

2017 UCEDD TA Institute

Tiered Breakout Discussion – Notes

Topic (check one): Employment HCBS Quality Medicaid Education

Tier A: General Content (Thursday 10:30-11:30 am)

What is happening on employment in your states (with a focus on opportunities for partnership across centers)?

TX –

Post-secondary education program done in partnership with the DD council, “Bridge to Career” “Project Higher through VR”

Contracting with CIL and other TX UCEDD to replicate at 10 locations over the next 5 yrs.

2 TA coordinators and TA center at university. Their existing program is funded through VR and they will continue to fund even though VR is being restructured under TX workforce. So UCEDD is working to help expand outreach with limited VR funding.

“TX partners for transition” CILs involved, Foster Youth/CASA, Junction 505 involved, other universities and community colleges, and council of governments. The goal to develop models around local language for VR with a focus on integration and community living as a pillar of all models being created.

NH – Our strength is the GREAT data (NTIDE), but they are working on expanding the limited base of community applications. This was identified in strategic planning as a critical need.

ND - 4 projects

- TPSID grant (Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities) for a post-secondary certificate to career program called “ASTEP.” It can be a 1, 2, or 3 year process, but regardless of the length, every student leaves with a job. This project is also recognized by VR to receive scholarship funds. Funding: Parents/School/VR/self-pay (sometimes a collaboration) for tuition/housing/transportation. Some students still have IEPs others have diplomas or are aged out, but all are students with ID. Not yet a CTP through ThinkCollege
- Expanding supported employment (WISE / VR) 4-5 sites that waive VR and DD waiver limitations to take individuals from day program to competitive employment. Worked with WISE to get Employment Specialist designation training. This project eventually resulted in a peer mentoring project to teach individuals with ID to advocate for themselves to be competitively employed.
- PREPT – Program to build parent resources by teaching families how to facilitate the transition process. The program developed a toolkit for families to use. They began this program after a similar program focused on training teachers resulted in no benefits, and they are seeing much better results. [DE is in the planning stages of a similar project.]
- DD Council funding for a small project working with a single rural school district to better meet the needs of students with IDD who are graduating who are no longer eligible for DD services. Working with schools to identify what students can do in the last 3 years to improved transition outcomes.

AK – TPSID grant with self-employment focus (state, federal and foundation funding)

- Micro-enterprise grant for up to \$10k in startup money and includes TA. They also teach a national certification in employment services required by Alaska VR to be a vendor, and certificate in discovery. Both certificate training programs are done through distance learning. They used to use an online-in person hybrid but had a 50% completion rate; now with a 100% remote instruction through live video, they have a 90% completion rate.

HI - Partnerships in Employment Systems Change (PIE) project through ACL, TPSID grant, and VR contract for benefits planning and training people to be benefits advisors. They have another project funded through a local startup to develop a self-employment training program to teach entrepreneurial skills (start your own lemonade stand). Pat’s interest is: How to invest state level leadership in their PIE grant so that it is more than a project but is instead leveraged for holistic systems change.

DE- was an original TPSID (but no longer). The TPSID resulted in a fully self-sustaining program through funding from VR, Medicaid and federal financial aid. They are working on getting access for students to state scholarships for the non-degree program offered. WIOA pre-employment services led to expanded relationship with VR which led to summer programs

- Pre-College degree program funded by VR that incorporate career planning
- Bridge program for students seeking employment, internships and can access college discovery program as well as job shadowing. Follow up is with families in the academic year.
- Participates in a state leadership collaboration works with NTAC

SC – Major obstacle is that their state VR agency does not serve people with IDD. Instead, the state DD agency works on employment - Employment First (EF) initiative. They also have a brand-new PIE grant

- Transition Alliance of SC - started with UCEDD and DD Council funds, now 5-year funding by DOE to make education transition initiatives meaningful. Have also had success in starting some small regional/local all-volunteer teams of school district administrators, VR and family members who work together on systems integration and transition planning. UCEDD has provided TA. They now have 60+ teams around the state. This model has support of secretary of ED and has been championed by their state administration.

