pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

October 30, 2013

Mr. David Giraldi, President
Gateway Employment Resources, Inc.
342 West Ridge Pike
Limerick, Pennsylvania 19468

Dear Mr. Giraldi:

I am enclosing the final report of Gateway Employment Resources, Inc. that was recently completed by this office. Your response has been incorporated into the final report and labeled as an Appendix.

I would like to extend my appreciation for all the courtesy extended to my staff during the course of fieldwork. I understand that you were especially helpful to Barbara Miller in expediting the audit process.

The final report will be forwarded to the Department's Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) and the Office of Development Programs (ODP) to begin the Department's resolution process concerning the report contents.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact David Bryan, Audit Resolution Section, at (717) 783-7217.

Sincerely,

Tina L Long

Tina L. Long, CPA
Director

Enclosure

c: Ms. Karen Deklinski
Ms. Rochelle Zaslow
Mr. Timothy O'Leary
Ms. Patricia McCool
Ms. Deborah Donahue
Ms. Thomasina Bouknight
Ms. M. Kathryn Jacobs
Mr. Eric Goldstein

bc: Mr. Alexander Matolyak
Mr. Daniel Higgins
Mr. David Bryan
Ms. Kenya Mann Faulkner
Ms. Shelley L. Lawrence
SEFO Audit File (S1210)

Some information has been redacted from this audit report. The redaction is indicated by magic marker highlight. If you want to request an unredacted copy of this audit report, you should submit a written Right to Know Law (RTKL) request to DPW's RTKL Office. The request should identify the audit report and ask for an unredacted copy. The RTKL Office will consider your request and respond in accordance with the RTKL (65 P.S. §§ 67.101 et seq.) The DPW RTKL Office can be contacted by email at: ra-dpwtkl@pa.gov.

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

October 30, 2013

The Honorable Beverly Mackereth
Secretary of the Department of Public Welfare
Health & Welfare Building, Room 333
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Secretary Mackereth:

In response to a request from the Montgomery County Department of Behavioral Health/Developmental Disabilities Department (Montco), the Bureau of Financial Operations (BFO) initiated an audit of Gateway Employment Resources, Inc. (Gateway). The audit was designed to investigate, analyze and make recommendations regarding the reimbursements from Montco and the Provider Reimbursement and Operations Management Information System (PROMISe) for client care. Our audit covered the period from July 1, 2011 to March 31, 2013 (Audit Period).

This report is currently in final form and therefore does contain Gateway's views on the reported findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Gateway Employment Resources, Inc.'s Executive Summary

Gateway provides services to consumers who are enrolled through Montco and funded through the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS). Gateway also provides services to consumers that participate in the Home and Community-Based Services waiver programs that are paid through the PROMISe system, such as the Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Supports waivers for the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP).

The report findings and recommendations for corrective action are summarized below:

FINDINGS	SUMMARY
Finding No. 1 – Reimbursed Claims Were not Adequately Documented.	Two statistically valid random samples (SVRSs) of Montco and PROMISe paid claims were tested for adequacy of supporting documentation. The result was that the errors identified in the Montco SVRS totaled $190,969. The errors identified in the ODP SVRS totaled $109,309.

HIGHLIGHTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS
OMHSAS should: • Ensure Montco recover $190,969 for inadequately documented claims and double billed claims. ODP should: • Recover $109,309 for claims that were inadequately documented. Gateway should: • Only claim reimbursements for services that are supported by adequate documentation, and ensure that consumers are billed to the correct funding source.

FINDINGS	SUMMARY
Finding No. 2 – Services Were Inappropriately Provided and Billed	Gateway provided services to one consumer who had passed away. Services were billed for six months subsequent to the consumer's death resulting in $3,593 billed inappropriately. Gateway also inappropriately billed Montco $7,640 for services provided to an ODP consumer.
HIGHLIGHTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
Gateway should: • Develop and implement procedures related to staff supervision to ensure that job developers are monitored more closely and that service cannot continue to be provided without periodic and regular physical contact with the consumer. • Implement a system of identifying consumers not only by a referral number, but also by their funding source.	

