

Employment First
FLORIDA



Employment First Success Stories: Employment Services

Florida Center for Inclusive Communities: Training All Stakeholders on Employment Innovation

The *Employment First Florida Success Stories Series* highlights examples of innovative employment services, creative state agency employment practices, and individual employment success stories in Florida. The series is a product of the EmployMe1st project, a joint project of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston, and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services.

Description of the Practice:

The Florida Center for Inclusive Communities (FCIC) was established at the University of South Florida in 2005 as one of the national network of university centers for excellence in developmental disability (UCEDD) across the country. Over the last decade, as Florida has moved toward its recent adoption of an Employment First policy, FCIC has come to play a prominent role as a provider of training and technical assistance in employment. To standardize training on innovative employment models, it offers a resource library and training opportunities designed in collaboration with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC), the Department of Education's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Social Security Administration.

These trainings include career guides for transition-age youth; monthly webinars presented by individuals with IDD, family members, service professionals, and employers; and a series of job development modules with certificate credit for training hour requirements as an employment service provider.

The job development modules were developed by the Collaborative on Discovery and Innovation in Employment (CODIE), a partnership between FCIC, FDDC, and Dale DiLeo, a Florida resident and director of the Training Resource Network. Each of the nine modules in the series includes a video presentation detailing a step within the Discovery and Customized Employment processes, followed by a short quiz.

The series is useful to people with IDD, family members, teachers, and service professionals. For example, it keeps service providers up to date on strategies and practices to increase

employment possibilities, such as ways to approach employers to see if job seekers whose skills and interests match their businesses could visit or try out jobs.

Lessons Learned:

The CODIE job development modules are ideal for anyone interested in learning about the Discovery and Customized Employment processes. The modules also help providers to acquire training credits that let them keep their active provider status. As users navigate through the modules, they complete a self-assessment that reinforces the content and the key systemic beliefs that dictate changes in daily practice.

For service providers with demanding caseloads, the modules are a quick and easy form of professional development.

Learners surveyed about the series reported being satisfied with the information and strategies provided. They also reported high satisfaction with the content and materials shared in the archived webinars.

FCIC's on-demand training resources and materials are accessible to job seekers and employees with IDD, as well as the entire community of people supporting employment possibilities for this population. The free access to FCIC employment training and technical assistance resources builds capacity for change within the existing systems of support and services.

Through these resources, job seekers, employees, employers, family members, and professionals are equipped with information and tools to reach beyond their traditional partnerships. Partners collaboratively develop shared belief systems, serve as change agents to their local community, and promote Employment First principles and values to develop meaningful employment expectations and outcomes.

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