

Employment First Collaborative Team

Wednesday, March 12, 2014
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Conference Room, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council
124 Marriott Drive, Suite 200,
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Minutes

Members Attending:

Allison Chen Hall
David Darm
Dehryl McCall
Jan Pearce
Jarl Jackson
Jennifer Evans
Kristen Panella
LeeAnn Herman
Nancy Butt
Shelia Gritz-Swift
Shila Salem
Steve Dunaway
Suzanne Sewell

Welcome and Introductions

Members were welcomed and all members introduced themselves.

Collaborative Partner Updates on Related Work and Initiatives

- APD -
 - Employment Placements program
 1. 200 students at \$500,000
 2. Thirty-one placement
 3. Eleven internships
 4. Meeting with Commissioner Stuart with the Florida Department of Education regarding insufficient referrals from the schools in relation to the known numbers transitioning out
 5. Plans for more students
 - Confirmed with AHCA that the Medicaid Waiver can be used
 - Referring people the Waitlist to receive VR services
 - SELN membership
 1. Need feedback on how to use SELN connection
 - Data collection made a priority - issues relating to insufficiently up-dated data related to insufficiently up-graded data capture system
 2. Changes to the rate structure to create provider incentives to help clients get work a priority
 - Transportation

Shelia noted that transportation needs to come to the top.

- BEESS-
 - Schools and Transition site visits April 7 and 8
- VR-
 - Technical Assistance on Order of Selection
 - Making sure people are applying now
 - TPCA – targeting the most severe disabilities
 - Will cover TPCA at VISIONS conference

Shelia noted that the Council's Project SEARCH and Rural Routes to Employment projects were receiving VR assistance.

- VR (continued)
 - Insure Supported Employment is available statewide, especially to persons with the most significant disabilities
 - Project Discover expanded into Miami
 - Building capacity to provide more services
 - Integrating services through a cooperative arrangement with APD
 - Will cover TPCA at VISIONS conference
- Blind Services
 - Statewide training coming up in two weeks; getting the word out
 - Preparing for new Section 503 regulations coming out March 25
 - Employer Recognition Team established to build stronger relationships
 - Fully-staffed with Employment Placement persons

It was noted that the “word” about Employment 1st is getting out there

Shelia noted that the first Employment 1st webinar, which attracted over 100 people, had a great deal of involvement from the Division of Blind Services and supporting organizations. She also noted that the Communications Subcommittee also has good DBS representation.

Employment First Status Updates and Calendar Items

Shelia discussed the following:

- Governor's Commission
- Employment 1st Grassroots Group
 - There were two initial calls in February, the topics included:
 - Transportation
 - Funding for persons with more significant support needs
 - Employer engagement
 - How?
 - The need for more family and self-advocate involvement was noted.
 - The next meeting is scheduled for March 27, with additional meetings in April 23 and May 28.

Steve suggested outreach to and through the Family Care Councils and BEESS parent connections, as well as the upcoming website. John noted advertising in other ways to get people to access archives and provide feedback.

Shelia noted that the self and family advocates are waiting on the team as partners in Employment 1st. We also need to get more feedback from and give guidance back to them. Suggested was to do this include webinars and an e-mailing list.

The high-priority advocate interest of transportation was discussed. David suggested emphasis on questions relating to transportation, such as getting to and from work. He also noted that transportation is driven by local and/or regional action. John noted that this matter must be delved into further, especially for self-advocates. Issues relating to transportation included reliability.

David noted that the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged was working on this issue. He added that the extent and nature of the problem varies across the state, but that they are researching a national model known as the 'Mobility Manager.' The focus with this model is to find different options for different individuals, increase local opportunities and get the various players; various localities and the state - involved to work together.

Steve noted that there needs to be a focus on both the long and short-terms of transportation. He added that job coaches are often working to solve the problem, one person at a time.

John noted that more information needs to be available to families.

Shelia noted that a problem was how to communicate to families and others on this issue.

Shelia noted issues involved included

- Access – with there being no system in many places
- The assistance required people with significant disabilities
- Cost – especially as some providers won't accept payment by individuals.