MS - Just wrapped up 5 year PIE grant with DD Council and P&A with the primary outcome being that they got state agencies in the room together; they built relationships and started the conversation.

- In 2015, the governor signed MS competitive employment act (Employment First Initiative) – reviving a defunct commission and adding members from the advisory council to join commission. After passage, they have met now experienced challenges with securing appointments to the commission but they press on.
- As part of the PIE grant, the DD council funded several initiatives that are sustaining themselves
- Project SEARCH - HS students come to campus for pre-employment and life skills and internships at university (not with the intention that they will work at the university longterm, but to give them some experience and work skills). This year the Project SEARCH expanded to include community placements.
- The UCEDD's Self-Advocacy group called "STEPUP" with 40+ members started a new peer-education program called DMV "determination meeting victory" to help members get drivers permits.
- Inclusive Americorps program

VI- The Government is the #1 employer in the whole territory, so they are seeking inroads there. They secured an Executive Order on employing people with disabilities from the Governor, but it doesn't have any teeth. They are going to use this EO to work toward legislation that would require at least 5% of hires at entry level positions. Legislators have demonstrated an openness, so UCEDD is working on drafting. New governor is in place who may not be so friendly. They need to move quickly so they are seeking from UCEDD peers draft language of similar legislation

VT- Also has a new TPSID. Their employment specialist, Brian Day, recruited Medicaid funding, 14 students are now in program self-sustained.

- Have 3-4 articles - 98% exiting the program are employed in the area of their training
- Brian is working nationally to help move people from the sheltered workshop to competitive employment
- DD Council had worked with UCEDD on setting up state ABLE Act.
- Included employment as one of top 3 priorities in renewal grant.
- Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Consortium working on transition to employment
- VT Interdisciplinary team - training and TA to school districts, added new focus on high school and transition
- June 6 they are hosting an employment conference, co-sponsored by APSE, to gather state leaders in support services across the lifespan and help get families thinking ahead.

PA- Academy for adult learning graduates 15-20 students

VR funding an program called Employment Now to do 3 8-week rotations in Health Sciences departments for young adults with IDD

Takeaway: There is a significant focus on leveraging state and local funding over federal funding.

Tier B: Relationship Building (Thursday 12:45-1:45 pm)

Continuing the conversation about what states do on employment:

ME: Some Work for Me (Council and VR) one site, hoping to replicate

- Possibly starting a Project Search site
- ABLE - Council took lead in implementing with State Treasurer. During a conversation at a 529 conference, there was a question about whether retail banking accounts are allowable. The legislation allows it so ME is the first state to begin implementing ABLE in with retail banking
- Employment First Legislation - State Agency pushed out proposed new rules that exclude work support from waiver cap (allowing more people to take advantage of the benefit without having to sacrifice another type of support).

ID - No specific project, sits on councils and collaborations, supporting other initiatives

- Annual conference on Transition and Employment
- Contract with VR for summer contracts including a Deaf-Blind program focusing on employment
- Like most states, has many issues with employment

WY - Not a lot to report: Fee for service AT assessments, PSE and Transition CoP, Employment First state, and small deaf blind and HL programs

CA (UCLA) - 2013 EF Legislation

- Using Project of National Sig funding built a consortium (with relationships guided by MOUs), which has expanded by 7xs (5->45)
- Holding out a promise for what can happen, the 3 key state agencies have committed to plan for employment - 3 separate plans for individuals (with each plan tied not to what is the person wants/needs but to what an agency offers) is not person centered
- VR agencies funds internship programs and offering outcome based funding for employers to hire more people with disabilities
- College to career program at 8 community colleges is funded by VR
- Mini-grants (\$500-\$1,000) for professional development of artists with disabilities in collaboration with arts agencies
- TPSID - Pathways is still there