FINDINGS	SUMMARY
Finding No. 3 –Weaknesses in Internal Controls Impacted the Quality of Service	Gateway did not have proper controls over time sheets and progress notes to ensure that Montco and PROMISe billings were accurate. Additionally, Gateway did not have sufficient supervision and monitoring procedures in place to ensure services were delivered and documented appropriately.
HIGHLIGHTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
Gateway should: • Develop controls to ensure that adequate documentation is maintained to support billings. • Develop the required Goal Plans for consumers referred by Montco and ensure that staff provided services according to the Goal Plan. • Provide services to ODP consumers as authorized in the Individual Support Plan (ISP) in regards to duration and frequency. • Develop controls over the supervision and monitoring of staff to ensure services are delivered appropriately.	

See Appendix A for the Background; Objective, Scope and Methodology; and Conclusion on the Objective.

Results of Fieldwork

Finding No. 1 – Reimbursed Claims Were not Adequately Documented

Two separate SVRSs of claims were selected for the Audit Period; one from the claims paid by Montco, and a second from the ODP claims reimbursed through PROMISe. Supported Employment claims were tested in both SVRSs. The underlying documentation was analyzed to determine the validity of each sampled claim. Analyzed documentation included time sheets, progress notes, if any, and the nature of the services provided.

Significant exceptions were identified in both SVRSs. The exceptions in the Montco sample related to a lack of progress notes, billings for inactive consumers, billings for consumers paid by the Office of Vocation Rehabilitation, and billings for unallowable services. This resulted in an error rate for the Montco sample of 52%. Extrapolating the error rate over the total universe of paid Montco claims resulted in a disallowance of $190,969.

The majority of exceptions in the ODP sample related to a lack of progress notes and missing time sheets. The error rate for the ODP sample was 27%. Extrapolating the error rate over the total universe of paid ODP claims resulted in a disallowance of $109,309.

Recommendations

The BFO recommends that OMHSAS ensure Montco recover $190,969 from Gateway due to inadequately documented claims and double billed claims.

The BFO also recommends that ODP recover $109,309 due to inadequately documented claims.

Finally, the BFO recommends that Gateway only bill for services rendered that are documented by employee time sheets and progress notes. Additionally, Gateway must ensure that consumers are billed to the correct funding source to ensure duplicate billings do not occur.

Finding No. 2 – Services Were Inappropriately Provided and Billed

Gateway delivered services inappropriately to two consumers. First, Gateway continued to provide service to and bill for one consumer who was deceased. The consumer had passed away in July of 2012; billing continued through January 2013. The Gateway employee who assisted this consumer in finding employment had no contact with the consumer after his death and had documented this in the progress notes. In fact, Gateway was not aware of the consumer's death until Montco performed a monitoring visit in January 2013. A total of $3,593 was billed to Montco for services provided after the consumer had died.

The second incident involved a consumer who came to Gateway to receive services, but did not return to receive any services. In this case, the referral number, a number assigned by Gateway upon intake, was confused with the referral number of an ODP consumer who was receiving service. As a result, Montco was billed $7,640 for services Gateway management stated were actually provided to an ODP consumer.

These two errors were able to occur in part because of Gateway's lack of staff supervision and poor record keeping.

Subsequent to the close of our audit fieldwork, Gateway made the appropriate adjustments to their Montco billing and repaid a total of $11,233 related to these two errors.

Recommendations

The BFO recommends that Gateway develop and implement procedures related to staff supervision to ensure that job developers are monitored more closely and that services cannot continue to be provided without periodic face-to-face contact with the consumer.

The BFO also recommends that Gateway implement a system of identifying consumers not only by a referral number, but also by their funding source, in order to reduce the risk of billing the incorrect entity.

Finding No. 3 – Weaknesses in Internal Controls Impacted the Quality of Service

Our analysis of Gateway's documentation, record retention and billing procedures identified the following internal control weaknesses:

Deficient client files:

Gateway did not have an organized client file procedure in place; as such, the files were unorganized and, many times, incomplete. As a result, Gateway could not accurately determine whether a consumer was currently receiving service, could not locate progress/contact notes, continued to bill for inactive consumers, and billed for consumers inappropriately. At a minimum the consumer's file should contain the intake form, the Goal Plan or ISP, a budget of hours needed to achieve the goals, progress/contact notes and any other information that is deemed necessary.

