

CEG (Customized Employment Grant) Summary

Background:

The federal Office of Disability and Employment Policy (ODEP), awarded the Alaska Workforce Investment Board this 3 million dollar, 5 year project in the fall of 2002. There were a total of six full time staff initially hired for this project. The lead agency assigned to run this project was the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) in conjunction with all of our workforce partners under a statewide steering committee. The project initially targeted Alaska's five full-service job centers in Juneau, Kenai, Anchorage (Muldoon), MatSu and Fairbanks. It has since expanded to include Sitka and Ketchikan with other sites anticipated to come on line soon.

Project Goal:

The project goal was to pilot a new service delivery system that provided a wrap-around delivery approach using new customized employment tools to better serve individuals with very significant disabilities so they could successfully go to work. This approach utilized "service delivery teams" at each job-center that are comprised of individuals from various partners throughout the job center, community at large and client's own support system to implement the tools of customized employment; discovery, profile, facilitated job-development planning, portfolio and negotiated job placement. This process focused on thoroughly getting to know the client through a discovery process so that an individualized, choice oriented, job development approach is utilized. This unveils the hidden strengths, talents and capacity of each individual which drives their job-placement process while the needs of the employer are also met.

The ultimate goal was to take the "lessons learned" from piloting this new delivery system to more effectively re-design our job-center services throughout the state so long-term sustainability was achieved. We relied on the high-level national expertise of Joe Skiba (Organizational System's Change and Consulting), and Mike Callahan & Civa Shumpert (Employment for All), to help us develop and implement this new service delivery system and associated service re-design development. In addition, our statewide steering committee of workforce leadership team represented now by the "Job-Center Integrated Service Committee" evolved out of this project to help ensure long-term successful sustainability of best practices are achieved.

Project Outcomes:

The services of this project directly resulted in over 60 consumers with very significant disabilities successfully going to work as a result of utilizing the above service strategy. At a systems level, the customized employment service approach has been adopted by various agencies throughout the state for long-term, sustained use. These agencies include the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division of Public Assistance (“Family Centered Services”), Division of Employment Security (“Disability Program Navigators, etc), various school districts, centers for independent living, youth transition programs (Youth in Transition/YIT, etc.) and the new statewide self-employment program, etc. In addition, many features currently in place and/or in development at our job centers such as the recent movement toward an integrated employer services as well as improved triage processes were all directly assisted through this CEG grant.

Current & Future Status:

This project is in the last year of the grant so this year’s focus is ensuring we’ve developed a sustainable plan by October 1, 2007 so that the many strengths of this service delivery approach are permanently embedded and implemented. This entails developing longer term staff training approaches and additional agency policy changes that align with this objective. Some of these changes have already occurred such as DVR formally adopting some of the CE tools as part of this comprehensive assessment system for consumers. In addition, on-going work with various workforce partners such as our Community Rehab Providers (CRPs), ESD’s Disability Program Navigator (DPN), DPA’s Family Centered Services (FCS), the new self-employment project and various youth and independent living services to help solidify this sustainability is very much underway.

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