Shelia added that mobility managers could be a start towards systems change.

David noted that the focus should be in helping the customer find the best way to go, suggesting that vouchers were a possibility.

Shelia noted that the Council will be funding a voucher pilot project together with DOT.

Steve noted that we need to look for solutions in the long, medium, short and immediate terms on this issue.

It was noted that job coaches need to understand the importance of the transportation as one to solve in helping individuals find work.

Sheila noted that messaging was also important in getting the word out.

She also noted that we need input on what to focus the March webinar on.

Collaborative Partner Updates in Related Work and Initiatives (continued)

- DEO/CareerSource Florida
 - Working with Diane on the portal
 - Mockup coming; date not yet set.

- Moving forward on the concept of “workforce,” with the contractor/vendor side done.
- CareerSource sponsoring/involved in the Family Café, June 6-8
 - Getting information to families
 - Workshops on a variety of topics, including Employment 1st
 - Using the state plan to move disabilities up to the top (ex.: AmeriCorps)
- Workforce Summit in Orlando, October 29-31 – staff training as per US Department of Labor
 - Opportunity to provide update to Workforce staff on Employment 1st
 -

Kurt suggested that the Workforce Summit would be a good place to make a presentation on Employment 1st.

- DCF-MH
 - Still defining what our contribution should be
 - Providing technical assistance to the Florida Housing Commission –implicit link between supported housing and supported employment.
 - Two large grants related to these
 - Pilot transportation project

Shelia noted that we need to keep reminding people that persons with mental illnesses are among the most unemployed.

Kurt suggested that our approach should be collaborative, not contractual, with one service provided in conjunction with another.

Jan noted the Dartmouth model as representing what is being done in housing.

Kirk noted that PolicyWorks in California developed peer-mentoring supports for college and careers.

Shelia noted what other DD Councils have done:

- Wisconsin supported transition into employment through peer mentoring
- Alaska has done similarly to what the Florida DD Council has done.
- Council
 - Co-hosting community webinars with Disability Rights Florida, the UCEDD, and the Mailman Center.
 - Soliciting feedback on new and emerging issues.
 - Dealing with continuing challenges:
 1. VR concerns
 2. Transportation
 3. More training and technical assistance to keep people with disabilities out of the criminal justice system.

The April Employment and Transportation Task Force meeting will decide on changes to the Council State Plan relative to Employment 1st.

- FARF/RESPECT of Florida
 - Supports additional funding
 - Freeze- Florida set to lose 300 supported employment people

Concerned with transitioning youth

- RESPECT side: thirty centers – wages, benefits, minimum wage adjustments
 - Campaign Onward – subminimum wage to create new jobs that can move up to the minimum wage
 - Looking at the feasibility of a Medicaid Buy-in type program
 - Facility-based employment
 - 70% + have paid employment in the community

Kirk noted that Florida would have to put \$18 million into it to drawdown the federal match.

Employment First Status Updates and Calendar Items (continued)

David noted that the February meeting was productive.

- Transportation
- Data - Important questions:
 - How to look at the data
 - How to incorporate it into the plan
 - What we can do better or differently in making it useful and/or making use of it.

During the discussion, it was revealed that different agencies have different data systems, with different capacities for collecting and processing data.

Steve noted that APD has to call providers to get a manual head count of waiver recipients who are employed. David asked if waiver support coordinators keep track using the ABC system with fill-in screens. Steve noted there was no way to have Supported Employment providers electronically report data even regionally. He also noted that perhaps a data agreement with Workforce might allow collection of some basic data, as they would at least like to catch when jobs are lost or gained.

He also noted that some supported employment providers could provide quality of life data.

David suggested that Steve could construct an agreement. He noted that DCF and Mental Health could also benefit from participation.

Kirk noted that VR had data on time within the system and closing survey data, though not much that is useful in determining longer outcomes (i.e. e.: competitive employment). They have data on service category, services provided with the outcomes and could track this.

David noted that sixty percent of the Mental Health beneficiaries would have benefitted from follow-along.