No Goal Plans:

Montco requires providers to develop a goal plan for individuals referred for employment services. Gateway did not have goal plans for their consumers even though Montco stated they had provided extensive training and technical assistance around developing the goal plans. Goal plans are important to assist Gateway in providing an effective service to their consumers, to ensure that job developers remain focused on each consumer's unique needs and to efficiently manage contract funds.

Time Sheets are difficult to read:

The time sheets used by Gateway employees are difficult to read, resulting in billing errors. The time sheets are crowded and do not provide adequate space for staff to record the time they spend with individual consumers.

Progress Notes/Contact Notes:

Gateway staff does not complete progress notes and/or contact notes on a consistent basis. For ODP funded consumers, progress notes are required to document that the services provided are consistent with the services authorized by the ISP. For Montco consumers, Gateway's contract requires the maintenance of records which support the delivery of service.

Insufficient Staff Supervision:

Gateway does not provide adequate supervision to its direct service staff. For example, in the case identified in Finding No. 2 regarding the consumer who had passed away, the supervisor should have questioned why services were continuing to be provided even though the Gateway employee had not made contact with the consumer in more than six months. Additionally, the lack of supervision allowed staff to become careless in documenting the services they delivered, and caused billing errors to occur.

Gateway Needs to Identify Direct Service Activities vs. Indirect/Administrative Service Activities:

Direct service staff and supervisors through Gateway bill service units related to indirect and administrative activities. Gateway classifies these units as case management but bills them as a direct service. Gateway is not an authorized case management entity so these activities should be limited to assisting the consumer in contacting their case manager to resolve any issues which occur. Units identified as discussions among staff or other activities related to the consumer that are not direct services should be considered administrative and should have been included in the calculation of the rate paid for direct services. Only direct service units are permitted to be billed to ODP and Montco.

Authorized Units and Budgets are not Tracked:

Gateway management does not provide service to ODP consumers based on the frequency and duration that is specified in their ISPs, nor do they monitor the budget amount for Montco consumers. Instead, services are provided and billed until the units, or budget is fully exhausted. Once this occurs, any units provided are either unfunded or funded by donations or grants.

Gateway Bills One Unit of Service for any Amount of Time up to Fifteen Minutes:

A unit of service is defined as 15 minutes. The standard in order to bill for one unit is when billable activity occurs for more than 7 ½ minutes. On numerous occasions, Gateway billed for units delivered to several clients consecutively. In some cases the time sheets or progress note indicated that a call was made and a message left; this activity would not meet the required time spent to allow one unit of service to be billed.

Insufficient Procedures to Ensure Accurate Billing:

Gateway does not have sufficient procedures in place to ensure that billing is correct and appropriate. Procedures should be developed that require a review of the billing and to randomly check to be sure that there are sufficient progress notes, legible time sheets and that the consumer being billed is actively pursuing employment opportunities.

No Procedures in Place to Monitor the Status of Consumers:

It was observed that both direct care staff and supervisory staff were not aware of the status of consumers. There were several cases identified where consumers were inactive, had never received service or there had been no face to face contact. Staff continued to bill without verifying the status of these consumers resulting in inappropriate billings.

Recommendations:

The BFO recommends that Gateway develop internal controls which address the issues stated above pertaining to proper billing and maintaining adequate documentation to support billings to Montco and ODP.

The BFO also recommends that Gateway develop the required Goal Plans for consumers referred by Montco and that staff provided services according to the Goal Plan.

Additionally, the BFO recommends that Gateway staff provide services to ODP consumers as authorized in the ISP in regards to duration and frequency.

Finally, the BFO recommends that Gateway develop internal controls over the supervision and monitoring of staff to ensure services are delivered appropriately.

Exit Conference Summary

Gateway did not request an exit conference. Gateway did prepare a response to the draft report. The response concurred with our findings and included a corrective action plan; however, Gateway requested a change to the recommended recovery amounts and a minor wording change. No change was made to the recommended recovery amounts; however the wording change was made.

