

July 16, 2008

**Steering Committee Planning Retreat: Part 1
Moving Employment Forward**

In Attendance: Kathy Sykes, Jeff Orlin, Todd Handler, Len Kravitz, Marianne Roche, Shauna Roman, Julia Barol, Teresa Myers-Thompson, Michael McAllister, Rosa McAllister, Ann Marie Campbell, Michelle Sparling

Meeting Summary

The meeting opened with a review of the Agenda for the day (see attached Agenda). There was a general discussion about focusing this year's Vision for Employment 2010 efforts on improving employment provider practices. Kathy pointed out that one of the points Cesillee Coulson made during her presentation at the May 2008 Employment Supports Symposium was the amount of time the state of Washington has worked toward developing policies and practices that support employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. Kathy also stressed that it is important for us to set milestones for 2010 but that we also need to think and plan beyond 2010. Kathy also emphasized that it is important to find ways to engage providers in order to improve system-wide employment outcomes.

I. Work Group Activities / Accomplishments (Last Year):

A. Supports Coordination Work Group

Marianne reported that the work group has made a concerted effort to spread the message of employment through a variety of written products. The Supports Coordination Work Group held a number of meetings with groups around the city (32 sessions with 32 different groups). At each session the five information sheets developed by the Work Group were distributed. Approximately, 400 individuals attended these sessions. Marianne felt that one area in need of attention is how we help individuals and providers think beyond part-time employment. She asked the group, "What can we do to maximize social capital beyond part-time jobs?"

Marianne proposed several questions to consider:

1. How do we assist supports coordinators in explaining and discussing employment possibilities with individuals and families?
2. How do supports coordinators monitor employment outcomes?
3. If individuals are employed part-time how do we use this as a springboard to full-time employment as well as an individual's free time more productive?

It was suggested that Len share his 'What Employment Is, what Employment Is Not' document with the Supports Coordination Work Group. The document can be used as a tool for helping

supports coordinators to better understand the concept of work. One idea suggested was to survey supports coordinator attitudes about employment.

There was much discussion around how we can better equip supports coordinators to discuss employment with individuals and families. It was suggested that a forum for supports coordinators to discuss issues that families are expressing concerning employment may be needed. Shauna noted that her experience with the Who Wants To Work- Work Group was that when employment was discussed more fully with families that the employment outcome was more positive. It was agreed that there continues to be a need to include how supports coordinators discuss employment with individuals and families as part of supports coordinator training. It was also suggested that we recruit supports coordinators and families to be part of training so that they can talk about their positive experiences with employment. Another idea discussed was the notion of identifying employment champions within Supports Coordination Organizations (SCO's).

B. Transition Work Group

Todd presented the group with a list of accomplishments from the Transition Work Group in FY2008:

- Organized and participated in Information Resource Fairs at the Swenson Skills Center and Hyatt Penn's Landing (Employment Supports Symposium)
- Participated in the Employment Expo at Community College of Philadelphia
- Contacted some of the School District Special Education Liaisons to promote Philadelphia MRS and Vision for Employment 2010
- Worked with the Philadelphia Transition Task Force
- Followed-up with specific providers and their relationships with schools
- Created better connections with: the Philadelphia Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Speaking for Ourselves (SFO), Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BVS), Disability Rights Network (DRN), Supports Coordination Organizations (SCOs) and families.
- Began the development of a Brochure related to Transition and Employment – and will continue development of this document in the coming year

There was considerable discussion concerning the need to engage the School District of Philadelphia at a higher administrative level. There were questions about the viability if the Transition Coordinating Council and whether it was adequately addressing the transition of students with intellectual disabilities. Suggestions were offered about making contact with the new School District Administration as well as inviting their participation for the Stakeholders event scheduled for October 2, 2008.

Kathy suggested obtaining a master list of all students 16 – 21 that are currently registered with MRS which would help in general planning efforts as well as with specific projects such as the Philadelphia Transition Planning Project.

