

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

November 20, 2014  
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  
Jan Pearce, Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Jean Winsor, Institute for Community Inclusion, UMASS Boston  
Jeff Michels, Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
John McBride, Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities  
Judy White, Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services  
LeeAnn Herman, Agency for Persons with Disabilities  
Lucy Mohs, Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Nancy Boutot, Agency for Persons with Disabilities  
Sheila Gritz-Swift, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council  
Shila Salem, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity  
Suzanne Sewell, Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities

As part of the introduction, Sheila Gritz-Swift shared a compelling letter about an individual who had found a good job and was confronting income limits and confidentiality issues under the Medicaid waiver. This individual needs a Personal Care Assistant to maintain employment. The letter was sent to the FDCC and shared with the Governor's office. The group discussed that the issue is not only about helping people get a job but helping them get the accommodations and supports they need to live and work.

#### **1:15 – 1:45 Update on Employment First Florida Year Three Project with ICI**

The Employment First Florida project with ICI has moved forward and is now requesting advisory committee feedback on the following areas:

- Community of practice (CoP) and topics: The hosting of CoP meetings is a service deliverable through Florida Employment First's contract with ICI, whereby ICI can conduct a meeting on a topic generated by the Employment First committee. The concept of a CoP, as opposed to a training, was reviewed with the meeting attendees. A CoP is a gathering of people who share an interest or passion for an activity and meet regularly to learn how to do it better. A CoP is a series of structured conversations in which participants share activities they're doing to facilitate the operation of what they're trying to do. By definition, a CoP should meet more than once: ICI has several CoPs including the State Employment Leadership Network and the Employment First Learning Community. The benefits to CoPs include building local-level agency collaboration facilitating the use of outcome data to follow through with policy and practice implications.

The employment COP topic would likely remain consistent from CoP meeting to meeting. A list of potential topics was distributed for the attendees to review and select topics that a CoP could address. The Employment First committee was given the next month to consider moving forward with at least one regular CoP and selecting its topic.

- Draft website: Jean Winsor presented the website draft which is scheduled to go live next month, pending approval by the FDDC and the Employment First Collaborative Team. The purpose of this website is to communicate with stakeholders and to present information that is inspiring and introduces the policies and practices that Florida Employment First is developing. The Partnerships in Employment website (<http://partnershipsinemployment.com/>) was presented as an example of what the Florida Employment First site could be, due to its content and accessibility and ease of use across multiple platforms. Jean also presented the potential website layout and the topics that would be covered on each page, particularly the individual, provider and state-level employment success stories. Feedback on the website's features and content is encouraged.
- Draft Employment First Florida Logo: In presenting the logos, Jean Winsor mentioned wanting to continue to use the blue and green Florida Employment First colors and the tag line "Good Jobs Matter". The group discussed ensuring easily accessible links to other resources, such as the Florida Employment First Coalition and Florida Abilities Work. The group agreed on using the blue and green color scheme and commented that Florida's shape needs to be rotated on the page to make it look accurate and not tilted. Jean encouraged participants to discuss logos further and send alternate ones to her for consideration by the ICI's marketing and communications team. Feedback is also encouraged on the use and placement of the "good jobs matter" tag line.
- Pilot site communities: Jean Winsor also announced that the Employment First Collaborative Team would be receiving a request to join a small working group to identify communities in

which the Employment First interagency work could be piloted, and also participate in the process of identifying success stories to populate the website.

Question from the group: Why do we need a different logo than the Abilities Work portal?

Answer: Sheila the audience for Abilities Work is employers vs. the Employment First Florida is for individuals, families, providers, educators,

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

- Sheila Salem presented on the upcoming launch of the portal and mentioned that Jennifer Diaz, the communications director, is finding out about having time at the Governor’s Cabinet meeting in early December to announce the launch. David Darm also mentioned that DEO would be making a press release about the portal. Sheila also mentioned that Lucy Mohs, who is managing the help desk, has some pamphlets about the portal that she would like the participants to send her feedback about. Lucy also followed up with information to promote the portal and engage employers and people with disabilities to use it. David mentioned the importance of keeping the focus on the promotion of employment while the announcements and press releases are sent out from various entities in Florida.
- With regard to the new help desk, Jeff Michaels updated the group on the database to track and record calls. He also mentioned that DVR now has a statewide business services representative, Kathy Davis, who formerly worked for the North Carolina Division of Blind Services. Kathy Davis is currently able to take emailed job requests from employers based on existing relationships between DVR and employers, and VR is optimistic about her plans to further develop relationships between the DVR and the business community.
- The conference call was briefly interrupted. While the call was offline Sheila Gritz-Swift asked the Collaborative Team: what other types of marketing materials need to be vetted by Collaborative team? She reminded the group that items that we expect all of the agencies to release together will need to come back for vetting to individual agencies but if it is an individual agency is just revising their information to reflect their support for the interagency work then there is no need to come back to the group.
- Judy White noted that all communications for the Abilities Work Portal and Help Desk will be designed so they look nice if printed in color or black and white. Color scheme will complement the logo and will use plain language. Agencies that already have similar items and will continue to use them but as they update those items they will add the Employment First language.