Gateway Employment Resources, Inc.
July 1, 2011 Through March 31, 2013

In accordance with our established procedures, an audit response matrix will be provided to OMHSAS and ODP. Once received, the program offices should independently complete the matrix within 60 days and email the Excel file to the DPW Audit Resolution Section at:

RA-pwauditresolution@pa.gov

The response to each recommendation should indicate the program office's concurrence or non-concurrence, the corrective action to be taken, the staff from the program offices responsible for the corrective action, the expected date that the corrective action will be completed, and any related comments.

Sincerely,

Tina L Long

Tina L. Long, CPA
Director

c: Ms. Karen Deklinski
Ms. Rochelle Zaslow
Mr. Timothy O'Leary
Ms. Patricia McCool
Ms. Deborah Donahue
Ms. Thomasina Bouknight
Ms. M. Kathryn Jacobs
Mr. Eric Goldstein
Mr. David Giraldi

bc: Mr. Alexander Matolyak
Mr. Daniel Higgins
Mr. David Bryan
Mr. Michael A Sprow
Ms. Shelley Lawrence
SEFO Audit File (S1210)

GATEWAY EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES, INC.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Background

Gateway is a non-profit corporation located in Limerick, PA that provides services to clients who are approved by Montco/OMHSAS and ODP. Gateway works with developmental disability organizations in Montgomery County and provides supported employment services to consumers with intellectual disabilities.

Gateway assists consumers to acquire and maintain independent employment by considering each consumer's particular circumstances and providing Supported Employment services. These services are performed primarily in community settings by Gateway's employees.

Montco consumers are funded through OMHSAS Base (county administered) funds, while, ODP funds the waiver eligible services through the PROMISe reimbursement process.

Objective/Scope/Methodology

The audit objective, developed in concurrence with Montco and ODP was:

- To determine if Gateway has adequate documentation to substantiate its paid claims through Montco and PROMISe for services delivered.

The criteria used to ascertain the adequacy of supporting documentation was 55 Pa. Code Section 1101, 55 Pa. Code Chapters 51, and pertinent Federal Waiver requirements.

In pursuing this objective, the BFO interviewed Montco and ODP personnel and Gateway management. We also analyzed books, payroll records, care-giver time sheets, progress notes, bills, receipts, PROMISe reimbursement data, and electronic records available in the Home and Community Services Information System (HCSIS) and other pertinent data necessary to pursue the audit objective.

Government auditing standards require that we obtain an understanding of management controls that are relevant to the audit objective described above. The applicable controls were examined to the extent necessary to provide reasonable assurance of the effectiveness of those controls. Based on our understanding of the controls, there were material deficiencies in documentation and billing procedures. Areas where we noted an opportunity for improvement in management controls are addressed in the findings of this report.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted governmental auditing standards (GAGAS). Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

The BFO's fieldwork was conducted intermittently from June 17, 2013 to August 13, 2013 and was performed in accordance with GAGAS. This report is available for public inspection.

Conclusion on the Objective

Gateway did not always meet the documentation requirements necessary to support claims reimbursed from Montco or PROMISe from July 1, 2011 March 31, 2013. Significant billing errors and the lack of required documentation along with weaknesses in internal controls resulted in a total recommended disallowance of $300,278.

GATEWAY EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES, INC.

APPENDIX B

October 11, 2013

Mr. Daniel Higgins, Audit Manager
Division of Audit and Review
Bureau of Financial Operations
Department of Public Welfare
801 Market Street, Suite 5040
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3126

RE: Gateway Employment Resources, Inc.

Dear Mr. Higgins:

Gateway Employment Resources, Inc. ("Gateway") hereby submits its response to the "draft" performance audit report prepared by the Bureau of Financial Operations (BFO) dated September 19, 2013.

Finding No. 1 – Reimbursed claims were not adequately documented.

Gateway concurs and will only claim reimbursement for services that are supported by accurate and complete documentation. Further, Gateway will ensure that consumers are billed to the correct funding source.

