

SMHP Council Employment Subcommittee
August 20, 2025

IN ATTENDANCE: Don Hughes; Michael Stepansky; Kim Anderson; Steve LaMaster; Val Comerford; Tom Coppinger; JR Rivers; Allyson Blanchette; Amelia Dillon; Justin Brown; Maura Silvia

1. **Introductions:** Welcome to new members JR, Maura, and Allyson!
2. **Disability Employment Tax Credit (DEPC):** A state funded tax credit, the DEPC can be combined by employers with the Work Opportunities Tax Credit (WOTC). Certification for the DEPC is provided by MassAbility to the job seeker, who can transfer it to an employer for a \$5,000 tax rebate at the end of the year. Steve will work to get the word out for MassAbility. There may be a role for the MHPC-ES to assist.
3. **Clubhouse/SNAP Summary:** Some clubhouse members alerted staff that they received letters from DTA informing them they failed to meet SNAP Work Requirements and were at risk of losing their SNAP benefits. DTA confirmed that SNAP has work requirement rules, though they had previously gone unenforced, and that “participating in DMH services” substantiates an exemption to the requirement. MCC is planning to publicize the situation and coordinate a response, including adding this item to the MCC Employment/Ed committee agenda. Riverside has drafted a letter clubhouses can use to submit to DTA to have benefits reinstated. Michael has submitted the letter to DTA for review and is waiting to hear back. While this issue has surfaced at clubhouses, there is risk to individuals receiving all DMH services.
4. **Clubhouse Employment/Education Report:** Michael reviewed the July Clubhouse employment/education summary report:
 - Although the overall statewide percentage of members working has dropped, this appears to be driven by an increase in clubhouse enrollment, not a drop in members employed.
 - Statewide TE use remains low relative to pre-pandemic levels. The MCC is hosting a MCC TE Symposium November 5th from 10-2 at the Living Work Church in Worcester to support clubhouses in developing and maintaining TEs.
 - DMH is planning a statewide data-submission training with Mary Merrill to improve data-submission rates for clubs. Missing data counts against clubhouse employment/education outcome rates.
5. **PACT employment reporting:** PACT is DMH’s largest community service that does not have person-level reporting. DMH is seeking to implement person-level reporting in the future, such that employment/education reporting would look similar to that for clubhouses. Currently outcomes are reported at the program level, and can vary significantly across programs.

6. **MassAbility:** Employment Subcommittee member/s have heard informally that CIES cannot accept more referrals, and of the referrals it does accept, there is direction to only refer individuals who will achieve a Successful Employment Outcome (SEO). There is significant concern that this practice will reverse recent progress stepping away from the concept of “job readiness” at MassAbility. Despite funding cuts, MassAbility vendors and counselors are under increasing pressure to show improved outcomes; referrals for individuals who do not engage negatively impacts outcomes for all involved. MassAbility is considering increasing referrals to internal job development staff to compensate for the decrease of CIES contracts. While MassAbility as an agency is continuing to accept referrals, it may move to an Order of Selection to triage services for those most in need. Among three priority levels of need, ACCS is expected to be determined as the highest priority (Priority 1) as based on the level of disability.
7. **August Meeting:** Agenda to include discussion of updating subcommittee goals, mission, and vision statements and updating the Subcommittee website.

~ Adjourn ~