

Employment First Council
Working Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2019
200 Piedmont Ave.
Atlanta, GA 30334

Members Present:

Chairman Shawn Ryan

Vice Chair John Wells

Felita Williams

Brandt White

Dave Ward

Amy R. Riedesel

Eric Jacobson

Conrado Marion-Landais

Mr. Ryan called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. He welcomed everyone and recognized GVRA Marketing and Communications Director Robin Folsom to discuss promotion and marketing of Employment First.

Ms. Folsom said that while considering the appropriate audiences for information, it would make sense to establish a uniform brand and language to capture the key missions and goals of the Council. She presented several proposed logos. Ms. Folsom recognized GVRA Marketing Manager Patrice Meadows to discuss the logos and language. Ms. Meadows said she would ensure Council members have the information electronically and that a poll would be sent to them for a final vote.

There was discussion about the criteria that would be required for partners to use the logo and language.

Mr. Ryan opened a working session to discuss the draft of the latest Employment First Council Report. He recognized Mr. Jacobson. Mr. Jacobson said that a separate working group is looking at ways to guide funding to ensure that employment is recognized as the first option for people with disabilities in Georgia. He gave a brief rundown of the latest draft of the report.

There was discussion about whether the report should contain language that requests more money for DBHDD as it stands in contrast to mandated budget cuts that have already been handed down by Governor Brian Kemp. It was suggested that language be included that demonstrates that the budget request has no immediate timeline.

Mr. Wells said he believes the report needs to have a stronger stance moving away from sheltered workshops. Mr. Jacobson agreed. There was discussion about how this new portion of the report should read.

Ms. Riedesel suggested state agencies work together to ensure eligibility requirements and other policies are as uniform as possible. Mr. Jacobson said the differences can largely be attributed to inconsistent federal guidelines.

Mr. Jacobson said he would make the suggested changes.

Ms. Riedesel outlined DBHDD's partnership with WISE, a disability organization based in the state of Washington that deals with transition-aged populations. There was further talk about how to best engage and serve these populations. The Council agreed to discuss this matter at its next meeting.

The Council approved a tentative schedule for 2020.

The Council adjourned at 2:21 p.m.