It was noted that VR is migrating data to a new system.

Frank noted that unemployment insurance figures could also be used.

Consensus was that means for cross agency data sharing needed to be found.

Interagency Cooperative Agreement

Shelia announced that they had heard back from two agencies (in addition to the Council) on the interagency agreement being cleared by legal counsel. Kirk said that both Department of Education agencies needed to follow-up with departmental legal counsel regarding clearance.

Shelia reminded everyone that a deadline of March 24 had been set for this, and it was suggested that a meeting needed to be held to go through all feedback from legal and then send revised document back to legal. Shelia also reminded everyone that the Strategic Implementation Action Plans do not have to be vetted by legal counsel.

Web Page

Shelia reminded everyone that the Employment 1st web presence currently consists of a page on the Council website. She presented an overview of the contents and layout.

Kirk suggested that the webpage should contain statements on Employment 1st descriptions for each group. Shelia said that in the eventual full web portal there will be a piece for each audience. She noted that Richard LaBelle and the Family Network on Disabilities would like to help on this.

Allison noted that the web portal should serve to and be a resource for others. She suggested that they should also create an e-mailing list. Shelia noted that a special category could be established in the Council list. She then provided everyone with the Employment1st email address.

Communications Subcommittee

Leann noted that the Communications Subcommittee has reviewed and revised the communications plan, asking the question, How to best market Employment 1st?

Shelia suggested

- Increased employment opportunities motivate employers to hire.
- The message should show the value of hiring people with disabilities.
- Employers need to be informed of the resources available to them for support.

She also noted that the needed feedback by March 24.

Shelia added that she and Council communications person, Richard Bivins, had met with the Florida Chamber of Commerce and received good feedback on Employment 1st.

Kirk noted that the logo and the message need to be consistent for employers. David noted that the issue was making the draft plan into an actuality, including the logo. Allison noted that ICI was ready to help with this.

Shelia suggested that the team get feedback from all possible sources, including self-advocates.

Leann noted that the plan was open to improvement.

Upcoming Conferences

Several up-coming conferences were suggested and discussed as possible venues for Employment 1st presentations, including the Family Café, the Workforce conference, VISIONS, and AIDD. The idea of producing a collaborative video, to be used at such presentations was suggested.

Draft Strategic Implementation Action Plans: Review and Approve Collaborative Goals/ Finalize Draft Strategic Implementation Action Plans and Share Baseline Data and Targets for Improvement

Shelia then called on Allison to lead the review a spreadsheet listing seventy-four different items funding submitted draft action plan proposals. Allison did so, explaining how it could be used to compare different plans. She discussed points such as determining what needed to be re-worked, how each agency can assist in what others are doing, and how what each are doing impacts others' efforts.

This discussion highlighted the need for staff training and collaboratively "figuring it out as we go". Shelia noted that more revisions would be out by Friday to allow people to review and prioritize.

Next Steps - Seek In-house Approval of Strategic Implementation Action Plans, Baseline Data, and Targets for Improvement

Shelia then turned the discussion to the in-house agency approval of action plans, emphasizing that these should not need legal review. She also highlighted the need for baseline data to determine what type and degree of improvement in outcomes occurs. Discussion revealed that agencies vary greatly in capacity and overall effectiveness in data-gathering and analysis. However, the idea of putting together an agreement on data-sharing to facilitate the establishment of the baseline was mentioned.

Shelia reminded everyone that what the team is doing is essential a systems change initiative, that there would be an immediate transformation of the situation, but that we needed to establish a baseline to see change occurring, increasing annual, as desired. She suggested other agencies could use similar measures as those used by the Council, which has systems change as a primary focus of its mission.

Steve noted that we need to develop common definitions of terms to be able to establish useful numbers. Kirk emphasized the need to show progress; not just report numbers, but make improvements.

It was suggested that unemployment insurance data could also be used.

Shelia closed the meeting with a question for participants to ponder: "How can we help each other improve our performance?"

Meeting was adjourned.

***Future Employment First Collaborative Team meetings are scheduled for**