

Disability Employability Session Descriptions

May 11-13, 2016

(subject to change)

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

1:45 – 3:30 ***Successful Transitions Roadmap*** – Join us for a Panel discussion about the youth transition processes in the Great Falls area, which data indicates has achieved the most successes in transitioning youth out of high school. Gain insight on what they do, who is involved (students, Educators, Vocational Rehabilitation, Case Managers, Parents, others...), and what are the steps and when. What can be replicated in other areas? Come and listen to their process, and ask questions in hopes of using what they have learned in other areas across the state. PANEL: Jill Keough, MRC, CRC, Pete Townsend MRC; Karen McBirnie CRC, Kathy Reed and Ann Taylor, both of Great Falls Public Schools

3:45 – 4:30 ***MCIS/PEP System Overview*** – An expert from the Department of Labor will provide an overview of the Montana Career Information System (MCIS) and the Personal Employment Plan (PEP). Many high schools and Vocational Counselors already use this system. It is free and can help an individual learn about their skills and interests, as well as explore career opportunities both in Montana and nationally. We encourage Job Seekers, Parents, Educators, Employment Professionals, Case Managers and others to come learn more about these tools. (*a detailed walk through of these tools is scheduled Thursday afternoon*)
By: Pam Brandt, Department of Labor

4:35 – 5:00 ***The Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP)*** – An overview of the Developmental Disabilities Program, what services and programs they offer, and where services and supports are located across the state. By: Novelene Martin, DDP Bureau Chief

Thursday, May 12, 2016

8:45 – 10:15 ***The Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*** and services for Employers, Job Seekers/Youth, Educators, Employment Providers, Case Managers, and state Agencies that serve young adults with disabilities who need employment. Updates to Federal funding rules change the expectations on employment of people with disabilities. The new expectations require more coordination with employers, schools, and other stakeholders in the young adult's life. What does this mean, and what does this look like in Montana? Information will be given on the changes and activities that are currently happening, and ones that are coming to all areas of the state. *(for more information on the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, please visit their vendor booth Thursday afternoon!)* By: Beverly Berg, CRCC; Tammy Hogan, M.Ed., C.R.C.; Sally Sjaastad, M.S., C.R.C., Kathy Reed, Ann Taylor

10:30 – Noon **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

(A) *How Working Might Affect Your Benefits* – Are you or a family member currently receiving SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, or other benefits? Are you worried about losing these benefits if you or your family member are working? Come and learn more about the myths and facts of earning wages and receiving other benefits. There are local resources out there to help you make informed decisions when it comes to wages and your benefits. This overview will help you understand some of the most common issues, and where to go for more personalized assistance.

By: Margaret Keener, North Central Independent Living Services

(B) *Employment Law and Disability Law 101* – Are you an employer or human resource staff and are not quite comfortable with how employment and disability law might affect you or your business? Come and learn some of the details, such as asking for reasonable accommodations. Ask questions and get information on where to go for more individualized consultation. By: Roberta Zenker, Attorney for Disability Rights Montana

(C) *The Entrepreneur In You* – Self Employment is often forgotten as a viable employment option for disabled individuals. Have you ever considered if it might be a reasonable goal for you? Our panelists are people with disabilities that have successfully started their own businesses in Montana. Join them to hear how they accomplished it! By: Roger Shelley, U of M Rural Institute; Lissie, owner of Lissie's Luv Yums

12:15 – **Ice Breaker with Zack Anner** – People with disabilities are just 'differently abled'. Zack's life lessons through comedy.

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1:00-2:45 ***Engaging Employers and Job Seekers in Assistive Technology*** – Assistive technology has come a long way! There are many easy apps that can help a person become, and stay, successfully employed. A national A/T expert will walk you through some apps and devices that have proven their success. Most of these are reasonable, low, or no cost and are easy to create or program. Job Seekers will hopefully get an idea of how some of the different apps might help them. Employers/HR staff will be able to envision how they might incorporate some of these tools for employees who may need additional support to stay successful. Employment Providers/Staff and Case Managers will benefit from learning about these tools and how they might help people you are serving. Families will benefit from knowing more about these exciting options. By: Marsha Threlkeld, PIVOTAL Consulting and Training

3:00 – 4:45 **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

- (A) *MCIS/PEP System Detailed Tutorial*** – An expert from the Department of Labor will provide a detailed walk-through of the Montana Career Information System (MCIS) and the Personal Employment Plan (PEP). The PEP plans help an individual learn about their skills, interests, and potential barriers by using the MCIS. The Personal Employment Plan will help narrow down occupational choices and create an education and employment plan using the SMART goal setting model. The MCIS has assessments, career pathways, national and regional occupation data, a resume creator, and resources for postsecondary education and financial aid. We encourage Job Seekers, Parents, Educators, Employment Professionals, Case Managers and others to come learn more about these tools. By: Pam Brandt, Department of Labor
- (B) *Tapping Into a Different Workforce*** – People with disabilities offer the same benefits as any other person. In fact, data shows that sometimes employees with disabilities offer more benefit to an employer. We have assembled a panel of Employers and Employees with disabilities to help walk through the process that got them there. How did it work? Who was involved? What were the timelines? What benefits did employers discover? (lower turnover rates and tax incentives for example) Employers/HR staff and all stakeholders are encouraged to come learn more about some success stories and consider tapping into the disability workforce! PANEL: Jennifer Spellman, Director of Food Service and Robin Western, Lead Early Family Center; both are with the Great Falls Public Schools. Working students will also share their experiences. Christy Sofianek, Project Search Coordinator will bring an employer and student.
- (C) *Mapping the Route to Higher Education*** – College or post-high school education are often not considered for youth with disabilities. This session will provide information on potential resources and steps for planning a transition to higher education for youth with disabilities. By: Bronwyn Troutman, Movin' On in Montana

Friday, May 13, 2016

8:10 – 8:30 **Montana Youth Transitions** - MYTransitions is a collaborative effort between the public and private sector regarding all topics related to transition. By bringing together youth with disabilities, their families and professionals we are able to combine resources and efforts to make the transition process seamless. Project components include: web site, Regional Transition Groups, annual conference, Job Shadowing and Soft Skills training. MYLF is a unique leadership training program for high school students with disabilities which concentrates on career planning and the steps leading to their career goals.

By: June Hermanson,

8:30 – 10:30 **Strategies for Assessing and Finding Employment for People with Autism** – Youth and others with Autism are capable of many things, but their unique challenges may require some different strategies to help them succeed in the world of employment. Please join our national expert to help us to learn more about some successful assessment strategies, and how to find the best job match to maximize their potential for success. By: Zosia Zaks, M.Ed., C.R.C.

10:45 – 11:30 **Maximizing Financial Security and Benefit Eligibility for Persons with Disabilities** – Ensuring the economic well-being of a child with disabilities is a complex issue. Sometimes the assets of the youth when they become an adult (age 18) might affect their eligibility for other programs or benefits. This segment will provide some details, options, and advice for youth and their families as they plan for the young adult's transition into adulthood. The goal is to ensure that proper planning can be used to maximize the child's financial position and provide the most benefit. Topics covered include SSI, assets, exempt trusts, ABLE accounts, power of attorney, and guardianship to name a few. Employment Specialists/Providers, Educators, and Case Managers may also learn information that may help you guide youth and families in making informed decisions.

By: Nancy Gibson, Attorney from Missoula