**Top Ten Takeaways**

Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program

Federal Briefing on Provider Transformation

August 8, 2018

1. Provider transformation is possible with the support of strong leadership. Hope Haven, Inc. and Cornerstone Services, Inc. are implementing innovative strategies to provide employment service that results in competitive integrated employment for the people with disabilities they serve. Leadership occurs at many levels and it is critically important, but the key successes occurring with these two organizations are driven by the ownership of local community leaders making a positive difference to support competitive integrated employment.
2. Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) technical assistance has helped more than fifty providers determine their transformation path. This approach includes providers conducting a self-assessment, developing a transformation plan with Subject Matter Expert (SME) support, followed by receiving guidance on how to start and sustain transformation. Technical assistance is provided until the provider is well on the way to transformation by determining and implementing needed policies, practices, and other necessary changes.
3. Technical assistance for providers in a vacuum does not produce results; simultaneously, state agencies must identify and address systemic barriers, cooperate to align policies and practices and review and revise reimbursement rates to incentivize competitive integrated employment (CIE) outcomes and support transformation.
4. ODEP has developed Vision Quest, a nine-month three-phased process that has helped state teams develop interagency MOUs, draft legislation and Executive Orders, or develop new rate structure for services provided to people with disabilities under a state’s Home and Community Based Medicaid waiver program.

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| VQ Phase # | **1** | **2** | **3** |
| **SME Actions** | Assessment of existing policies and policy recommendations  | Development of Policy | Policy Implementation |

1. Over three years of provider transformation and Vision Quest work in the state of Iowa, placements into competitive integrated employment (CIE) of people with significant disabilities increased significantly.

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| Year | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| # of placements of people with significant disabilities into CIE | 14 | 427 | 725 |
| # of customized jobs | 14 | 86 | 150 |

1. Through EFSLMP, ODEP developed a Provider Transformation Manual and Provider Transformation Webinar Series (1.0 and 2.0). These resources support agency leadership to focus on key elements in the transformation process: Strategic Planning; Workforce Development and Support; Customer Focus through Person Centered approaches and job customization; Operations assessment and restructuring; and results measurement through bench-marking and data analysis. We encourage you to share these resources with your stakeholders.
2. Segregation does not lead to competitive integrated employment. According to research conducted by Dr. Robert Cimera et al., “Participating in sheltered workshops diminished the future outcomes achieved once individuals became competitively employed, per-haps because the skills and behaviors individuals learned in sheltered workshops had to be ‘unlearned’ in order for the workers to be successful in the community.” Additionally, many of the work related skills required to be successful in employment, especially social skills, are learned “incidentally” through interaction with others in the community who are demonstrating those skills. Segregation from these role models inhibits the ability of individuals to acquire these critical skills.
3. Employers are onboard with Customized Employment, but there isn’t enough ‘supply’ in the workforce to meet the present ‘demands’ of employers. As mentioned in the Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities (ACICIEID) Final Report, capacity building is needed to increase the availability of well-trained Employment Specialists who can used Customized Employment strategies to match qualified job-seekers with disabilities to meet the growing needs of employers.
4. Sustainability of the success of the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) is being demonstrated in many states through local support for staff training, provision of technical assistance, development of communities of practice, cultivating relationships with partner organizations, and development of peer mentoring projects that mirror the EFSLMP process.
5. The DRIVE Website Provider Transformation Hub houses all of our resources on provider transformation. We welcome any additional resources you have found useful to be shared with us so we can add them to the hub.