

Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program

Missouri Stakeholder Summit

Allan I. Bergman, ODEP SME

Mizzou North - Room 707
115 Business Loop 70 West
Columbia, MO 65203

June 16, 2016

Desired Outcomes for Summit: Input from 40 Stakeholders

- Collaboration & Unified Vision
- Next Steps and Work Plan
- Agreed Destination
- Innovative Strategies for Employment of People With Disabilities
- Cultivation of Employers and the Business Community as Valued Stakeholders: Use Successful Employers as Role Models for Their Peers
- Identification of Systemic Barriers
 - Fear of Loss of Benefits and Lack of Understanding of Work Incentives by Many Stakeholders

Presentation and Discussion with PowerPoint Slides and Handouts of Major Source Documents:

“Redefining Expectations with an Array of Services and Funding to Assure Employment First for All of Missouri’s Citizens with Disabilities”

Lunch Break

Facilitated Discussion of Current Issues in Missouri: Opportunities, Challenges and Strategies to Move Employment First Forward During the Next 3-5 Years

The group was asked for ideas on the vision of employment first and brain stormed the following.

Vision

- Schools will embrace the big picture of supported education for special education students without creating reverse equity with regular education students.
- Schools will adopt Employment First, postsecondary education and career education as a priority outcome for all students.
- All stakeholders will raise expectations for all people with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, to have a “good life” including community integrated employment and community participation.

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- We need to be cognizant of not creating an employment silo and address the critical need for affordable, accessible, safe and decent housing for individuals with disabilities.
- Terms should be defined the same making maximum use of the language for Competitive Integrated Employment in the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- Establish a statewide goal of all individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment for an average of at least 20 hours per week.
- Introduce stakeholders to benefits education and planning early and often:
 - Missouri Disability Benefits 101 online calculator –funded through an interagency collaboration with Department of Mental Health Divisions of Behavioral Health (DBH)/Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Benefits information is Missouri specific.
<https://mo.db101.org/>
 - Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) – federally funded
 - Important to provide opportunities to meet with qualified benefits counselors
 - Be sure to know who needs to report wages - immediately.
- Include one or more classes in Financial Literacy in a student’s IEP since it is a requirement for High School student’s graduation. We will not require Financial Literacy as a prerequisite (readiness criteria) for a student to seek and secure competitive integrated employment.
- Build upon the collaborations developed during the five years of Missouri’s federally funded Partnership in Employment (PIE Grant) that ends on September 30, 2016. Disseminate widely the findings and “lessons learned” from this interagency and multiple stakeholder initiative led by University of Missouri – Kansas City.

What is currently working in Missouri to get youth and adults with disabilities into competitive integrated employment?

- The WIOA mandated Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) now exist in 400 local education agencies because of the contract between VR and the University of Missouri-Columbia Hook Center for Educational Leadership and District Renewal. They are beginning to generate positive outcomes.
 - Helping students through MO Connects, College Career Competency, and Personal Plan of Study (transition plan).

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- Helping students get work experience through working in internships, summer jobs. VR offers summer jobs. (Need to expand use of the Department of Labor (DOL) Workforce mandated summer work for youth, both in and out of school.)
- These programs are also exposing business community to people with disabilities in the workplace.
- Some students are getting the jobs in businesses which they have interned.
- Independent Living Centers operate Summer Empowerment camps in which youth learn about disability history and disability culture as well as how to get an apartment, improve independent living skills, and experience real life scenarios.
- Project Search, is a business-led, high school transition program that provides real-life work experience to help youth with significant disabilities make successful transitions from school to adult life. There are 6 sites in Missouri located in 5 communities with a 70% statewide employment placement rate. <http://www.projectsearch.us/> Collaboration between Department of Education, VR, DD, and Mental Health.
- Lessons can be learned from Pathways to Careers, which is a national demonstration project promoting competitive integrated employment and is operated in four states by the Institute for Economic Empowerment within Source America. <http://www.Pathwaystocareers.org> The approach, begun at PARC in Clearfield, Utah several years ago expands on Customized Employment with Marc Gold & Associates and adds paid internships as “expanded discovery”. Job coach fading and the use of natural supports begins on day one and is integral to success where at the end of ten weeks, the average employee is receiving about one hour of job coaching (employment facilitation) for every 10 hours of work. Over 50% of the individuals have obtained employment after the first or second paid internship. Mathematica Policy is conducting the third party research.
- Individual Placement & Support (IPS), an evidence-based practice of supported employment, has been very successful for adults with mental health issues and/or substance use. It now is encompassing transitional age youth in Missouri.
- More employers are serving on Community Boards of agencies and are opening the doors into their businesses and others for competitive integrated employment.
- DD specific – Recommend that we obtain and disseminate the report from Best Buddies International through the Institute for Corporate Productivity on the results of an in-depth

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survey of 230 employers across the United States with very favorable results on employment outcomes from the employer perspective. <http://www.imintohire.org/download-the-report/>

Next Steps for Missouri Stakeholders

- Disseminate the MOU when it is completed and signed by the six state agencies: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Vocational Rehabilitation and Special Education), Department of Mental Health (Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities), Department of Social Services (MO HealthNet and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind), Department of Economic Development Division of Workforce Development; , which is expected in September 2016. Its purpose is to demonstrate consensus on a state definition of Employment First and 8 principles.
- Create statewide press coverage to spread the word about Employment First in Missouri, perhaps engaging the Governor in the signing ceremony.
- Reconvene this stakeholder group to maintain momentum and for stakeholders to develop stronger relationships with each other. Each entity represented should be prepared to share Employment First related resources with the group to enhance understanding and collaboration.
- Share the MOU and state specific data with key legislators and the Governor and his staff to seek both policy and fiscal support for capacity building and rate enhancements to strongly incentivize Employment First. Utilize Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services (P&A), Missouri Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (MARF), Missouri Recovery Network (MRN), the Governor’s Council on Disability (GCD) and other stakeholder groups with staff to educate elected officials as well as those who can generate grass roots support.
- Develop a multi-year financial plan to achieve the vision.
- Establish 3 or 4 “taskforces” to identify strategies and resources to address major systemic barriers to Employment First. Topics could include: access to benefits information to dispel the myths about employment and loss of benefits; strategies to engage employers; strategies to build provider community capacity and agency transformation; analysis of and recommended changes in state reimbursement for services resulting in competitive integrated employment; marketing and public relations of successful stories of integrated employment across the state.