



March 21, 2013 – CONSORTIUM MEETING

DESIRED MEETING OUTCOMES

- Update members on recent events and activities
- Discuss February meeting and evaluate success
- Fitting new items from February meeting into Strategic Plan
- Draft recommendations for the CWG on employment services to be included in new benefits package

Review of Recent Activities:

IEFC Consortium members reviewed the agenda and Tracy provided an update about Employment First information shared at the Tools for Life transition conference. The IEFC brochure and flyer were provided to participants and at the display table, the “What Can You Do?” and “Because...” national campaign PSAs were run on a laptop computer. The It’s My Business Expo featured 8 people with disabilities who are self-employed in some way. A Medicaid session included information about self-direction and employment.

Marilyn Sword reported on progress of the Collaborative Workgroup on Services for People with Developmental Disabilities (CWG). She said that the CWG would be meeting on March 25th to evaluate the benefit package and review services included in Idaho and in other states. The group discussed the importance of having recommendations for employment support services from the IEFC included in the CWG discussion and decided to change the agenda for the day to focus on drafting recommendations for the CWG meeting.

The group did a brief review of priority items from the February meeting. One of the issues was the importance of changing the discussion that people in various capacities, agencies, etc. have with individuals about employment. It would be good to have workshops for parents to talk about increasing expectations and to share what resources are available.

There was concern about building an expectation for employment and then when folks apply for needed services and supports they may not be available. Students coming out of school and others run into the wait list for Extended Employment Services.

A few upcoming opportunities include:

- Children’s Redesign – talking with case managers and those who do intake with families about how the employment discussion might be imbedded. Perhaps have a packet for parents. Amy Peterson oversees the case management contract for Medicaid.
- Jennifer reported that IPUL was doing a “Journey to Adulthood” training for parents that evening – Tracy will drop off EF materials. They are also doing a mid-week mini-conference in Coeur d’Alene in May.
- Scott Hoover is doing Keys to the Power of Work trainings in Payette, McCall, and Lewiston this spring.

Members shared what has been happening with their organizations:

Gordon (Labor) reported that he has attended meetings of the Coalition for Economic Improvement and they do tax preparation workshops, financial education, and have volunteers who can help with tax preparation.

Monique (SILC) said that she will be doing Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities outreach in north Idaho with 2-hour trainings in Moscow, Coeur d'Alene, and Sandpoint. This is the last year for the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant that has been funding this work so she is getting information and materials out. The SILC had a contract with the University of Idaho to complete an e-Learning curriculum for the Keys to the Power of Work trainings. The curriculum will be available on the Idaho Training Clearinghouse by the end of 2013.

Lori reported that the Idaho Falls Community Transition Team hosted a Tools "mini-conference" for students in the area. It is something they do the years that the main conference is happening in other regions. Next March the main Tools conference will be held in Idaho Falls.

Russ reported that the Project Search just held a graduation celebration the latest group of students to complete the program. TESH has a new job developer that is using informational interviews with employers and getting better job placement. They are also contracting with the school district which has more jobs than can be filled and have clients working in school lunch programs in 18 schools.

Tracy reported that she would be working on development of the Idaho Employment First website over the next few months. ICDD has requested a standalone URL – www.employmentfirst.idaho.gov and will know soon if that is available. Tracy will be using software the state uses for web development and it was suggested we contact Access Idaho to see if they could set up the initial site for us.

Medicaid Employment Services Recommendation for CWG

Suggestion: Make employment part of the exception review rather than in budget – this may not work with current budget determination process. Word questions differently in needs inventory. Utilize an addendum to use money for employment when the individual is ready. Medicaid can't do "pending" CSE anymore (as a way of insuring long term support services so Voc Rehab can provide initial services). Getting a job could be a change in circumstance for the individual and could lead to addendum to budget later. Person-centered planning teams could use criteria (for exception review) to have discussions about employment. 1915i (new waiver authority) could include both state plan folks and people eligible for the DD waiver.

Review of CMS 1915c Policy Guidance and the Service Categories Included:

Guidance included in document provides more in depth information and details that might be helpful for CWG when looking at rate setting etc.

Pre-Vocational Services –This service category could include the teaching of soft skills that are so important. Some service providers contract with schools to provide pre-vocational training and activities. For areas where the school is not working on pre-vocational skills and there is no transition program this could help fill gap for transition-age students. Discussion about who pays and how you braid systems and funding streams together: IDEA, Voc Rehab, Medicaid.

Group discussed that right now individuals who need significant support to gain soft skills go into work services because they aren't ready for competitive employment (there aren't enough job coaching hours to ameliorate their lack of soft skills) and there are no vocational rehabilitation services available because of the wait list for Extended Employment Services (EES).

Job coaches need a specific skill set to help train soft skills and help individuals learn job tasks in work environment. Goals and plans need to be specific about what a job coach is supposed to be doing with the individual on the job, not just about supervision. That way we can see how they are being supported on their path towards more independence and capability on the job. Discussion about folks who are in residential habilitation and how to deal with daily rate for res hab when you are also looking to provide services and supports for them to go to work. This is something to bring up with CWG.

Is benefits support, training, and planning the same thing as benefits counseling that benefits planners do with people now?

Small Group Employment – Group discussed concern that people may get “stuck” in group employment like enclaves or work crews. Important to make sure that data is collected to ensure individual goals are followed and each person is moving towards individual employment.

Perhaps develop parameters about how small group employment services are implemented related to establishing a standard for all providers to follow. Russ, Lori, and Howard talked about current QA reporting that is required related to CARF accreditation and other things.

Russ said that because of the number of people waiting for services they feel a lot of pressure now to move people through the system and towards independent community employment to make room to serve others. Providers have incentive to move people forward. Are their folks who would be left out if we do not include small group employment in the service package? Lori said yes – there are folks who they work with who need this step. Discussion about the need for many folks for a step between pre-vocational activities (and learning soft skills) and individual supported employment. Small group employment can fit this need.

Individual choice around these services happens during the person-centered planning process and with the team (circle of support). An array is discussed to determine which parts will best fit the needs of the individual. Group supported employment is part of that array of choices.

Russ said that right now TESH has 50 people in community employment with long term supports. Four or five people are in group employment and the rest are in individual employment. Howard has data about how many people are in group employment through EES. He sees group supported employment as one tool that can be utilized to help people reach their goals. It should be discussed in the planning teams.

Include in Recommendations to CWG:

Each person should have individual goals on their plan whatever services and supports they are using. Need quality assurance around person-centered planning. It is a process that is necessary to ensure individual choice and is often not happening well. Make training and quality assurance priority items as we move forward.

Plan requirements: the planning process must include the employment discussion and it must be documented. Should include a requirement for justification of why employment was not included in the plan for that individual. For individuals who do not have an employment goal on their plan, require periodic vocational assessment and include pre-vocational services in the meantime. Look into states that have policies related to these kinds of requirements like Tennessee and Arizona.

Make choices broad by including all services described in CMS guidance.

Inventory of Needs – include employment questions in assessments and process related to budget calculation methodology for Medicaid services.

Tracy will share guidance and draft recommendations from this group at CWG March 25th meeting.

Next Meeting:

- Thursday, May 2, 2013
 - This meeting 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.

Possible Agenda Items for May 2nd meeting:

- Information from March CWG meeting
- Review Phase 2 Report from research contractor (ICI)
- Review Employment First presentation draft to be presented at the Possibilities conference in late May.
- Talk about models for “braiding” resources for individuals to use funding from Vocational Rehabilitation and Medicaid and other sources.
- Workgroups meet