



February 28, 2013 – CONSORTIUM MEETING

DESIRED MEETING OUTCOMES

- Welcome invited guests
- Provide an overview of the Idaho Employment First Initiative
- Describe Idaho's current system of employment services
- Learn about effective practices in high performing states
 - *Guest Presenters:* John Butterworth and Jean Winsor from the Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts – Boston
- Employment Funding Policy Research – Phase One Report
- Discuss strategic plan

Meeting Guests

IEFC Consortium members enjoyed the participation of the following guests at the February 28th meeting:

John Butterworth, Director, Employment Systems Change and Evaluation, Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts-Boston

Jean Winsor, Ph.D., Research Associate II, Institute for Community Inclusion

Don Alvershere, Administrator, Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Alison Lowenthal, Special Education Transition Coordinator, SDE (morning)

Richard O'Dell, SPED Quality Assurance and Reporting Coordinator, Idaho Dept. of Education (afternoon)

Katherine Hansen, Director, Community Partnerships of Idaho, Vocational Services of Idaho Association (VSI)

Bryan Austin, Assistant Professor, Rehabilitation Counseling and Human Services Program, University of Idaho – Boise

The meeting began with an overview of the national Employment First movement and principles, the Idaho Employment First Initiative, and progress made by the Consortium with a review of the IEFC message and values. Lori Gentillon shared the perspective of why she and others feel it is important to be participate in Idaho's efforts.

Shannon Purvis and Howard Fulk shared an overview of vocational rehabilitation services and the Extended Employment Services (EES) program. Jean Christensen talked about Community Supported Employment (CSE) through the Medicaid HCBS Developmental Disability Waiver and there was very good discussion about how the two systems may work together (or not) related to federal and state rules that govern the programs.

Jean reported current data that shows that in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2011 there were 257 individuals using Medicaid CSE with a cost of \$1,599,289; in SFY 2012 – 225 individuals/\$1,215,683 (decrease in 12% of people getting service, drop of 24% in funds expended); in SFY 2013 – 129 individuals/\$368,000 (based on a quarterly expenditure of \$92,000

(43% drop in individuals over one year and 70% drop in expenditures). From 2011 to 2013 this is a 50% drop in individuals using CSE and a 77% drop in expenditures. Because of the dramatic drop in 2013, Jean is checking these numbers – **Jean will check to confirm numbers are accurate**. However, if the numbers hold and you consider this decrease in usage of/access to CSE in combination with the increase of the number of people on the waiting list for EES, it is quite alarming and a call for action.

The group discussed the possibility of identifying people who are using Extended Employment Services who may be eligible for Medicaid CSE and the possibility of bringing more people off the EES waiting list. Currently, it is difficult to find out how many people who are using EES are also eligible for CSE under the DD Waiver from data that is collected by VR. Katherine mentioned that Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) may have this information. Howard said that individuals who get CSE are not counted on the EES wait list.

There are some challenges to working with this idea because of the difference between the VR and Medicaid eligibility criteria in these federal programs and process and procedures that are mandated by federal and state rule. Currently the DD Waiver is part of a funding authority called a 1915c waiver that requires an individual to meet institutional level of care (ICF/ID level of care) to be able to access waiver services. The state is looking at the possibility of having a 1915i waiver that does not include this requirement. Individuals applying for services under a 1915i would need to meet the state definition of developmental disability but not the federal definition of ICF/ID level of care. If CSE is included in a 1915i waiver, it may allow individuals to access CSE services who may not have been able to under the 1915c.

The group talked about individuals being eligible for both Medicaid funded services and vocational rehabilitation funded services. Similar to how students who are in 18-21 transitional education services under IDEA can also access adult Medicaid services. This can occur if the individual's services are not duplicated under the two plans. It was also noted that for an individual to continue to be eligible for adult Medicaid DD services, they must access at least one service every 30 days. The issue of funding streams and access to services is something the group may want to spend more time discussing and researching in collaboration with the Collaborative Workgroup on Adult Developmental Disability Services (CWG).

A question was asked about VR being able to 'count' natural supports and resources as the long term supports needed to be in place for initial VR services to be provided. VR counselors do assess natural supports (family, jobsite/co-worker, employer, etc.) to fill the long term support needs, but there needs to be a reasonable expectation that those long term supports will be there over time.