Gateway must take exception to the BFO's recommendation made to both the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) and the Montgomery County Department of Health/Developmental Disabilities Department (Montco) to "recover" over $300,000 for inadequately documented claims. The claims filed by Gateway, although arguably inadequately documented, were in fact for the highest quality of services provided. Gateway is a small non-profit organization (not a "for profit corporation" as stated in the "Background" section on page 1 of Appendix A of the draft audit report) with an annual budget of approximately $750,000. The financial implications to Gateway, should it be forced to repay all of the recommended amounts would be catastrophic, in fact, it would force Gateway to close its doors. Gateway respectfully suggests that a more equitable remedy would be for Gateway to refund, over a 10 year period, only those billings attributable to administration-related services (i.e., non-billable time). This alternate remedy would ensure Gateway's continued financial viability and, coincidentally, its ability to refund the appropriate amounts.

The corrective actions to be taken by Gateway to address Finding No. 1:

Gateway is finalizing a new computer database ("Database") that will be rolled out in test mode by December 1, 2013 and fully implemented no later than January 1, 2014. The Database will address and resolve the following issues:

- Every Gateway participant will be maintained in a client table within the Database, so that each participant can be separately identified as being active or

inactive within the table. All inactive participants will be automatically excluded from any billing query that is run by Gateway.

- Within the client table, a field will identify the current funding source applicable to each participant. A beginning date and an ending date will be linked to the funding source to ensure that there is no overlap between funding sources, which will also ensure that the same service cannot be billed to two different funding sources.

- Whenever a direct service staff member is working on a client case they will be required to enter a contemporaneous record into the Database. Each contemporaneous record will include the current date, the referral number for the participant, the amount of time spent working with (or on behalf of) the participant, the location and type of contact with the participant (i.e., phone call, home visit, office visit, prospective employer visit, on job site visit), the type of service provided, and a contact note specific to the particular participant.

- A truncated version of each contact note will be included with each record pulled in connection with a billing query for a particular participant. Billing procedures will clearly specify that no time record is to be billed without a corresponding contact note. In any instance where a contact note is not made, Gateway's Financial Director will follow up with the Program Director and the direct service staff member responsible for entering the time record to insure that a contact note is entered.

- Billing queries within the Database will be designed to report only allowable billable services. This feature will eliminate the possibility of billing for any unallowable services, including service coordination and staff meetings. In addition, Gateway's staff will be retrained on the definition of each service type and what activities will qualify within each service type category, as well as the definition of a billable unit of service (i.e., at least 7.5 minutes of a billable activity performed).

- Reports generated from the Database will be clear and concise, eliminating potential errors created by illegible writing, and cramped or abbreviated handwritten detail.

Finding No. 2 – Services were inappropriately provided and billed.

Gateway concurs and will ensure that all future services are provided appropriately. Gateway also concurs with the finding that incorrect identification numbers were utilized by its staff which resulted in Montco and ODP being billed for services provided to ODP consumers.

With respect to the participant that had passed away, Gateway reviewed the case file with the staff member responsible prior to the BFO audit. Based on that internal review, it was clear that she had followed a reasonable course of action and clearly had no reason to believe that the participant was deceased. Gateway received no notification of the participant's passing, and the participant's non-responsiveness had been the norm since his intake meeting. During the time services were provided, which services were almost exclusively job development services, numerous attempts were made by Gateway to contact the participant. Gateway recognizes and acknowledges the need for greater supervision over staff members, even though such additional supervision may not have made a difference in this extremely rare and isolated instance.

As accurately stated in the draft audit report, Gateway has already refunded $11,233 to Montco related to the errors identified in Finding No. 2.

The corrective actions to be taken by Gateway to address Finding No. 2:

Gateway will develop and immediately implement the following procedures related to staff supervision and identifying participants both by referral and funding source:

- In order to improve staff supervision and establish more checks and balances in regard to oversight over the supervisors and directors themselves; job descriptions will be revised to insure that direct staff supervision is re-established as a priority. This will include weekly reviews and greater coordination of staff work schedules.

- As described in more detail in response to Finding No.3: below, Gateway's management team will hold weekly meetings with staff members to review participant files to ensure the highest standard of quality service is being provided.