#### **2:00 – 2:15 Virtual Job Fair**

- Suzanne Sewel from Respect Florida presented about the idea to hold a statewide virtual job fair at the end of June, 2015. She suggested that through Respect Florida’s agreement with the Department of Management Services, which emphasizes creating opportunities for people with

disabilities to find competitive employment, there is interest in creating something that covers the whole state and will reach all 50 employment centers in Florida. She is asking how resources from the Employment First committee's partners can be pooled. She is also interested in the process undertaken to create previous virtual job fairs in Florida, such as the job fair in the Brevard County CareerSource agency.

Some ideas suggested by the Employment First committee during this discussion:

- Engage the employers from the beginning about the interest in hiring people with disabilities, also by providing an employer education credit for participation.
- Target the virtual job fair to a particular industry or do several job fairs. One target employer would be the government as a model employer.
- Remember that most people with IDD still connect better in person and that job fairs traditionally are about connecting individuals to jobs that employers have available.
- Consider big-picture outcomes that should result from the job fair, such as increasing employers' awareness of people's talents and skills, and increasing the awareness of job seekers with disabilities about what they need to do to qualify and apply for jobs.
- Also consider the virtual platform that would be used on any supports or access issues people with disabilities might have.
- A work group was proposed to focus on the virtual job fair, and the Employment First committee discussed partnering with colleges and universities to work out the technological setup. Plans for the virtual job fair will be discussed at the next meeting to monitor progress.

**2:15-2:30      Break**

**2:45-3:30pm    Agency update on status of Employment First memo release**

The memo will be a one-pager with a black and white color scheme. Plain language will be used. Agencies that already have memos that look and sound similar will continue to use them, but as Employment First material is updated, they will incorporate language approved by the Employment First committee. The communications team will develop final drafts of products and send them to the main committee on December 18th for their approval.

- David Darm asked Collaborative Team members if there are changes that their agencies would like to see. The revised letter is focus again is on Employment First, that there is an expectation that local agencies should be building similar relationships to the Collaborative Team, and that future guidance will be forth coming. Since last month David has reorganized the letter some for clarity and is sharing the changes with the group.

Feedback from the group to improve the document:

- Make sure that we are providing specifics about how someone at an agency level can be a part of the Employment First Florida.

- Assume that this letter is the first time that people are hearing about Employment First Florida.
- Focus on using everyday language and giving an introduction that is very short and digestible.

The Sheila Gritz-Swift will quickly tweak the document to incorporate the group's feedback. This will be shared publically at the December meeting.

### **3:30-3:40pm Employment First Family Café presentation**

Beth Romans-Corsi: The FDDC would like to present on Employment First at the Family Cafe. Please let Beth know if your agency is interested in joining.

### **3:40-4pm Employment First Legislation**

Sheila Gritz-Swift: The FDDC has had an Employment First position paper for several years that we have regularly updated. The Collaborative Team has been able to do many things and would like to take things forward. The FDDC has had feedback that if we want Employment First Florida to have a lasting impact then we would like to have Employment First legislation introduced. Specifically the FDDC may want to ask for a Bill that would direct all Employment First Florida Executive Order parties to develop rules so that employment is the first priority.

The FDDC would like the Bill to focus on: Employment as a priority option, commonly defining employment, identification of state partners, defining the elements that the partners would be responsible for using the 7 elements of High Performing States (Hall et al, 2007).

### **4:00 – 4:30 Update on Employment First Collaborative Training Initiative**

Beth Keeton from Griffin-Hammis: Update on the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the project. Thank you to all of the members of the cooperative agreement that have shared information about the training options in Florida. There is now a finding reports that is in draft format, it includes the FL findings report and National trainings. A training was considered comprehensive if it meets all 4 APSE domains. Please let Beth Keeton know if there are edits you would like to see. Assessed training fell into 2 categories: comprehensive basic employment service provider training, and advanced or continuing professional development. Sheila Gritz-Swift and Beth Romans-Corsi will share the draft report with the collaborative Team by email and comments can be sent to Beth Romans-Corsi.

### **4:30 – 5:00 Collaborative Partner Updates on Related Work and Initiatives**

- Florida workforce summit: Over 800 people attended the summit. Overall have heard that people were very satisfied with the event. There were many choices of events for people to attend.
- Group discussed the ways in which Florida is looking to leverage secondary, post-secondary education to meet the needs of the employers. Noted how manufacturing industry has changed dramatically to focus on high tech and high skill. Additionally are looking at how to best support

students who are transitioning to post-secondary education and alignment with education standards.

- APD has started to look at a workgroup to better support ADTs to facilitate integrated employment. Will be looking at having 3 different pilot sites to transition people from ADT to integrated employment without back filling the ADT slot. Respect Florida has concerns about how to best ensure that people who are working continue to get the supports they need.
- Group discussed the impact of SSA income thresholds, impact on Medicaid Beneficiaries, and the Medicaid buy-in on employment choices for Floridian's with disabilities.

5:00            Wrap-up and Adjourn