TN – Since the Boling Center is housed in a department of pediatrics, they have a limited footprint in the employment space. They have desires to partner with agencies in Memphis to intern and possibly hire people with disabilities. Partner with university to grow infrastructure

LA - Co sponsors APSE chapter, Provides training around state for national credentialing exams

- Part of state plan for the HCBS rule, lead person has indicated that all reimbursement agencies will be required to be CESP credentialed
- Had TPSID grant, did not reapply. VR agency leaves \$ on the table because the state won't put up the \$ to secure the federal match. Instead they have funded projects with WIOA and local school districts funds. Their program has paid internship and classes in community college
- WIPA/SSA planning grant: Sharing transition and employment expertise with State wide autism coaching/mentoring program and a school
- And LEND! The video of a day in the life of an 18-21 year old in partnership with programs, provided for LEND as an eye-opening experience about transition options or lack-thereof

Relationships

- Who are the key partners for your center in working on employment initiatives?
- Money used to be just federal, but now we are hearing that most relationships are state and local; where is the money coming from? Where is the future?

TX- quarterly meeting with the UCEDDs and DD Council, RFPs from council have matched joint priorities (employment); VR and CILs have also been great partners who connect them to larger community partners (depending on the location). Unfortunately, CILs frequently don't have strong relationships with each other.

SC - works with DD Council and self-advocacy partners, DD Agency which has hired 2 FT staff specifically focused on employment and transition (one co-located at center)

How do state legislators/admins affect this process?

- SC - Politics does not come into any of the activities at our center.
- DD agency is not a cabinet agency, it is free standing.
- IN - State legislators passed a \$20million increase for DSPs regardless of politics
- ME – ME is topsy-turvy and has become highly-partisan with republicans pushing to eliminate waitlist but wanting to take the money from other programs that Dems want to protect. It gets caught up in other issues like a political football.
- ND - 80% Republican supermajorities
- VR program has worked very well with UCEDD and brought money to the table (\$380K), needed help with how to meet WIOA requirements, employment first initiative needed support from DDS which declined to participate due to other political issues.
- Parallel push on HCBS rule

WIOA has the expectation of a written agreement between VR (expertise), DDS (people), Medicaid (\$) based on the common understanding of employment. How have you seen this play out in your states?

- CA - The introduction of the internship service by DDA and VR and DOE was spurred on by this shift, proactively reaching out to 18-21 year olds previously excluded from services (all funded by Medicaid)
- ND - DD council 5 year plan requires them to identify a disadvantaged population; ND's DD council selected the 18-21yos. The UCEDD worked with them to ensure that an annual goal was employment systems change. This has fed back into grants.
- DD Council signed an agreement to collaborate on an initiative.
- Many DD councils are more focused on either employment or PSE.
- Definition of employment has been a sticking point in the past, but WIOA has given a clear inclusive definition. NCDDD is excited to see this moving forward
- WIOA crystalized a new definition for competitive, integrated employment.
- Opportunity to push - USE THIS DEFINITION, satisfies all standards
- We need to begin to collect data that reflects this new definition.

Is anyone working with OneStops or Employment Development Divisions (they are supposed to be doing more in this area) They (the OneStops) don't necessarily know what it means to focus on disability employment, so there is an opportunity there, but you need to be willing and able to translate your language.

- CA - we received a DEI Disability Employment Initiative Grant (requires a translational piece), they are seeking resources (they are afraid of people with PWDs they want to do ancillary services)
- HI has staff going to the OneStop every week, and people are starting to rely on that resource more and more.

Takeaway: Be good neighbors!

Tier C: Capacity Building (Thursday 3:30-4:30 pm)

WIOA Committee documented an insufficiency of capacity in every state, every region to meet the existing need for quality competitive integrated employment.

What is your status and what are your recommendations, how do you assess capacity in your state/region?

