “Supported Employment” will be replaced by the service options below.

- Discovery – 3 months to identify abilities, conditions, interests before employment
- Job Development – 3 months to develop a job based on Discovery results, including self-employment
- Ongoing Supports – to learn, complete job tasks and maintain a job when new, after promotion, or other changes; includes job coaching, travel training, personal care assistance
- Follow-Along Supports – assistance to maintain a job with at least two monthly direct contacts

Thrive –

Support Services (Assistive Technology, Behavior and Nursing Supports) have not changed significantly. In 2022 SEEC intends to increase our ability to provide Assistive Technology (AT) supports. AT items include devices that assist with speech and communication, vision, hearing, computer alternatives, environmental control, reminders, and health monitoring. Services are provided to support the use and maintenance of the AT devices.

Community Development Services will continue to be key funding for SEEC’s

Community Engagement and Project Search programs. The new definition allows for virtual supports and time-limited internships and apprenticeships to learn employment skills.

SEEC is an Early Adopter

By **Donné Allen, Director of Projects**

LTSS Maryland

In February 2021, SEEC began its transition from the current Department of Disabilities Administration (DDA) billing system into the new Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) system which will coordinate payments and service delivery in a more effective and streamlined manner. SEEC is one of three agencies that will “go live” in the new billing system on July 1, 2021 with more agencies following in October and January. Needless to say, the process for SEEC to move in this direction has been a big undertaking and we have an “all hands-on deck” collaborative approach.

Within the process to undergo this systemic shift is a large planning team made up of 8 sub-teams with a very specific charge to align our structure with the new components within LTSS. Each sub-team has a “Captain” or “Co-Captain” along with a small team of staff that analyzes our processes, problem solves on issues and develops solutions to align with our new billing structure.

- Pre-planning Team Captains: Shari Carver and Heather Adams
- Person Centered Planning (PCP) Team Captains: Tamnika Gaulden and Mishal Karim
- PCP Approval Process Team Captain: Lydia Aimone
- Management Information System Captains: Djibril Kamara and Elizabeth Kauffman
- Services Delivery Team Captains: Sherry Beamer and Donné Allen
- Data Approvals Team Captains: Paco Scott, Jessica Neely and Sherry Beamer
- Billing Process Team Captains: Paco Scott, Bonny Roy
- Payment Team Captains: TBD

The team captains meet on a biweekly basis to understand the implications of the latest DDA updates, the interconnectedness of our work and bring forward any concerns or issues that need collaborative problem solving. Team captains then meet biweekly with their designated teams during subsequent weeks for planning and progress review of the teams’ focus. The SEEC Leadership team also receives regular updates through rotating presentations from each team as they communicate their progress and plans to address the work ahead. With the strategic focus and efforts of all of our internal stakeholders, SEEC continues to lead change within the State of Maryland. Stay tuned for more LTSS Early Adopter updates on this effort!

More Improvements at SEEC! A New Database Called iCareManager

iCareManager (iCM) is SEEC’s new database management system and it is replacing our current Penelope database. iCM will make it easier to input data, process that data and output



meaningful information. We are transitioning to iCM to take advantage of an application that is fully integrated with the LTSS Billing System, to provide easy access to data, forms and reports at all levels of the company and to minimize the use of multiple systems to record information. Converting to a new database takes a lot of training and preparation and over the next few months our IT and Knowledge Management departments will be hard at work making these conversions and ensuring all staff have the information they need to use the new systems correctly. It's an exciting change and an improvement in our current system.

SEEC: A Night of Stars a Success!

By Katrina Kugel, Events Manager



On Saturday, April 24th hundreds of supporters joined us online for a fun and inspirational virtual event celebration. Sizhe Xie kicked off the event with a warm welcome and Karen Lee and Steve Blanks were our fabulous MCs for the evening. They debuted a two-minute video highlighting all that makes SEEC, and the people we support, so special. The evening also featured highlights of some of the “SEEC Stars”, the staff, people we support, and partners who have gone above and beyond during this most challenging year.

We raffled off a pair of diamond earrings and our silent auction was sold out by the end of the evening. Thanks to the amazing donations from our supporters and sponsors, we exceeded our goal and **raised over \$175,000!** Thank you to everyone who helped be a part of our success! We look forward to gathering in person next year!

[Click here to watch our new two minute video!](#)

[Watch Video](#)

[Click here to watch a recording of the event!](#)

[Watch Video](#)

How Mentorship Can Lead to Employment Success

By Pam Toole, Employment Outreach Team Lead



One of the key ingredients to successful employment outcomes at SEEC is engagement from the community. Oftentimes that engagement begins with volunteer involvement. We are fortunate to have a large pool of volunteers from many industries and backgrounds who contribute at a high level in many positive ways. Those volunteers come to

us through various channels – through our volunteer outreach; through the Employer Outreach Team’s networking activity; through our families, Board of Directors or Business Advisory Council (BAC); or through a recommendation.

Our weekly Job Club (<https://www.seeonline.org/virtual-activities/>) is one of the important ways in which volunteers get involved with SEEC. Job Club has a steady slate of outside speakers who dedicate an hour of their time on Monday mornings at 10am to introduce their businesses, their career paths, or their expertise in subjects like interviewing, composing business emails, proper body language or how to use LinkedIn.

In 2020, Jon Roth, VP of PMO/Strategic Initiatives at Sandy Spring Bank, found SEEC through the Montgomery County Volunteer Center and offered his time and energy. He was connected to Kyra as a speaker for Job Club. Jon developed a short series of presentations on goal setting for the people we support. Being the engaging and open person he is, Jon offered up his contact information to anyone who wanted to follow-up with him. Jonathan Feiffer, a job seeker SEEC supports, took him up on it.

Jon and Jonathan began meeting and talking. As Jon discovered all that Jonathan could do and what he was pursuing, Jon began to identify possibilities for Jonathan. Fast forward to September when Jonathan Feiffer began working remotely for Sandy Spring Bank, supporting a data project that Jon oversees. Today, Jonathan continues to work closely with Jon and is supported by SEEC staff, Willow Newman, who has been instrumental in Jonathan's continual success. In speaking recently with Jon, I learned that Jon is continuing to mentor Jonathan and is working toward pathways of career development for Jonathan.

We could not have scripted a more perfect example of what mentorship might look like. This happened organically and is due in large part to both Jon and Jonathan actively pursuing involvement - on the one hand, through volunteerism and on the other, through self-advocacy. Congratulations to Jonathan and thank you to Jon Roth and Sandy Spring Bank for embracing inclusive hiring!

SEEC Learners Have Completed the Mentor Track

By Anna Oldham, Workforce Training/Curriculum Coordinator



Congratulations to the SEEC staff who recently completed the MDDSP Training Consortium Mentor Track.

During the past three months these staff have received training and completed assignments on the following topics related to mentoring a work colleague: strengths-based mentoring, verbal and nonverbal communication, active listening, giving positive feedback and constructive criticism, goal setting, coaching for specific skills, and cultural competence. Graduates will receive a certificate attesting to their course completion.

Graduates:

Linda Copeland, Gregory Davison, Bobby John , Deborah Lawrence, Kenneth Lawrence, Sam Opaluwa, Abjatu Sillah, Althea Spence, Rosetta Weah, Tenneh Yeaher

Are you interested and passionate about helping adults with developmental disabilities reach their full life potential? Are you looking for a volunteer experience that is both fun and fulfilling?

Join SEEC on May 25th 5:30-6:30p for a Volunteer Info Session about who we are and how to get involved!



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