How to: Collaborate for Employment and Career Outcomes

It Starts with a Common Vision!

NC PSE Capacity-Building Summit
March 12, 2013
Agenda

- Transition to Employment and Careers
- What is the Vision – “Employment First”
- What’s Happening Today?
- NC Employment First Steering Committee
- The Role of DPI
- The Role of DVRS
- The NC Business Leadership Network
Transition to Employment & Careers For Young Adults with Disabilities

The Issue

- People with Disabilities - Highest Unemployment Rate of any Population
- Keeps most in Poverty and Segregation
- Has Changed Little in the Past 20 Years
- Results in Significant Costs to the Community
- Employers Miss Large Untapped Talent Pool
- Transition from Secondary and Post-Secondary Education is Key

Premise

- Expectations, Attitudes and Beliefs Are the Major Factors
- Public Policy, Practices and Funding Support Dependency
- Requires Collaboration – DPI, DVRS, DMHDDSAS, DMA, Employers
- It Starts with a Common Vision – “Employment First”
NC Employment First Vision Statement

*Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome for all citizens with disabilities regardless of level of disability, in a job of their choosing with supports and accommodations provided as necessary to achieve and maintain employment.*
So what is Employment First?

- Employment First is a declaration of both philosophy and practice—an “umbrella” term where states and programs align to emphasize the importance of employment focusing on ability vs. disability.
  - It does not mean that employment is the only outcome for all; rather, that employment is the expectation not the exception.
- Some of the goals and guiding principles of Employment First include:
  - Integrated community-based individualized employment
  - Informed Choice
  - Equal access to service for all individuals
  - Appropriate accommodations and supports
  - Employer and business education and awareness
- 19 states have been identified that have an official Employment First policy: California, Delaware, Kansas, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Utah, Washington, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee.
  - 6 policies are cross-disability: Arkansas, Delaware, Kansas, Michigan, New Jersey, Virginia, Utah.
- 14 other states have Employment First efforts and initiatives: Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Texas, Wisconsin.
NC Employment First Steering Committee

- Est. March 2011 in a response to community concerns around the “Segregated and Exploited” report released in 2011, where NDRN found a total failure of the national disability service system to provide quality work for people with disabilities.

- Over 40 members currently representing all disabilities - includes DVR, DMH, DPI, DMA, and stakeholders, families, consumers, youth - with the following goals:
  - To discuss the future of employment services in this state
  - To strengthen the collaboration between the state divisions, advocates, organizations, stakeholders
  - To be a launching point for ideas, issues, initiatives

- Led by Emery Cowan, DMHDDSSAS
NC Employment First Initiative…

Just some of the activities!

- Employment First Position Paper was approved with a cross-disability statewide employment focus and is endorsed by over 50 organizations (Oct. 2011) - this effort was started through the NC Alliance on Full Participation chapter through funding from NCCDD
- Employment First Talking Points & Resolution Statement approved August 2012 by the NCEFSC; Next? Legislation or Policy
- NC joined the national State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) with funding support from the NCCDD (Oct. 2011)
- NC participated in National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center’s Capacity Building Institute and DMH/DVR joined DPI’s State Transition Team (May 2012)
- NC joined the national Dept of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy’s Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program Community of Practice (July 2012)
- Employment Success Stories collected - over 30! - for “National Disability Employment Awareness Month” (Oct. 2012)
- New DMHDDSAS Employment webpage (Dec. 2012)
The guiding mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century.

The mission of the Exceptional Children Division is to ensure that students with disabilities develop intellectually, physically, emotionally, and vocationally through the provision of an appropriate individualized education program in the least restrictive environment.

The road map for preparing students with disabilities to graduate from high school, college, career and community ready is the Transition Component of the IEP.
IDEA 2004: Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include:

- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills

- Transition services (coordinated set of activities based on individual child’s needs, taking into account child’s strengths, preferences and interests), to include: courses of study; post-secondary education; integrated employment (including supported employment); continuing and adult education; adult services; independent living or community participation

- Student participation in the transition process

- Representation from participating agencies, when appropriate
DPI - IDEA

- The purpose of IDEA is to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living. [602(d)(1)(A)]

- Preparing students for further education, employment and independent living requires a village of those will:
  - Collaborate
  - Participate
  - Expect success
  - Focus upon abilities
  - Promote self-advocacy
  - Identify supports
DVRS

- Mission-to assist individuals with disabilities obtain employment commensurate with abilities, interests
- Commitment to Transition
- Relationship with DPI
- VR Process: Referral, Eligibility, Service Delivery
NC Supply and Demand Initiatives To Foster Improved Employment Outcomes For People with Disabilities

*From a “Push” System to a “Pull” System*

Supply Side – NC “Employment First”

- Employment is the Expected Outcome of Publicly Funded Services
- NC Employment First Steering Committee
- Alliance for Full Participation & State Employment Leadership Network
- DPI Transition Planning
- Potential Legislation to Change Service Definitions and Funding
- Changes in Vision and Mission Statements
- Attitudes and Beliefs!

Demand Side – NC Business Leadership Network (NCBLN)

- Recognition of Talent Pool and Return on Investment
- Develop Success Stories and Toolkits
- Network to Share Business Models
- Attitudes and Beliefs!
NC Business Leadership Network

Who We Are and What We Emphasize:

- A true business-to-business network of companies, that advocate for & assist other business to:
  1. Hire people with disabilities;
  2. Market to people with disabilities
  3. Contract with people with disabilities
- We do this for business reasons: finding talent/market share
- A core-group of companies & agencies working together
- Affiliated with the USBLN
- What we do **not** do: lobby; take resumes; do the hiring
NC Business Leadership Network

**What we do:**

- Organized Active Groups in Charlotte, Greensboro & Raleigh
- Hold quarterly meetings (Business oriented content)
- Annual Conference during “Disability Employment Awareness Month”
- Newsletter & Website
- Executive Director – Sid Smith
- Public Relations Outreach to Other Organizations

**What we want to accomplish next:**

- Increase publicity & awareness
- Expand into other areas across the State
- Address financial stability (We do have membership, sponsorship & supporter opportunities)
- Further expansion of the website
- “Tool-boxes” for businesses
- Continue to open the “demand side”
More information

- [www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddas/services/employment](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddas/services/employment)
- [www.seln.org](http://www.seln.org)
- [www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org)
- [www.ncbln.com](http://www.ncbln.com)
- [www.apse.org](http://www.apse.org)
- [www.ncdhhs.gov/dvrs](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dvrs)
- [www.dpi.state.nc.us](http://www.dpi.state.nc.us)
Contacts

- **DMHDD SAS**
  - Emery Cowan: emery.cowan@dhhs.nc.gov

- **NCCDD/NCBLN**
  - Ron Reeve: rr77777@carolina.rr.com

- **DPI**
  - Beverly Colwell: beverly.colwell@dpi.nc.gov

- **DVRS**
  - Alice Farrar: alice.farrar@dhhs.nc.gov