

## **Employment First Collaborative Team Meeting/Conference Call**

January 15, 2015  
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.

124 Marriott Drive, Suite 203  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Conference Number – 1-888-670-3525  
Conference Code – 7876850281#

### **AGENDA**

1:00 – 1:15 Welcome and Introductions

Beth Romans-Corsi, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council

David Darm, Governor's Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities

Dehryl McCall, CareerSource Florida

Diane Vacca, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

Jean Winsor, Institute for Community Inclusion, UMASS Boston

Jeff Michels, Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Judy White, Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Kristin Panella, Florida Department of Education, Division of Blind Services

LeeAnn Herman, Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Sheila Grits Swift, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council

Shila Salem, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

1:15 – 1:45 Update on Employ ME 1<sup>st</sup> Year Three Project

Employmentfirstfl.org website: The governor's commission link was added to the website, and the ICI web team is building the "wire frame", which is the structure of the website.

The Employment First Florida logo was finalized and approved after the December Employment First Collaborative Team meeting.

The January 21<sup>st</sup> Grassroots Group meeting has 120 registrants as of January 7, with Beth Swedeen and Jenny Neugart from Wisconsin (WI) talking about the use of Community Conversations to support employment development for people with disabilities. Jenny Neugart is a Senior Outreach Specialist for the Waisman Center. She is currently coordinating the WI Let's Get to Work systems change grant. Beth Swedeen is the Executive Director of the WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities and has worked on statewide disability-related program development and training, research, and evaluation, particularly in school inclusion, parent/self-advocate leadership, and employment.

Notice for local level collaborative team pilots: We are in the final stages of developing the pilot request. Two elements we would like the Employment First Collaborative Team's feedback on are:

1. Additional partners to include in the local level partnerships besides the regional or local level representation from all of the named interagency partners? Others could include: supported employment providers, self-advocacy organizations, business leadership network or other similar groups? 2. How to define local regions: regional vs. county vs. major metro area Orlando, Jacksonville, etc. The Team decided that the local groups should mirror the state-level collaborative teams, but local groups will have the ability to add more partners such as supported-employment providers, self-advocate groups and partners from business leadership networks. The groups should at least include the mandatory partners. Discussion was held about clarifying the partners to include because regions can span areas with different population densities and geographic issues. The goal is for these groups to be localized collaborative groups.

With regard to the knowledge translation peer network for individuals and families, Jean Winsor believes she will be able to share materials drafted to use soon. She is developing them with Dr. Stelios Gragoudas from the Institute for Community Inclusion. His research centers on the transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life. In addition Stelios provides professional development to educators across Massachusetts on topics such as transition, self-determination, career development and post-secondary education for youth with intellectual disabilities.

1:45 – 2:00 Update on “Abilities Work” Help Desk and Web Portal

Jeff Michels reported having received 30 calls, 10 from employers, 14 from job developers and 6 from other people. 70% of calls have been about information and referrals, and 30% of calls have been application requests. Of the employers, 9 were looking to fill a job and one was for information and referral. Jeff urged the Employment First Collaborative Team people to continue spreading the word about the Help Desk. Sixty-five job-seekers were referred to the nine calls to fill a job. The FRC, rehabworks.org and the Abilities Work web portal referred the employers.

Question's from the Employment First Collaborative Team:

- Do we know who referred the employers to the help desk? Most have been through word of mouth from DVR, Abilities work portal, other disabilities employment connections. Individuals with disabilities typically find it through web search.
- Will we know how many hired people based upon the hiring referral? We should but there will be a lag and will only include individuals who are Vocational Rehabilitation clients.
- Has there been feedback from employers about how easy it was to navigate the web portal?  
Not yet

- Have there been marketing activities through the Help Desk? Not yet but will be participating in job fairs as able. Also the Employment Collaborative Team sub-group will be working to develop materials about the portal and help desk. The job seekers mostly found out about the help desk through an Internet search.

#### 2:00 – 2:30 Review of One-Page Flyer: Employer Messaging

Some edits have been proposed to target the One-Page Flyer: Employer Messaging brief to employers. Judy White shared that the original flyer has been updated based upon the December Collaborative Team meetings feedback. And there is a new 1 page document that is much shorter and with a tighter message than the original flyer.

