

EMPLOYMENT FIRST COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT

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JUNE 30, 2015

The Employment First Committee met on Tuesday, June 30, 2015. We had a very ambitious agenda, and were presented with a great deal of information.

We were given a brief update on the Blueprint by Andy Mudryk from Disability Rights California. This is a collaborative group with representatives from Department of Rehabilitation, Department of Education, Department of Developmental, and Disability Rights California. This group is trying to identify changes in policies to improve integrated, competitive employment for individuals with I/DD. If you go to <http://www.chhs.ca.gov/> you can tab on "CIE" and see more information. The rough draft is close to being posted, and if you are interested, you can be sent an email for notification of meetings.

Next we were given a very informative presentation on the PROMISE Grant, which is intended to improve the provision and coordination of services for child SSI recipients and their families. This is a collaborative between the Department of Education, Social Security Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Labor. CaPROMISE stands for California Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income. 3172 students are being targeted to participate in this program in Northern CA, Greater LA, Southern Coastal and Greater Inland. Students are between 14 and 16 years old.

Direct support to CaPROMISE participants and their families are provided through 20 Local Education Agencies (covering about 89 school districts), Expandability and over 60 Career Services Coordinators. Services include Case Management and Transition Planning; Financial Planning and Benefits Management; Career and Work-Based Learning; Parent Training and Information and other Services and supports.

This is a five year project, and enrollment of students continues until April 30, 2016. 31 Work Incentive Planners will begin in July at Department of Rehabilitation offices throughout the State of California.

The State Council gave Jay Nolan a two year grant in the amount of approximately \$750,000 called "*Education, Empowerment and Employment for Success*" that was a partnership between Jay Nolan Community Services in the Los Angeles area, and Easter Seals in the San Diego area. From the report we learned that 76 young adults between the ages of 17-30 were served. The grantees collaborated with 7 high schools, 10 colleges and universities and 5 adult learning and occupational centers. Additionally they collaborated with 10 generic community resource agencies, 5 regional centers, the California Department of Rehabilitation and CA PASS (Plan to Achieve Self-Support) Professionals. The outcomes were 24 wage earning jobs achieved, 5 carved jobs, 3 small businesses, 1 resource ownership opportunity and 1 approved PASS plan was developed. 22 people went to college, there were 7 paid internships, 5 volunteer positions were developed and 24 people were assisted to receive long term supports and services. What was learned from this grant was:

- Using a strength based process, getting to know the person and the circle well was beneficial
- Understand the person's community and their resources
- Create real opportunities in real environments
- Have funders work together
- Provide options for flexible funding
- Be willing to fund an upfront investment in people's futures

The College 2 Career presentation had to be consolidated from a 60 minute presentation to a 10 minute presentation; so much of the planned information was not included. What we did learn is that College to Career is in five regional areas, and is intended to be a three year program. Three more programs are coming on board during the next year. Applicants come from school districts, regional center, Department Of Rehabilitation, Disability Support Programs and Services counselors, etc. The fall semester offers a "College Smart Module", which covers the basics to college success, professional emails, communication, time management, organization, responsibility, punctuality, professional appearance, self- advocacy, identifying strengths, strategies for challenges, college and career exploration and more. The spring semester is the "Job Smart Module", which teaches students how to conduct an effective job search, resume development, master employment application, cover letter writing, job search strategies, etc. Year 2 fall semester is Professional Experience, and in the spring semester, it is work experience. The goal of Year 3 is successful, competitive employment in the field that aligns with the students' academic and employment goals. The presenter shared success stories, and talked about collaboration as being key to success, not only with Department of Rehabilitation, but with businesses as well.

Progressive Employment Concepts was the final presentation (CECY gave up their time so others could present). As we had heard from Jay Nolan, Progressive Employment Concepts also spoke about the need to utilize the Customized Employment model to locate jobs that people will be successful in. Networking with community, family, friends, etc. was stressed in locating employment opportunities, and talking employer language was also discussed. Success stories were shared, and ideas for “next steps”, such as training employers, were identified.

At the next meeting, it was suggested that meeting objectives were put on the agenda, so the desired outcome could be understood. Also, a suggestion was made to have a laminated sheet on each table to remind members of the information in the Employment First policy, so the meeting stays on track.

The next Employment First meeting will be on September 29, 2015.