

Philadelphia Vision for Employment 2010
Steering Committee Meeting

June 20, 2007

Attendance: Ann Marie Campbell, Andrea Glazer, Todd Handler, Leonard Kravitz, Michael McAllister, Teresa Myers-Thompson, Marianne Roche, Shauna Roman, Kathy Sykes, Wanda Sabb

Meeting Summary

The meeting revolved around the following topics:

I. Review of Employment Support Symposium

The group de-briefed about the Eighth Employment Support Symposium making general comments and highlighting particular activities. There was general agreement that the Symposium was a success. The event had the largest attendance of any of the previous Symposium's with approximately 176 people attending day one, 157 attending day two, and 184 people attending the Employer Awards Luncheon.

Michael reviewed some of the feedback he received from Networks staff and others who attended the Conference. One idea discussed was holding the event in June and a suggestion was made to possibly move the conference to an earlier time period. Shauna is currently checking for availability with the DoubleTree Hotel on May 14, 15 & 16, 2008.

Todd commented on the great atmosphere created at the Provider Expo and the group in general provided positive feedback about that specific event. There was mention of several individual sessions that were well attended and well received. The group also discussed the fact that there were a number of sessions, especially on the afternoon of the first day, sparsely attended. Michael speculated that one of the reasons for the low session attendance was the result of too many sessions occurring at the same time. Room configuration (Provider Expo occurring at the same time on a different floor than the other sessions) was also suggested as contributing to the lower attendance at afternoon sessions on the first day. In designing next year's conference, room configuration and the number of concurrent sessions will be examined. Also noted was the need to review the Conference Program after the opening session in order to avoid the confusion that was experienced by some attendees regarding the afternoon sessions.

There was a general discussion about the advantages of earlier advertising as way to increase attendance at next year's Symposium. There were suggestions about re-thinking the design of the Meet 'N Greet session if considering a similar session next year. The group noted hearing positive feedback about David Mank's Keynote on day one. There was consensus that the Employer Awards Luncheon was an inspiring event and that Kerri-Lee Halket from Fox 29 News did an excellent job as Master of Ceremony. Unfortunately, the Fox 29 television coverage promised did not occur.

Also discussed were some ideas about how the graphic created at the Symposium can be used in the future. One idea suggested was to shrink it in size so that it can be distributed at other events and activities. Michael will check on the status of the graphic and investigate some possibilities.

II. FY 2007 Half Year Data

Len Kravitz provided a brief update of his efforts to gather FY 2007 data from Community Integrated Employment (CIE) providers. At this point, 22 of the 33 agencies have reported half year employment data. The group discussed possibilities of utilizing RIM collected data as well as the implications of using the state's data system for tracking employment outcomes as we move into the future. Kathy suggested that Len continue to contact providers directly in order to obtain FY 2007 data. The goal is to have all of the data by the August 15, 2007 Steering Committee Retreat.

III. Work Group Updates

A. Who Wants to Work – Work Group Update

A questionnaire was sent to approximately 15 agencies that provide adult day and sheltered and employment services. The intent of the survey was to find out how many people who currently receive adult day and sheltered employment services were interested in working. Currently, 12 agencies have returned completed questionnaires. Approximately, 150 people were identified as wanting a job different from their current adult day or sheltered employment situation.

Kathy suggested the need to follow-up with all of the agencies who received the questionnaire as well as the three organizations that have not as yet submitted a completed questionnaire. There is a need to identify the supports coordinators involved with the individuals interested in working so a process can begin that leads toward employment for them.

B. Transition Work Group

Todd Handler provided an update of some of the activities of the Transition Work Group. The Transition Work Group has been meeting on a regular basis and has taken on several of the activities started by the Transition Coalition Group including supporting the Transition Best Practices document and working to disseminate information at events such as Transition Fairs for students and Information Sessions for teachers and parents. Todd talked about some of the work being done with George Washington High School disseminating information.

Michael provided a brief update of the Philadelphia Transition Planning Project. In the coming year, one of the ideas is to organize the project in a geographic area of the city or around several schools that have expressed interest.

There was discussion about identifying a lead supports coordinator in the area of transition at each Supports Coordination Organization (SCO).

The Transition Work Group has a meeting scheduled for June 25, 2007 at 10 AM.

C. General Discussion

The group brainstormed around a number of issues and ideas. One concern raised was the idea of “back-filling” as people who are in sheltered workshops find other work there may be a tendency to fill the vacancies created. Another related topic discussed was the recent commitment by Spin, Inc. to close their workshop and the unintended consequences of this decision. A number of the individuals who were receiving these services did not receive services and supports leading to integrated employment. Instead they transferred to another facility-based program. Unfortunately, it appears that the other facility-based program is renting space at the same location that Spin previously operated as a sheltered workshop. The group discussed the need to better support organizational efforts aimed to increase integrated employment options, including the need to assist supports coordinators with understanding the preference for integrated employment and explaining that employment is a viable option to individuals and families.

One suggestion was to continue to publish and talk about stories of people who have found meaningful employment outside of sheltered workshops as a way to highlight the possibilities of working in integrated settings. The importance of collaboration with families in telling the stories of their sons and daughters was emphasized.

Another topic discussed was the proposed new Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) service definitions recently distributed. It appears that the current service definitions call for a cap on the number of hours of on-going job support that can be provided. This provision may serve to deny individuals who require time-enduring support access to community integrated employment services. Kathy also noted that the cost of community integrated employment services relative to facility-based services may act as a choice disincentive for individuals and families since these services are substantially higher.

The group discussed the necessity for creative and innovative ways to support employment and other integrated and meaningful experiences for people during the day. There continues to be a need to move from ideas to concrete practices. A key component discussed was educating supports coordinators about the positive aspects of employment as well as attempting to identify supports coordinators in the system who can act as “employment ambassadors”.

Kathy suggested looking at the Employment Toolkit for Supports Coordinators developed by the Commonwealth as a basis for designing relevant training. Kathy will forward a copy of it to everyone for discussion at the next Steering Committee meeting.

IV. Printed Materials Review

The group briefly reviewed three documents originally developed by the Supports Coordination Work Group. The “General Information for Families and Caregivers Involved in Special Education” brochure seemed to be essentially finished. There was still some discussion about whether to insert different pictures in the brochure. The other two documents reviewed: “What You Can Expect From Supports Coordination in The Process of Employment” and “What You Can Expect From Supports Coordination in the Transition From School to Work and Community Life Years” required a little more editing and Wanda Sabb agreed to bring back the editing suggestions made to the Supports Coordination Work Group.

V. Steering Committee Retreat

Reviewing Work Group goals, objectives, and activities will be a primary focus of the Retreat. There may also be a need to develop Work Group goals and related activities, combine Work Groups, or collaborate in various ways when there are overlapping activities and priorities. The Steering Committee Retreat is scheduled for August 15, 2007, 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM to be held at the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, Broad and Walnut Street.

The next Steering Committee Meeting is scheduled for July 18, 2007, 2:00 pm at MRS.

Summary Completed by:

Michael McAllister, Ph. D.