#### Feedback from the Employment First Collaborative Team:

- Focus the talents of people with disabilities. Make sure that it is a positive statement about how they can connect to good employees.
- Focus on what the employer will learn about from connecting with the Abilities Work Web Portal and Help Desk.
- Focus on the fact that there is an existing applicant pool of Floridians with disabilities.

After proposing and discussing changes, Sheila Gritz-Swift read through the brief with the modifications incorporated. The brief is being sent out electronically for feedback. The plan for sending the flyer out to the employment subcommittee is to send it out with the Employment First Collaborative Team memo designed last fall. If the memo and flyer are approved soon, they can go out before the week of January 26th or at the beginning of February. The goal now is to have the flyer and memo ready for an upcoming job fair and the rest of the employer community this week sponsored by the regional office of CareerSource. Once both documents are finalized Sheila Gritz-Swift will get the document out to all of the partners.

#### 2:30 – 3:00 Employment First Legislation

Discussion was held about the need for Employment First legislation. Debra Dowds has met with the chief of staff from the Florida Senate President's office and have worked to make sure that the legislation is almost exactly like the Executive Order. For now, all the groups represented within Employment First Collaborative Team are still part of the process of developing the legislation. The need to define Employment First was expressed. The importance of discussing the Interagency Agreement within the legislation was discussed to strengthen the impact and permanence of the legislation. Maintaining a balance between referencing the interagency agreement but not being overly proscriptive (ex. naming partners, spelling out when they will meet, etc.) was discussed, the theme being that the legislation focus on mandating that agencies work together. Sheila Gritz-Swift urged Employment First Collaborative Team members to move discussion of the drafted legislation up the chains in their organizations.

3:00 – 3:15      BREAK

3:15 – 4:15      Review of accomplishments to date and plans for remainder of 2014-15

The next Employment First Collaborative Team meeting is on February 18th and the last meeting of the year will be in May. The end of the agreement year for this Employment First Collaborative Team is on June 30th. The goal in May is to have a formal report on the progress Employment First Collaborative Team has made to send to the Governor's Commission on Employment in July, and to determine how Employment First Collaborative Team meetings will be coordinated for the next year, i.e., who will facilitate.

As part of the report on the Employment First Collaborative Team's progress, each representative reported on where they are in reviewing and making necessary changes to their organizational policies, procedures and plans, training and service delivery planning tools, data collection strategies and strength of partnerships to ensure alignment with state and local employment-related goals. Completed reviews and changes should be submitted for the formal report by February 2nd. Within the discussion about the strong partnership piece, the development and continued use of other efforts and structures was discussed such as the development of the Employment First Florida website, and Abilities Work Help Desk and Web Portal; the use of integrated resource teams to support people in obtaining employment, and the development of new documents on transition and WIOA.

4:15 – 5:00      Collaborative Partner Updates on Related Work and Initiatives

- First Annual Independence and Employment Conference: Employment First Collaborative Team's members did not know about it until recently. The conference has been organized by some national groups (this is a national it is being offered by Autism after 21, Disability Policy Works, and stand Among Friends). It appears to have a regional focus and if possible agency Employment First Collaborative Team partners are trying to send representation.
- A new program at University of Central Florida for post-secondary students with intellectual and developmental disabilities is being developed. These programs are likely to be a focus of legislation over the next year to ensure their continued funding.
- The quarterly meeting on February 18th will still take place, but the separate work group meeting on February 19th has been dropped to avoid doubling up of meetings.
- A statewide manufacturing job fair is being coordinated for April 22nd. The Manufacturers' Association of Florida, the Florida Trade Consortium and other organizations are part of the planning.
- Vocational Rehabilitation is hosting an information session on pre-employment services.
- The Vision's conference on post-secondary transition from May 6th through May 8th at the Rosen Shingle Creek Hotel, which is a Project Search site.
- The FDDC is moving into a phase of collecting information through surveys to develop their new state plan.

5:00              Wrap-up and Adjourn