

New Jersey State Employment & Training Commission
Disability Issues Committee Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2010

Welcome/Opening Discussion

The meeting commenced at 10:15 with a welcome and introductions from Judy Formalarie, who sent the regrets from Chair Nicky Gacos, who could not attend due to a family illness.

DiscoverAbility Grant Update

Joseph Amoroso, Acting Director, Division of Disability Services, gave an update about the DiscoverAbility grant. All subcontracts on the grant are now out. The Division is currently awaiting the 2011 award amount from CMS. The Division is partnering with the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development for the final year of the grant.

Mr. Amoroso discussed the information dissemination strategies on the grant, including social media and outreach. DiscoverAbility and the NJBLN will be meeting to discuss better coordination of the two groups' social media efforts. He believes social media is helping to improve the marketing of services to everyone.

Michele Martin spoke to the importance of sustainability in the final year of the grant and working within departments and organizations at the state and local levels, including working locally with WIBs and One-Stop Centers to integrate DiscoverAbility goals into their current activities. The grant ends September 30, 2011, and DiscoverAbility aims to ensure that work continues after that date, through strategic sustainability activities, including engaging the Disability Program Navigators and the public workforce system. A public progress report on the third quarter (July – September 2010) was handed out.

Update on Regional Chair Meetings and November 3rd Conference

Judy Formalarie gave an update on regional Disabilities Issues Committee Chair meetings. These meetings were held with the WIB Director, the local Disability Issues Committee Chair, DPN, and local DVRS manager. Meetings were held in the central region, southern region, and two in the northern regions in November. The meetings served as information exchanges and opportunities for partnering between WIBs.

Michele Martin discussed themes from regional meetings. There is a lot of activity around disability employment, but it is not necessarily coordinated activity. In the central region, there is a fair amount of planning and strategic thinking. The region expressed an interest in doing planning at the regional level in addition to local planning. The southern region had held service provider events, and surveyed staff about training needs. The Passaic/Hudson/Bergen area comes together under the MOSAIC project, and felt that more needs to be done to educate service providers and job seekers about the changing economy and an emphasis on contract work and freelance work. This group was also concerned about performance measures and outcomes. The Essex/Morris/Sussex/Warren/Newark region was focused on

staff training and a sense that staff needed to develop skills at One-Stop Career Center and partner organizations, including Boards of Social Services.

Ms. Martin mentioned that DiscoverAbility gained specific insights and ideas from these meetings (such as surveying One-Stop staff) but is also now considering implementing a “peer learning and leader network” to engage staff from all providers and agencies for capacity building on an ongoing basis that is sustainable and can continue after the conclusion of the grant.

Savannah Barnett gave a brief overview of the November 3rd *Learning at Work* conference. The conference featured presentations about “Workplace Tours, Job Shadowing, and Informational Interviews;” “Internships, Mentors, and On-the-Job Training;” “Apprenticeship;” and “Experiences and Programs for Teachers/Staff.” Approximately 60 people attended, including disability employment service providers, public workforce staff, and educators. Feedback was positive, but challenges remain about engaging employers and understanding the employer perspective.

John Sinzer from the NJBLN mentioned the “Skills First” conference, which had similar feedback. Jan Goodman discussed a training that Greater Raritan conducted that the NJBLN presented at, with positive feedback. Seventy-two people attended and seemed to appreciate hearing the reality of competing for job openings.

Michele Martin discussed the “training coordination” meeting held at the Heldrich Center in November to discover the range of training needs and resources within the state. One thing that emerged from the meeting is that One-Stop training is needed around understanding hidden disabilities, specific populations of people with disabilities, etiquette, etc. The service provider community expressed need for training in job search, techniques, understanding the labor market, etc.

Disability Employment Initiative Grant

Alice Hunnicutt discussed the Disability Employment Initiative Grant (DEI), which is one of nine awarded. Due to a reorganization at LWD, DVRS is now a part of the Workforce Division, while previously they were a part of Disability Services. Ms. Hunnicutt has appointed Brian Burns as the lead person on the DEI Grant.

Mr. Burns discussed the DEI Grant. New Jersey is one of three states that will focus on youth populations, including youth veterans and youth ex-offenders. The grant is \$2.4 million over three years. DVRS is the lead agency for DEI, and there will be a Disability Resource Coordinator at each grant location. The initial proposal was to provide funding for eight WIBs to allow for an experimental and control group. A letter of solicitation was sent to all WIBs with eight responses, the US DOL decided to select four WIBs (Bergen, Burlington, Cumberland/Salem, and Passaic) and four for data comparison purposes. All funded WIBs are required to become Employment Networks and must be able to comply with data reporting.