1. Philadelphia Transition Planning Project. Michael gave a brief overview of plans for this year's Philadelphia Transition Planning Project. Eight schools have been targeted: University City High School, Ben Franklin High School, William Penn High School, Dobbins High School, South Philadelphia High School, BOK High School, West Philadelphia High School, and Furness High School. Michael introduced the idea of a gathering of the Philadelphia Transition Planning Project to include all participants from previous years. The tentative date is June 5, 2009. Beth Mount will be asked to facilitate this event.

Michael noted that the **10th Employment Supports Symposium** will be held May 20, 21 and 22, 2009 at the Hyatt at Penn's Landing.

2. FY 2009 Transition Initiative. Teresa reported that 74 June 2009 graduates have been identified to be part of the ODP Transition Initiative. Initial planning ideas include holding another Provider Exp in the Fall of 2008 and to again include an Expo as part the 2009 Employment Supports Symposium. Teresa expressed a desire to hold the Fall 2008 Expo at a place other than the Community College of Philadelphia. Arrangements need to be made in the near future for that event.

C. Public Relations Work Group

Jeff updated the group on the accomplishments of the PR workgroup.

- Second Edition of the Employment Success Booklet with 50 new stories
- Five (5) of the Community Integrated Employment (CIE) providers provided 37 of the 50 stories
- A new Transition Age Youth Directory
- Family Forum continues to have regular stories about Philadelphia Vision for Employment 2010
- Employment and Vision for Employment 2010 was the topic for one of the Quality Management Forums
- Several Public Relations members and a person who receives CIE services participated in a Poster Session at the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) Annual Conference in Washington, DC at the end of May 2008.
- Employment Ambassador Cards distributed widely
- A document listing 2010 ways to be an Employment Ambassador is increasing in number
- The *Phila on the job* website is up to date

It was suggested that all Employer Award Winners from past Employment Supports Symposium's and those recommended for Awards be placed onto the Website as well as in next year's updated Success Story Book. Other ideas Public Relations Work Group Ideas discussed included: the creation of a PowerPoint presentation to be distributed on CD; Enhancement of the philaonthejob.org Website; Development of a marketing Brochure directed at employers; Public Service Announcements; and the on-going development of a Speakers Bureau. Julia is working on organizing speakers to talk about their experiences with employment and several meetings have been scheduled to bring those individuals together.

1. Employment Video. There was considerable discussion around the development of an Employer Video during this year as way to promote and highlight employment and the role of employers. Julia mentioned that a Philadelphia Law Firm (Volpe Koenig) offers grants to non-profit organizations that may be applicable to supporting video development. Their current RFP is due August 31, 2008. A small group was created to work on the video: Julia, Michelle, Jeff, Anne Marie, and Michael. A meeting was scheduled to begin the process.

D. Capacity Building Work Group

Teresa gave an update on the accomplishments of the Capacity Building Work Group and noted the following:

- Created a streamlined referral process: Supports Coordinators - CIE providers
- Held successful Employment Expos
- Updated CIE Provider Directory with current numbers of people supported on the job and the jobs they hold
- Offered Career Planning Workshops for students transitioning from high school. There were several ideas discussed for re-shaping these workshops in the coming year. One idea presented was to offer the workshops at Supports Coordination Organization offices.

E. Who Wants to Work-Work Group

Shauna distributed a summary of accomplishments of this Work Group (see attached). The summary included the following:

- Establishment of a time line (through 9/07) detailing the activities and desired outcomes of the Work Group
- Distributed a 'Who Wants to Work' letter from Kathy as well as a survey to 15 day program providers in March 2007
- Received responses from 14 out of 15 day program providers, and compiled the information by name and Supports Coordinator according to the data received, 142 people responded favorably when asked about work
- Spoke with a total of 105 Supports Coordinators and of those identified 24 people with employment outcomes in their ISP who want to work
- Follow up efforts have begun with SCO managers to feed back the information from the Supports Coordinator phone conversations and continued strategizing

Michelle reported on a meeting with Partnership for Community Supports to discuss the individuals on the "yes list". Michelle reported a productive meeting that included a review of individual support plans. Discussion ensued around follow up visits with other SCO's. Shauna will follow-up with Person Link and Consortium. It was suggested that individuals who have employment outcomes specified in their ISP should be the **first priority** in terms of providing technical assistance. Assistance can be offered to both supports coordinators and employment providers as a way to "jump-start" efforts to find the person a job. The **second priority** would be for those individuals without an employment outcomes specified in their ISP but responded