- HI - UCEDD Staff go to the OneStop weekly, also connect with SSA there - One recommendation is to give desks to peer agencies at your center. Co-location builds capacity by sharing expertise, cross-training personnel and increasing efficiency of the programs and collaborations.
- Phil LA - Small # Rehab providers can serve pw/complex needs, has sought ways to do evaluation and send data back to system about the insufficiencies of capacity but no one will fund. They have refocused on community training, not sure how effective this strategy is, more hit or miss.
- Are segregated agencies transitioning into integrated service providers or not? If so, who is going to help them with transformation. Is this an area where the UCEDD network can play a key role.
- HI - In Pat's observation, legacy service providers have been resistant; they are concerned about losing clients. Pat has been trying to sell the idea that many clients will not ever be full-time employed and will still need support services in other parts of the day.

Is waiver/HCBS rule (via the states) putting pressure or not?

- LA- Unfortunately no, DDA seems more fearful of losing providers than concerned about meeting the rule. UCEDD is concerned that people are just waiting and trying to hold out until they can keep the status quo. Hoping that if they wait long enough they can dodge the bullet.
- Oregon had a different experience because it was a DOJ settlement, it was a process. It wasn't forcing people to comply with a blanket rule but rather identifying a problem and allowing the state to propose the solution that would work for them - this included a comprehensive plan to transform system - \$3million to retool existing agencies and grants to start new services.
- Phil - ready to give up on the legacy agencies if they don't have a value base, work with people who are bringing the right value base.
- Mank/IN - interview 200 people in sheltered workshops exploring what people want. 2/3 people wanted out.
- ND - Current project is the result of 3-4 failed attempts of policy and funding changes (with push back from agencies. The service providers did not have the capacity to make change because they did not know what the goal looked like. The UCEDD pilot project has been helpful at redefining the language (e.g. Person Centered) for service providers. Existing agencies don't have the fundamental capacity to change.
- IN - Is outcome based funding a good solution? CMS can do hourly and (possibly) milestones based funding.
- CA - CA's providers were excited about something similar, very well received because providers feel they're doing a lot of unpaid work under the current system.
- NE - In our state, you have to get certification that you can not be competitively employed to access DDA services.
- DE - still trying to figure out where waiver and VR services start and stop because it's the same people doing the services

UCEDD role in developing personnel?

- LA - we can train people and coach them, but if the culture of the employers does not reinforce this there will be a regression toward the mean. Need to offer people living wages.
- ND- agreed! Training doesn't meet the need in the absence of values.
- AK - ¾ of DSP's don't consider their work their primary employment and are receiving public benefits.

How will the increased minimum wage in places like Seattle play out?

- In ND DSP wages are tied to nursing home wages.
- AK - We need to be careful about pushing wage increases since it could have unintended negative consequences (loss of access to childcare and other public assistance)
- AK is not in fiscal crisis, needs to cut DDA budget - The UCEDD saw as an opportunity, they are capping Day Habilitation Service hours, replace this with employment. Will not reimburse providers who are the employer of record.
- Forces at play: societal wage issues, HCBS rule, etc.

What is our role?

- HI - If states have increased opportunities for waivers, could we influence what waiver requests look like? We could be involved in the waiver plan rewrite.
- LA - We can't just add cost implications, nothing will be implemented if it is not cost neutral.
- IN - Yes, we have seen the effects of unintended consequences - where the increase rates for DSPs were not implemented with any changes to the per capita cap to waiver funding, so resulted in sharp cuts to service hours.
- Denise (AUCD) - There is an opportunity to be involved as states move to managed care for medicaid including waivers - MCOs may be particularly interested in employment services this since people who are employed tend to have fewer health issues. MCOs are competing with each other. There may be opportunities (and AUCD has some relationships that we could leverage).
- TX - Regarding the role of the UCEDD, our fellows provide research (white papers) to partners (i.e. DD Council) and policy makers since they can't lobby. And we are considering a Data dashboard to share information between agencies.