The DEI includes integrated resource team approach, integrating resources and services, blending and braiding funds, leveraging resources; and self-employment, guideposts for success, and partnership and collaboration. A public-private collaboration will be formed to serve as a single point of contact (like MOSAIC). DEI will work with the NJBLN to get more businesses certified in the Disability Supplier Diversity Program. DEI will also provide technical assistance on Universal Design statewide. DVRS is currently engaged in conversations with USDOL to further define the grant. DVRS will coordinate activities with DiscoverAbility, especially around shared goals such as providing training on becoming an Employment Network and outreach on Universal Design. The PowerPoint presentation given today will be sent to the committee via email.

Discussion about Subgroups

Michele Martin discussed the breakdown of the committee into sub-groups: employer outreach; preparation for and connection to jobs; public awareness and communication; research, evaluation and performance. John Sinzer, Dana Egreczky and Michele Horst signed up for the employer group. Alice Hunnicutt, Bob Haugh, Joe Gazzara, and Brian Fitzgibbons signed up for preparation and connection to jobs. AnneMarie Cook, Jan Goodman, Harriet Findlay, and Jennifer Joyce signed up for public awareness and communications. Frank Kirkland and Brian Burns signed up for research and evaluation. Groups then met together to decide next steps.

The employer group reported out stating the need for better outreach and coordination with employers, better feedback and skills and qualifications needed for current and future jobs, better pipeline of information regarding jobs and information needs for employers. The approach on the job development level needs to change to have one point of contact and information sharing between agencies. Better outreach needs to be done to small and midsize companies. One action item is for the State Chamber to reach out to local chambers more to engage small and mid-sized businesses.

The communication and public awareness group reported out stating that even though there have been educational efforts, there still needs to be more outreach, including tools developed with public funding such as the “What Can You Do?” Campaign. Another important piece is the transitioning of youth, including self-employment opportunities. Learn/Do/Earn, a product of the State Chamber, has been employed to help youth transition, but needs to do more. Several questions arose to keep in mind:

- Do we need a common message or specific audience?
- Who are our stakeholders?
- Can we do our Workfirst programs as other states do?
- Can we do more with Alliance for Full Participation?

The preparation for and connection to jobs group reported out regarding the misconceptions of work, preparation in terms of online training, better connections to the education system, and reasonable expectations for work. It was noted that we need to seek curriculum that is already available. It was noted that some Centers for Independent Living are working with

school systems to provide ongoing training. It would be good to offer this as an extended school year experience and as a transition strategy. It was also noted that there is a need to communicate Labor Market Information and demand occupations better. It was suggested that more marketing be done of the two state websites, NJCAN and NJ Next Stop.

The research group reported out and decided to have a follow-up meeting. The most effective outcome is employment and satisfaction in that employment. What are the groups of people with disabilities that are employed? Is the state not reaching certain groups of people (i.e. people with developmental disabilities)? Are there specific areas that can be looked at to assess effectiveness? What are the barriers to employment? This fits in with Alliance for Full Participation initiative, which has adopted an “employment first” model. Analysis is also important when making resource allocation decisions and as a guide for policy creation.

New Business

Judy Formalarie asked all committee members to ensure their contact information is correct with the SETC. A full list of members will be emailed to all once all the contact information is affirmed.

Judy also distributed a flyer from the Voorhees Transportation Center regarding a transportation survey, as well as information on the websites for Workforce3One (www.disability.workforce3one.org) and the Disabilities at Work radio show (www.DisabilitiesAtWork.org).

Scheduling for next year’s meetings was discussed. The SETC will no longer have their board meetings at the Janice Levin Center at Rutgers, so the Disability Issues Committee can meet at any time or place. Judy will attempt to put a schedule together and email it out to the group.

The meeting concluded at 12:25p.m.

Attendees:

Joseph Amoroso
Savannah Barnett
Brian Burns
AnneMarie Cook
Harriet Findlay
Judy Formalarie

Joseph Gazzara
Jan Goodman
Alice Hunnicutt
Frank Kirkland
Jody Levinson
Lillie Lowe Reid

Michele Martin
Nils Richardson
David Rosenblum
John Sinzer
Ed Sroczyński