“yes” to wanting a job. Assistance can be offered directly to supports coordinators and to SCO’s to help with reviewing ISP’s and with specifying an employment outcome in the ISP. A **third priority** would be to focus on those individuals who are already working but are interested in a different job, more hours, more money, etc. Assistance such as participation in Career Planning workshops as well as direct technical assistance to begin exploring other work possibilities can be offered.

F. Data Work Group

There was a brief discussion concerning provider data collection and it was decided to table this discussion for the August 13, 2008 meeting.

II. Mini-Grant Activities/Projects Brainstorm Ideas: FY 2009 Focus: Improving Provider Practices

Michael distributed a one-page summary document of the FY 2008 Mini-Grants. There was a brief review of last year’s activities and agreement that the FY 2009 focus would be Improving CIE Provider Practices. The following were some of the ideas suggested to be included in the FY 2009 Mini-Grant RFP:

- Developing a cash bonus program for job coaches/job developers as an incentive for helping individuals find jobs that are beyond food service and maintenance positions.
- Developing a cash bonus program for job coaches/job developers or agencies for those who find jobs for people the quickest (the job has to match the persons interests as described in the assessment information in the ISP or from a career planning process)
- Demonstrating the use of a customized employment approach that results in individuals getting jobs that are tailored to their expressed interests, talents, etc.
- Developing and implementing a data collection and information management system
- Implementing a job development training that builds staff competencies in finding, developing, and creating jobs
- Implementing a staff incentive program for getting people jobs
- Creating a professional development system that promotes employment outcomes
- Developing a Procedures Manual that addresses day to day practices for job coaches and employment programs

III. Improving Provider Practices

There a general discussion of how best to assist providers in improving practices so that more individuals can access paid community employment. Two general areas of concern revolved around efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency was discussed in terms of how quickly individuals move through the employment process from initial referral to securing a job. Effectiveness was discussed in terms of the types of jobs individuals are obtaining and the degree to which these jobs match strengths, interests, and preferences. One idea suggested was to re-visit the Guidelines for Practice that were originally issued in July 1998 as a starting point for discussions with providers.

A. Re-thinking, Collaborating, and Combining Work Groups

There was much discussion about the importance of the Capacity Building Work Group especially with this year's focus on provider practices. The idea of regularly scheduled meetings with CIE providers to disseminate information and provide updates on employment initiatives was discussed as an important component of capacity building. Many of the activities of all of the Work Groups are directed at building system capacity to support more people working in community integrated jobs.

The group agreed that there is a need to focus more on specific provider practices. It was decided to create a new Work Group to be called **Improving Provider Practices Work Group**. Michael will act as chairperson of that Work Group. The initial activity will be the development and implementation of a CIE Data Collection system. Len and Michael will work on that activity in collaboration with Teresa. The next step suggested was to assess current provider practices and possibly use the Employment Guidelines as a starting point for this effort.

Len suggested that the Data Work Group may not be necessary as a standing Work Group. It was agreed to discontinue the Data Work Group as a stand-alone Work Group and to discuss ways in which a data component can be infused across all the Work Groups. It was also agreed to fold the Who Wants to Work - Work Group into the Capacity Building Group. Len, Shauna, Michael, and Teresa will meet to discuss the details of these changes and the roles of the Capacity Building and Improving Provider Practices Work Group given these changes.

IV. Wrap-up

There was a general discussion about the focus of the planned October 2, 2008 Stakeholder's meeting. This topic will be addressed at the next planning retreat. The group decided to table the 5-23-08 Moving Employment Forward Session agenda item for the next meeting. The Provider Data Collection agenda item was also tabled for the next meeting. It was decided to utilize a different space for the next meeting.

The next planning retreat day is scheduled on August 13, 2008 from 9:30 to 3:30 at Networks, 123 S. Broad St, 23rd Floor Conference Room.