It is important to understand the language used in VR agencies (e.g. switch from "tuition" to "training" due to new restrictions) know their needs and work to meet them. Developing a partnership and ongoing relationships help UCEDD to understand the needs and language issues.

- IN - Be especially alert to personnel preparation opportunities. Have training program for counselors who didn't have masters program ongoing. This is particularly valuable because it offers opportunity to influence culture of DSPs in the early part of their careers.
- AK - need to have capacity to strike when the window of opportunity
- HI- people don't need policy solutions, they want HELP.

New topic: Leverage the natural support system by training people with disabilities to mentor others.

- IN - We did that in during institution closure. It turned the opinion tide.

- CA - Innovation is a key role for UCEDDs
- Example, In a rural area of California where people served by day program were very isolated, people with disabilities were employed to contact peers and do the regular health check-ins (trained on health questions)- using remote contact (like skype) . This resulted in relationships

Tier D: Measuring Progress and Impact (Thursday 3:30-4:30 pm)

Capacity Building - who do you have at the table in your state.

- HI - DD Council, P&A, DDS, VR, DOE, Self Advocates. For relationship building UCEDD uses both a formal and informal structure, a two prong strategy, group meetings and 1-1 meetings. Everyone is comfortable with the status quo and feel the PIE is an intrusion
- They are missing employers at these coalitions, so they're working on that: so critical!
- Goal to combine Employment First Workgroup (older, has more traction) and UCEDD collaboration. Goal to revitalize USBLN in Honolulu
- ND - Partnerships have been through an evolution
- First, APSE/EF Governors committee, a group of those with belief that all people can be employed which included representatives from the P&A, VR, and Parents. After some strategic planning, they decided who they want at the table and developed a marketing plan. Now: VR, DD, State Council, P&A, Provider Agencies are all involved. Unfortunately, even with all that collective support, they have seen a single opposing provider undermine progress. For example, recently the state legislature passed law to requiring DDA to implement differentiated rates based on inclusion, but one agency threatened to stop services and DDA defied the legislature saying that the differentiated rates could not be done.
- SD - SD State administration has been great to work with. The Governor issued directive that all agencies have that Employment first as a priority: DD, P&A, VR
- EF alliance group facilitated by DDA for parents, self advocates, community agencies
- Governor has taken pride in the success which has catalyzed everyone to be on board
- Certification gets increased rates. VR put \$ behind initiative
- IN - There are a lot of different tables in Indiana.
- Self Advocates, UCEDD, VR, typical partners (dda...)
- Governor's Council has honed in on this issue. And P&A has prioritized this as well.
- They have found that it is important to find new external partners and not just the standard partners, particularly when it comes to leveraging natural supports. Natural support means nothing if you don't know WHO and WHAT it means.

We need to elevate the conversation to the issues of poverty and connect with service providers and advocates focused on low SES because disability is a huge part of their constituency.

The value of the voices of individuals and families cannot be understated.

- Andy: Consider social entrepreneurs as additional partner - use of disruption and innovation as a possible re-envisioning of the lives of people as a whole
- SD- conversations are now shifting because at the local level there is a greater opportunity to innovate. You can then take that experience back to the state level.

Where and how do states measure improvement -

- NTIDE - Labor participation rate

- AK- MH trust authority/permanent fund organization (unique to alaska), beneficiary groups broadly described (by the legislature), mandate to represent the needs of the community to the state, employment is one of their initiatives
- Did a data source survey and evaluation, and added additional measures to gather the data that they need.
- ND - state survey 98% response rate from adult provider agencies (it was mandatory), file review ->extensive data, 5 year resurvey and documented no progress. plan to resurvey in 5 more.
- Should we be looking at periodic SSI / SSDI participation? Yes, there was interest in this
- Mathematica / ICI / Cornell reports on SSI #s

Mank: We have a great new definition for competitive, integrated employment but no means to collect data about employment with this definition.