Cassie Mills and Lori Gentillon talked about the kinds of services that Community Rehabilitation Providers provide to individuals including: community-based work evaluation; job readiness skills; job shadowing, informational interviews, and career exploration; job application support and networking with employers; work adjustment; follow-along; CSE job coaching; job club; group trainings; skills training and computer skills. They also develop relationships with community employers. People served by CRP's have come through Voc Rehab or the Dept. of Labor. Lori reported that Development Workshops places approximately 150-175 people per year into competitive employment.

Gordon Graff reported that the Dept. of Labor offers a variety of resources to job seekers and those are also available to people with disabilities including: job club; group job seeking skills

development; Career Information System (CIS); and others. He passed out the DOL booklet “Willing and Able: A Job Hunting Guide for Idahoans with Disabilities.”

ICI Presentation:

John Butterworth provided a presentation about the Institute for Community Inclusion’s work with other states through the State Employment Leadership Network and other projects. He shared information about different strategies and projects in high performing states. He also shared some data from various national surveys related to employment some showing there has been an increase in non-work services and sheltered work has gone down a little. John said that because of congressional hearings in the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee over the past year, employment for people with disabilities is getting more attention now. There is a shift in priorities to employment at the state level. A lot of national data is included on the StateData.Info website managed by ICI: <http://www.statedata.info/>

Some notable items mentioned in John’s presentation include:

- How state’s report outcome data: Washington and Oregon make data public within 5 months of service. Oregon gets data from providers and posts a state summary twice each year. Washington narrows data into categories. They are able to do this through continuous reporting from providers – a report is required at each billing cycle.
- Wisconsin has moved forward in using the CMS guidance around pre-vocational services (Medicaid)
- Oregon has changed how service coordinators and support brokers talk with people about employment. Oregon’s Pathways to Employment – how to have conversations with people who may not be thinking about employment.
- Oklahoma ‘Contracts with Industry’ provides payments to employers to provide support above and beyond typical support for other workers in that environment.
- Tennessee Provider Manual – vocational assessments every 3 years to have conversation about employment. CMS funding new service – career exploration.
- Connecticut – messaging to individuals that work is a good thing. “Employment Idol” (like American Idol) - videos of people telling their employment stories. The state made an investment in getting message out there – especially to self-advocate community.
- Maine and New Mexico – training model for employment support professionals
 - Idaho currently requires 40 hours initial CSE training and 40 hours/year thereafter.
 - IDAPA rules describe the training required to work with people in the EES program
- Massachusetts and Florida have policy/process that sets aside protected funds for students coming out of high school and moving into employment services through the VR system. The money is allocated to ensure the required long term supports so the VR process can begin. The allocation of these funds came about because of pressure from employment initiatives.

Other Key Points:

Leadership – is employment for people with disabilities being talked about at the leadership level? Leadership in government, agencies, and organizations includes assigning staff to focus on the issues, policy, and projects related to employment first for individuals.

Pay people fairly for what they are asked to do. Train job development and job support staff well – they represent the agency in the public/community and also represent the individual. “Don’t let individuals look incompetent in the community” is a key concept to include in staff training for all support professionals.

Discussion about Transition from High School:

School transition assessments are controlled locally in Idaho but the State Department of Education (SDE) can make recommendations. There are currently 149 school districts in Idaho.

Alison said that she has a curriculum to help get vocational rehabilitation and employment conversation started early with youth. It might be possible for families to use Family-Directed Services to do Discovery and vocational goals planning.

Transition Timeline:

- Families may need more than a list: examples of what each activity looks like, how to implement, videos, stories.
- Expand timeline to include goal setting, social skills development, other

Richard O’Dell talked about the Post-School Outcomes Survey that is conducted each year. It is done by an outside contractor who makes contact with every student who has received special education services and are one year past graduation. The survey gathers data to help the SDE report Indicator 14 data – post-school outcomes and includes questions about post-secondary education and employment status. Richard said he would share the questions that are currently included on the survey.