- Gateway's new Database (as described above) is an attempt to reduce (and hopefully eliminate) errors created by staff members utilizing incorrect participant-identification numbers. Each time record entered into the Database by a staff member will require the entry of a unique participant-identification referral number, and at that time the participant's full name and funding source will appear along with other relevant data fields (i.e., date of service, units of service, contact type, type of service, and contact note). Staff members will be able to search for participant records, when entering contact notes into the system, in the Database by using a participant's identification referral number or name.

Finding No. 3 – Weaknesses in internal controls impacted the quality of service.

Gateway concurs with this finding to the extent that its internal controls over time sheets and progress notes, as they relate to the agency's billing practices, could be greatly

improved. However, Gateway strongly questions the suggestion that such deficiencies had any effect on the quality of services provided to its participants. Gateway recognizes that documented Goal Plans and the tracking of billable units as they relate to duration and frequency of services provided would be beneficial to ensuring that Gateway's participants achieve their goals. However, Gateway's placement results and the positive feedback that it has received (and continues to receive) from its participants are a testament to the quality of services that Gateway provides and the drive and focus our direct service staff place on helping the individuals with disabilities that our agency serves.

The corrective actions to be taken by Gateway to address Finding No. 3:

As mentioned above in the corrective actions being taken to address Finding No. 2, Gateway is restructuring its administrative and supervisory management positions which will directly address its deficits in staff supervision and how such supervision relates to the services provided to Gateway participants. Specifically, a mid-level staff manager will be assigned the following responsibilities:

- Handle staff logistics by:
    - Confirming that all referred clients have a direct service professional working with them;
    - Scheduling staff to follow frequency and duration requirements established on all client Individual Support Plans (ISP's); and
    - Maintaining direct service staff census levels and assisting in the hiring of new direct service staff personnel.
- Quality control over services and contract management:
    - Keep track of services provided to every participant to make sure that staff members follow each participant's ISP with respect to frequency and duration of services provided (this will be accomplished through the utilization of Database queries and face-to-face meetings).
    - Make certain that all client files are complete. A matrix will be established to create a checklist of all necessary documentation for each participant file. Gateway's Program Director is responsible for confirming that direct service staff members complete the required documentation.
    - Hold regular meetings with direct service staff members to review caseloads and to ensure that quality services are being provided to all

participants and that satisfactory progress is being made towards individual participant goals.

- Responsible for final review of all billing sheets to ensure accuracy, by making sure that all participants are "active" and that the services provided are relevant to the individual participant, prior to processing claims for payment.

- By December 1, 2013, Gateway's management will introduce new policies to implement new participant file procedures (including a matrix or checklist to confirm completeness). While Gateway has traditionally relied on participant intake packets and job development profiles to direct what services are required for a particular participant, in the future the agency will incorporate Goal Plans into this process and it has already initiated the use of a new progress report format in this regard.

- To maintain future compliance and quality assurance, Gateway will provide access to Montco to its new Database to review participant files and billing records (much like Gateway has access to the Montco Behavioral Health Department's database).

We at Gateway are very proud of the 27 years of exceptional service that the agency has provided to individuals with disabilities in Montgomery County (enclosure). The BFO audit findings have merely become a catalyst to changes that Gateway had already started implementing prior to the audit. While Gateway's management team was aware of certain weaknesses within our organization, it was not aware of the extent of those weaknesses. The corrective actions described in this letter are in process and Gateway is optimistic that once all of the changes are implemented, that it will be a stronger, more modern and efficient organization for the foreseeable future.

Sincerely,

David Giraldi
President and Chief Executive Officer
Gateway Employment Resources, Inc.

cc: [redacted]

{00814479 }

Mr. Daniel Higgins, Audit Manager
Division of Audit and Review
Bureau of Financial Operations
Department of Public Welfare
801 Market Street, Suite 5040
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3126

RE: Gateway Employment Resources, Inc.

Gateway is not requesting an exit conference.