- NCI survey could help create connection between employment and other parts of life (QoL)
- IN is writing papers on this, reinforcing some frequent claims (e.g. people at sheltered workshops are more lonely; goals matter)
- UCEDDs could survey gaps in national data and leverage trainees and to fill those gaps. Are we looking at ways to get money to get data and put result out in new and important ways.

We need attention to longitudinal work, linking state data on school and childhood services to long term employment and life outcomes.

AK and MN match Social security #s and employment data.

Tier E: Collaborations & Next Steps (Friday 9:45-10:30 am)

“What is their biggest headache and what can we do to help alleviate their headache”

What will you do at home on the Employment Agenda in the next 6-18 months:

- Wendy/SD:
 - Focus on data – what other state level data can we access \to measure better and then scale it up? Currently working on data for the Governor – data that looks at impact on bigger systems
 - Monthly networking calls (or SIG) with this group to continue conversation
 - People on the ground need more training – how do that?
 - Continue joint rural/native American employment conversation – currently working on bringing different underserved audiences together
- Phillip/LA:
 - Think more about using data to move the agenda
 - Continue statewide training
 - Consider DE idea of statewide scholarship for post-secondary
 - Look into DE type Pathways waiver to institutionalize ongoing funding for transition age youth
- Karen/AK:

- How do they keep employment initiative going after PIE money goes away? (grant goes until September and maybe enough \$\$ for no extension for 1 year)
- Continue DD Council partnership around employment
- Brian/DE:
 - Continue state scholarship work for post-secondary – in legislature this year
 - Ramp up more research/collection of follow on data and outcomes on post-secondary
 - More focus on NCI – how to use them to educate others on employment
 - DD/VR/DOE conversation across joint data systems possible
- Beth/MS:
 - Convene Commission of State Agencies – CIL/DD/Etc.
 - Looking to tap into defense contractor requirement re employment of people with disabilities
 - {Project Search
 - How include diversity of people with disabilities at University of Mississippi
 - Minority Partnership grant un Hattiesburg on transition to adulthood
- Susan/VT:
 - Data: 1/3 of people with ID in state tracked; see where they are working and what they are doing
 - Gather people with disabilities across the lifespan at the table to talk employment earlier; help set the stage for high expectations
- Sijan (sp?)/UT:
 - Issue sin university to work on – moving employment to same department
 - Move out of more segregated approaches
- Bill/MA (other than Think College/post-secondary):
 - Working on state DOE endorsement in transition for teachers; counts for professional development and cash incentive
 - How to tie part-time workers in with both employment goals and community involvement
 - Working with state DD agency and provider organizations to close workshops – have state \$\$ in the budget but some of it is going into day programs so how do they engage providers so they change/train/engage in new business model
 - Work to develop a diverse workforce – working with 9 companies that are economic engines in the region to include people with disabilities in diversity
- Wayne/NE:
 - UCEDD new to employment (2 years)
 - Project Search (2 years ago) focused on adults; have 90%employment, partnership with VR/parochial school/parochial provider
 - Working with Job Centers – looking at how to partner with them and VR for people with significant disabilities; certificate programs?
 - Look at Defense workforce outreach?
 - Looking at Think College/inclusive post-secondary education program
- David/SC:
 - UCEDD collaborates with 5 inclusive post-secondary programs
 - Working to change DD Agency into Employment Frist agency
 - Looking to introduce Employment Frist legislation

Across states:

- Dig in on existing relationships with states to organize at the state level to be able to access flexibility at the federal level; UCEDDs can be some of the best conveners because of relationships
- Capture innovation and share with other states
- Possible SIG or other way for this group to continue talking about employment; share what is happening in other states with each other; benchmark themselves to other states
- What about DOL/ETA (Employment and Training Administration) funding – not good for people with disabilities. ETA has money, but how do we get it?? Perhaps go to new Secretary of Labor (Alex Acosta) with an ETA agenda re internships/apprenticeships