The group asked if it might be possible to add a few more questions to the survey such as: How many hours is the person working? What wages are you earning? and wondered if it would be possible to do the survey again at 3 years past graduation. Richard said that one of the issues is funding (current contract costs \$25,000) and other factors include: district time to pull together contact information, Alison and other staff time at the SDE. So you can probably double that to \$50,000.

Data Collection:

John recommended that we keep data collection simple. When collecting work outcome data some of the basic points you want to know are:

- Type of job
- Hours worked
- Wages earned

You also need to plan for the frequency of reporting (how often you want to collect the data).

Are community rehabilitation service providers collecting information related to performance management? Are they talking to folks about their goals/timelines and asking questions like “Are you moving forward on your goals?”

Additional ideas from the group:

- Cost of someone in CSE versus Adult Day Services (Jean reported that CSE is \$20/hour and Adult Day Care is \$7/hour. She also said that 95% of people on the DD Waiver get some kind of residential habilitation support.)
- Comparisons of rates paid for CSE versus EES

- How do we smooth out bumps between systems? Vocational Rehabilitation, Medicaid/DD System, and Education. Many state are working on better collaboration between these agencies to “braid” services and funding for better outcomes.
- How do we help the Collaborative Workgroup on Adult DD Services (CWG) identify employment as the first option to be considered for services?
- Incorporate work into the inventory of needs – right now work is not considered a need, it is an add-on. Find out about states that incorporate work into needs assessment that determines budgets.
- Find out more about states like Wisconsin that gathers detailed data comparing outcomes with services provided.
- Learn about quality assurance process and outcomes from other states
- How do we build that quality and reliability/validity of data?
- How can we get more qualitative data to:
 - Inform training
 - Provide feedback to systems, professionals, planning, etc.
 - Where can we get the data we need from the most folks?

Key Concepts:

- ❖ Do not lose focus on the importance of a seamless system for people needing long-term supports.
- ❖ Help people embrace the idea of choosing employment over adult day services and developmental therapy. How do we present the idea that work is an expectation across all folks in the system – leaders, administrators, managers, staff, and others.

Priorities for Idaho that became clear:

- Making employment a priority
 - Across system components
 - As something discussed in goal planning
 - Start early with families, students, adults (collaborate with IPUL to provide information about employment to families of younger children)
 - People with disabilities talk with students and schools about successful employment – tell stories
- Funding Streams
 - Bring Medicaid/DD Services and Vocational Rehabilitation systems closer together.
 - How do we maximize that relationship?
- Address kids coming out of high school and running into EES wait list.
- Change law around Medicaid budget requests that are limited to health and safety.
- Budget methodology that includes employment as a need.

- Utilize Medicaid 1915i authority to provide access to services for folks not meeting federal ICF/ID level of care.

Links to resources mentioned during meeting:

<http://www.statedata.info/> – **StateData.info** website includes ICI’s national report with employment and service data for all states. Idaho’s information starts on page 139.

http://www.communityinclusion.org/project.php?project_id=54 – **Access to Integrated Employment** - ICI project. This website includes links to a lot of other sources of information – many that we have discussed in meetings in the past.

<http://realworkstories.org/> - **Real People, Real Jobs** - employment stories from the front line.

<http://employmentfirstgeorgia.org/> - **Employment First Georgia**

<http://idahotc.com/secondary-transition/Documents/tabid/860/Itemid/1280/Default.aspx#LiveTabsContent2155193-It> - **Moving On Binder**/Transition Timeline/Idaho Graduation Guidance on the Idaho Training Clearinghouse. Click on the “Moving On Binder” tab under transition documents.

Future Meeting Dates

- Thursdays: March 21, May 2, June 6
 - All of these meetings will be held at the Red Lion Downtowner at 1800 Fairview Avenue (208-344-7691) a map to this location is included on the second page of the agenda for each meeting.

Agenda Items for March 21 meeting:

- Review strategic plan/timeline to take advantage of current opportunities and issues related to data collection and funding policy.
- Develop recommendations for an improved model for “braiding” resources for individuals to use funding from Vocational Rehabilitation and Medicaid resources.
- Discuss and draft suggestions for additions to current data collection processes in education, developmental disability services, and vocational rehabilitation.
- Marketing materials update, successful events, future conference participation