Please find attached Letters of Support from just a few satisfied participants, employers, and family members.

cc: [redacted]

[redacted]

October 7, 2013

The Montgomery County Office of Behavioral Health / Developmental Disabilities
Human Services Center
P.O. Box 311
Norristown, PA 19404-0311

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you today as a concerned parent of a 25 year old son with Autism. My son currently works at Shannondell at Valley Forge in the housekeeping department. He loves his job and enjoys the support he receives from his employer and from his job coach, [redacted], from Gateway Employment Resources, Inc.

My son began receiving services from Gateway in 2010. Before his services started he was having trouble keeping on task, interacting with the other employees and residents, and completing his assignments on time. He also lacked self-confidence. After Gateway came on board, my son became more engaged in his job. He started interacting with the other employees and with the residents. His increased job performance has earned him high ratings on his yearly performance reviews and he has received yearly salary increases. This wouldn't have happened without the interaction of his job coach.

I feel that Gateway provides dependable, reliable and quality services to the disabled. The job coaches are kind, caring and have an excellent knowledge base of what a disabled individual's needs are. In addition, they interact well with employers and are excellent advocates for their clients. They have been my "eyes", watching over my son when I can't.

Recently, it has come to my attention that The Montgomery County Office of Behavioral Health / Developmental Disabilities is considering no longer funding Gateway Employment Resources as a provider of career support. This is very disturbing to me and will have a huge impact on my son. Continuity is the key to success for an individual with Autism. If you no longer fund Gateway it will mean my son will have to start over, not only with a new job coach, but with a new agency that may not have a similar way of working as Gateway.

On behalf of my son and all those who Gateway supports, I am reaching out to you in hope that you will take into account the negative impact no longer funding Gateway will have on these individuals, and what it will mean for their future success.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

October 4, 2013

Dear Gateway,

I am writing this letter to thank you for all you have done to help me with my job. I started my job as a cashier at WAWA in Conshohocken in April 2012. This job is near where I live.

In the beginning I had difficulty with my money skills. [redacted] was my job coach on the weekends and she helped me learn to count the change out. [redacted] took me to work on the Coffee Cart for a couple weeks to practice counting change for customers. Now I am quicker at it.

I use crutches to get around which is hard for me. [redacted] sometimes helps me get new tips for my crutches, and new shoes and pants for work. She also helps get me monthly trail passes.

When I started my job I was limited to the hours I could stand at the cash register. Gateway helped me get permission to use a stool at the register, and got me new a stool to use at work. This helps me work extra hours.

I like my job because I meet new people. I like making friends and talking to people.

I need my paycheck to help me pay bills. I live in my own apartment. When I have extra money after paying the bills I like to go out for lunch and outings with my friend like going to the movies. It is nice to have my own money instead of asking friends to pay.

If [redacted] couldn't be my job coach and help me I would have to do it myself.

Thank You,

September 26, 2013

Gateway Employment
342 W. Ridge Pike, Bldg 1
Limerick, PA 19468

Dear [redacted],

We wanted to drop a line to tell you how helpful you have been in preparing [redacted] for the workforce. Without your organization, we did not even know where to begin to try to find employment for her. Everyone was so very nice and made her feel important and confident for interviews.

Without your organization I feel that things would not have been as successful as they turned out to be.

Thank you for all of your hard work!

Sincerely,

[redacted]

letter from the [redacted] family

[redacted]
To: [redacted]

Fri, Oct 4, 2013 at 7:54 PM

October 4, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

As a long term client of Gateway Employment we found it important at this time to let you know how much we appreciate and value your services.
My son [redacted] has been working with [redacted] for at least ten years and she has helped to make his working life a pleasure. [redacted] feels so comfortable and strengthened by her that he knows if he has a problem she will be totally available to help him out. She has a wonderful rapport with his company and they are thrilled to work with her because she always gets things accomplished. Her wonderful personality and easy going style relaxes you so that you really feel like family.

[redacted] and [redacted] were recently recognized as the Employee of the Year and Employer of the Year in Montgomery County. [redacted] hard work I'm sure had alot to do with this honor. When my husband passed away I know [redacted] felt comfortable sharing his feelings with [redacted] and this was a great help to the family and a release for [redacted]. She's also gone out of her way to do things with him after hours when he needed help with things.

