

Interagency Cooperative Agreement

Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Florida Department of Education, Division of Blind Services
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
Workforce Florida, Inc.
Florida Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program
Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.
Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Inc.

I. Parties:

The parties to this Interagency Cooperative Agreement are the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD); Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (FDOE, BEESS); Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (FDOE, DVR); Florida Department of Education, Division of Blind Services (FDOE, DBS); Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO); Workforce Florida, Inc.; Florida Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program (DCF, SAMH); Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC); and Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Inc. (FARF).

II. Background:

On October 8, 2013, Governor Rick Scott signed Executive Order 13-284 mandating the creation of an interagency cooperative agreement among specific state agencies and other disabilities service organizations to ensure the continuation of a long-term commitment to improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

III. Purpose:

The general purpose of this interagency cooperative agreement is to provide a framework for long-term commitment to improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities in the State of Florida. The agencies and organizations reflected in this agreement are fully committed to working together to improve the number and percentage of growth in competitive employment for individuals with disabilities. For the purpose of this agreement, employment is defined as integrated employment, including supported employment, customized employment, and self-employment where an individual is paid by an employer at minimum wage or greater or receives earnings through one's self-employment business, fully integrated in the community workforce, with a goal of maximum self-sufficiency.

Employment outcomes shall be based on each individual's measurable vocational goals, skills, and abilities with the intent to also meet the expectations and hiring needs of the employer.

The specific purpose of this interagency cooperative agreement is to outline roles and responsibilities that Partners will embrace and conduct to accomplish the desired outcomes. The intent is to:

- Establish a commitment among agencies' leadership to maximize resources and coordinate with each other to improve employment outcomes for persons with disabilities seeking publically funded services;
- Develop strategic goals and reasonable benchmarks to assist the agencies in implementing this agreement;
- Identify financing and contracting methods that will prioritize employment among the array of services paid for or provided by agencies;
- Identify ways training opportunities can be better utilized by agency employees and contracted providers to ensure effectiveness of employment services;
- Ensure collaboration occurs during the development of service plans, including the Individual Plan for Employment, when individuals are served by multiple agencies to achieve their employment goals;
- Develop and implement a long-term communications plan to 1) increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by motivating employers to hire, 2) promote a consistent message of awareness among employers about the value persons with disabilities bring to the workforce, and 3) inform employers about the resources that are available to assist with their hiring needs, including the single-point of contact;
- Promote service innovation; and
- Identify accountability measures to ensure sustainability.

IV. Scope:

The scope of work is statewide. To most cost efficiently coordinate activities within this interagency cooperative agreement, the following structure will be used:

- Employment Partnership Coalition
 - The Employment Partnership Coalition will meet face-to-face quarterly with director level and designee participation. This coalition is charged with coordination and implementation of activities to achieve the desired outcomes and ensure continuous improvement.
- State Level Employment First Collaborative Team
 - This team will meet face-to-face or via conference call on a monthly basis. This team will be responsible for identifying systems' and practices' barriers

and solutions; innovative funding and training solutions; and statute, rule, policy, practice and program gaps and facilitators. The team will provide general guidance to the Employment Partnership Coalition for their decision making process.

- Grassroots Level Team
 - This cross-disability representation of self-advocates and local stakeholders will meet via webinars or conference calls on a quarterly basis to ensure the voice of stakeholders is heard and to share information.

V. Specific Roles and Responsibilities of the Partners:

All Partners will:

- Assign a minimum of one representative to attend Employment Partnership Coalition meetings.
- Assign a minimum of one representative to attend State Level Employment First Collaborative Team meetings.
- Develop and implement an annual action plan to include methods for addressing the following:
 - Commitment to maximize resources to improve employment outcomes for persons with disabilities seeking publically funded services;
 - Strategic goals and reasonable benchmarks to implement this agreement;
 - Financing and contracting methods that will prioritize employment among the array of services;
 - Training opportunities that can be better utilized by agency employees and contracted providers to ensure effectiveness of employment services;
 - Collaboration during the development of service plans, including the Individual Plan for Employment, when individuals are served by multiple agencies to achieve their employment goals;
 - Develop and implement a long-term communications plan to 1) increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by motivating employers to hire, 2) promote a consistent message of awareness among employers about the value persons with disabilities bring to the workforce, and 3) inform employers about the resources that are available to assist with their hiring needs, including the single-point of contact; and
 - Promote service innovation.
- Identify baseline employment outcome data for persons with disabilities served by their agency or organization, if a direct service agency or organization or funder of direct services, and set targets for improvement.

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- Report annually to the Governor's office on accountability measures for implementation of the action plan and results from targets for improving the employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

VI. Terms of the Interagency Cooperative Agreement:

The term of this Interagency Cooperative Agreement shall begin on July 1, 2014 and end on June 30, 2019. The agreement will require formal renewal to remain in effect beyond June 30, 2019.

One Partner will serve as the point of contact and assume responsibility for facilitation and coordination. The point of contact will be re-determined annually. The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. will assume responsibility for year one, July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

Nothing in this Interagency Cooperative Agreement shall be construed to give the Partners any authority, express or implied, over the programmatic and/or budgetary decision making operations of the agencies or organizations involved.

Any of the Partners may terminate its participation as a member at any time by giving thirty (30) days written notice to all Partner agencies or organizations of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof.

By signing this Interagency Cooperative Agreement, each Partner is accepting and agreeing to abide by and complete the responsibilities delineated in this Interagency Cooperative Agreement.

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