

**Interagency Cooperative Agreement
Employment First Initiative**

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. d/b/a CareerSource Florida
Florida Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Office
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. d/b/a CareerSource Florida; Florida Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Office (DCF, SAMH); Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC); and Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Inc. (FARF). The parties may be referred to herein as “Partner” or “Partners.”

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 a long-term commitment to improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities in the State of Florida. The agencies and organizations that are parties to 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 and as defined in Executive Order 13-284, “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 of the Partners to accomplish the desired outcomes. The intent is to:

- Formalize the efforts that have been accomplished to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- 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 is composed of those Partner leaders charged with the overall administration of each Partners responsibility to facilitate employment of individuals with disabilities. Additional members of the Coalition include each Partner leader’s designees, which should be individuals charged with oversight of employment programs and policies.
 - The Employment Partnership Coalition will meet quarterly, in person, or via conference call, with participation from Partner leaders and designees. The Coalition is charged with coordination and implementation of activities to achieve the purposes and desired outcomes set forth in this Interagency Cooperative Agreement, and to ensure continuous improvement.
- State Level Employment First Collaborative Team
 - This Team shall be composed of program staff assigned by the agency or organization leaders of each Partner to this interagency cooperative agreement.
 - This Team will meet in person or via conference call on a monthly basis. This Team will be responsible for identifying systems’ and practices’ barriers and potential solutions to address those barriers; innovative funding and training solutions; and statute, rule, policy, practice, and program gaps and best practices. The Team will provide general recommendations to the Employment Partnership Coalition for its decision making process.
- Grassroots Level Group
 - This Group shall be composed of self-advocates and local stakeholders representing a cross-section of persons with various disabilities.
 - This Group 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:

- Appoint a minimum of one designee to attend Employment Partnership Coalition meetings in the absence of the agency or organization leader.
- Appoint 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 identifying and addressing the following:
 - A 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 provided by the respective agency or organization;
 - Training opportunities that can be better utilized by agency employees and contracted providers to ensure effectiveness of employment services;
 - Collaboration with Partners during the development of service plans, including the Individual Plan for Employment, when individuals are served by multiple agencies to achieve their employment goals;
 - 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
 - Promoting service innovation.
- Identify baseline employment outcome data for persons with disabilities served by their agency or organization, if the Partner is a direct service agency or an organization with contracts for direct services, and set targets for improvement.
- 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. General Terms of the Interagency Cooperative Agreement:

Term. 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.

Point of Contact. One Partner will serve as the point of contact and will assume responsibility for facilitation and coordination of all provisions of this Interagency Cooperative Agreement. The point of contact shall be determined annually by a majority vote of the Employment Partnership Coalition. The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. shall be the point of contact for year one, July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

Limited Authority. Nothing in this Interagency Cooperative Agreement is intended to require or imply that any Partner will provide services to persons with disabilities beyond the individuals they are mandated to serve as defined in Florida Statute. Nothing in this Interagency Cooperative Agreement shall be construed to give the Partners any authority, express or implied, over the operations of the agencies or organizations involved.

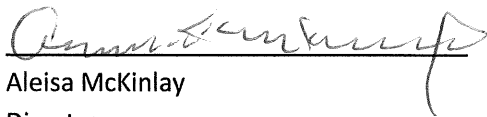
Termination. Any of the Partners may terminate its participation in this Interagency Cooperative Agreement at any time by giving thirty (30) days written notice to all Partner agencies or organizations of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof.

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.



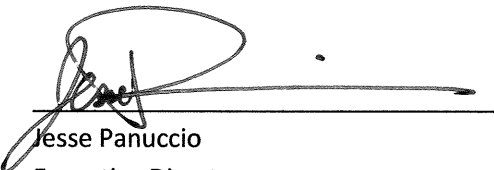
Barbara Palmer
Director
Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Date: ~~4/14~~ 5/1, 2014



Aleisa McKinlay
Director
Florida Department of Education
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Date: 4-14-14, 2014



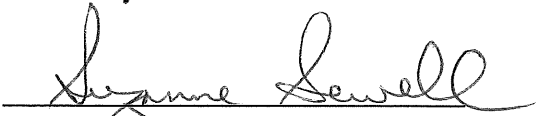
Jesse Panuccio
Executive Director
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

Date: 5/7/14, 2014



Hayden Mathieson
Director
Florida Department of Children and Families
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Office

Date: 4/29, 2014



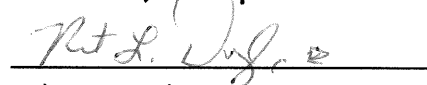
Suzanne Sewell
President and Chief Executive Officer
Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Inc.

Date: 4/30, 2014



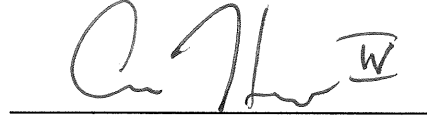
Monica Verra-Tirado, Ed.D
Bureau Chief
Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Date: 4/20/14, 2014



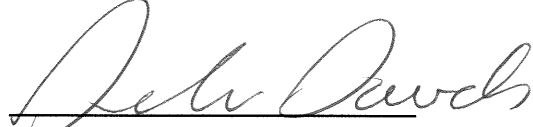
Robert L. Doyle, III
Director
Florida Department of Education
Division of Blind Services

Date: 4/21, 2014



Chris Hart IV
President/CEO
Workforce Florida, Inc.
d/b/a Career Source Florida

Date: 4-29, 2014



Debra Dowds
Executive Director
Florida Developmental Disabilities
Council, Inc.

Date: 5/7/14, 2014



Pam Stewart
Commissioner of Education
Florida Department of Education

Date: 4/25/14, 2014