We are very grateful to Gateway for all the help and support you've given us. It has enabled our family to have a special needs son who is loved at his job and best of all he has the highest self-esteem possible. I hope our relationship with [redacted] and Gateway can continue for a long time. We've been truly BLESSED!

Thanks for everything,

[redacted]

October 8, 2013

Montgomery County Office of Behavioral Health

Attention:

Dear

I am writing to support continued funding of Gateway Employment Resources Inc. My daughter is a 22 year old who is afflicted with significant learning disabilities AND a serious mental illness. The staff at Gateway has been working with her for the last few years, initially on job readiness skills, then on job placement. After two years, they were instrumental in helping her get a part time job which she began in May 2012. Gateway staff provided hands on support through the interviewing and training process, then also on site with when she began to work.

Gateway has continued to be involved with to date, providing support as needed when she experiences perceived conflicts, needs help speaking to management staff, and assisting with transition the two times she has been hospitalized since beginning her job. Her job coach was also involved when she suffered a work related injury.

's self esteem has increased significantly since she has started working. Though she is certainly not able to work full time at this point in her life, getting and keeping a job is an essential part to her becoming more independent and self sufficient. Without the assistance of Gateway, would not have been able to find-or keep- a job on her own. My husband and I are very appreciative and thankful for the assistance they have provided to our daughter and hope that the county will continue to provide funding to Gateway. Their services are essential to many disabled people like .

Sincerely,

[redacted]

08 October 2013

To Whom It May Concern:
I would like to express my concerns regarding funding that may be cut to an agency that my 21 year old son has been utilizing with great success. Gateway Employment has been an integral part of his success as a young adult with special needs looking for a job in order to productive member of society.

If it were not for Gateway, my son would still be sitting home day after day without a job, a purpose, and feeling depressed and alone. He wanted to work right after high school, as he did not think college was a choice for him immediately after finishing high school at the age of 20. Although he could have remained in school until 21 years of age, he was not benefiting from the extension of the school year and expressed feelings of being looked upon as a failure. Double compound that with no job to go to daily, it is a very sad place for anyone to be, and most importantly a young man that has so much to offer, yet his special needs some times impede him to be as successful as we all know he can be with a little extra help along the way.

Gateway provided an outlet for him to pursue the job market and as of today he has been successfully employed part time at a local Burger King. He finally got his chance to show that he can be successful and earn money, feel important, needed and most of all productive. This was all made possible by job coaching that Gateway has and have been providing to him. His different ability in learning new things requires extra help in order to understand verbal instructions and reinforcement of what most people know intuitively, and the guidance and instruction that job coaching has provided has been a vital part of his success. He is happy, proud, and now has a purpose and feels good about himself. He will be a great employee wherever he goes, as he is ready, willing to please and give a great day's work to his employer.

Please kindly consider the work force of people with special needs and the success they can all achieve with services that Gateway Employment provides to a forgotten community of young adults with special needs. After all, they are and can be successful and loyal employees to all that give them a chance.

Regards,

[redacted]

Seeptember 27, 2013

[redacted] Family
[redacted]

To Whom It May Concern:

For the past 12 years my daughter, [redacted] has been a recipient of services from Gateway Employment Resources. My family has the highest regard for the agency and the services provided to my daughter. These services include job development, job coaching, Best Buddies and Rise Group. The job coaching experience has been particularly outstanding. The people who have supervised [redacted] have acted with professionalism and caring. She has been given a sense of confidence so that she knows she can succeed. Continuity of service is vital because of a sense of comfort and the ability to achieve. Special needs people need routine and if services were stopped by Gateway the impact would be great.

Sincerely,
[redacted]

US restaurants Inc.
A FRANCHISEE of Burger King Corporation

September 26, 2013

We, at US Restaurants, Inc., have been working with [redacted] and the Gateway Employment Resources team for over ten (10) years.

They have been very professional and I must admit they really care about the people they place in our restaurants. We have developed a great working relationship…one in which I can really place my trust in [redacted] and her team to make the right decisions. They know what we need and always seem to find the right fit for our organization.

Should you need to speak to me directly, please contact me at [redacted].

Sincerely,

US RESTAURANTS, INC.
[redacted]
Vice President

GW:kc

[redacted]