

Supported Employment Leadership Network (SELN) Work Group
March 27, 2012 - 10:00 – 3:00 pm

Attendees: Kelly McNurlin, Jannis Conselyea, Jenny Betz, Troy Kelly, Deb Park, Mike Hermanson, Lori Idland, Janet Dalton, Charlie Briggs, Darin Nelson, Debra Swingley, Rita Schilling, Lori Lundberg, Nathan Dudley, Tim Plaska, Diane Booth, Jenece Sharkey, and Karen Cech (minutes).

Meetings will be on a regularly scheduled basis of every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 10:00 to 3:00 pm. The meetings have been scheduled for April 18, May 16, June 20, July 18, August 15, and September 19.

Meeting began with the update of the ODEP Grant.

ODEP Grant - Last February 2012 ODEP (US Department of Labor: Office of Disability Employment Policy) offered states within the SELN two grants to apply for: (1) 3 - \$50,000 grants to a mentor states to pair with a state to help them get started in the SELN process, and (2) 3- \$100,000 to a protégé states where a mentor state comes and helps a new state with the SELN process. Eighteen states applied for the grants. The Montana SELN workgroup applied for this grant as a protégé state. Letters from the Governor and 4-5 other states were needed to apply for this grant. ODEP was to award the grants and let the states know on March 5th. The SELN workgroup is still waiting for the announcement and will let the members of this group know who has been awarded. If Montana is awarded the grant, the grant could help fund agencies training needs and education for transitioning individuals into the workforce. If Montana does not receive the grant SELN will have to find alternative ways to fund projects.

There will be a SELN related training held April 26th from 8-5:00 pm. at the Holiday Inn Plaza Downtown in the Ballroom. Rie Kennedy-Lizotte and John Butterworth from the National SELN will focus on what case managers and individuals need for tools to prepare Person Centered and Community Integration for individual who want to plan what they would like to do for employment. If SELN members wish to attend notify Karen Cech at (406) 444-2995 or e-mail at kcech@mt.gov. This is to insure the right amount of training materials needed.

In the SELN meeting, the group introduced themselves, explained the services they had to offer related to employment, and what do they see as a need to help individuals transition into the workforce.

Jenny Betz, Program Manager for Disability Resource, from the Department of Labor – Workforce Services (Job Services) said that the word, disabilities, has a broad meaning (anyone with a barrier to employment: ex. has a felony, over 65, has a disability, etc.). Their department has two skill sets (1) staff – case managers and job coaches, and (2) clients. When looking at DD job coaches, Jenny noticed that these coaches are paid very little and that it would be of interest for DD to see how they can pay the job coaches better.

Jenny mentioned that Job Services offers Prove It testing. There are 200 tests available for individuals to acquire score outcomes in their skills or knowledge in an area of work they may be interested in. If scores are low on the tests Job Services can help train individuals to get their scores to be higher. The test is proof for employers to show that an individual can do a skill without having the experience in the workforce. These tests through Job Services are free.

Troy Kelly is a Quality Improvement Specialist with the DDP Region 3 office in Billings. The office building he works in is shared by Job Service, Vocational Rehabilitation, and DDP. His position does Quality Assurance reviews on the Providers that are contracted with DDP. In doing Quality Assurance reviews he looks at Support Plans to make sure services are being delivered. Troy sees two things that are needed (1) case manager training (skill based to help find out what an individual wants to do), and (2) retaining staff (job coaches).

Deb Park from the Office of Public Instruction – Program Improvement Special Education transferred from Havre and just recently started with her OPI position. With her additional experience of working for the State of Oregon, Deb is excited to be working with high school transitioning.

Students are divided into tiers for levels in which they cause problems or have behavior problems. There are three resources that schools or parents of individual have access to for help, (1) GEAR UP – Montana one of six states with this program – College Challenge Access Grant, (2) TRIO – , and (3) Upward Bound.

GEAR UP MONTANA
<http://mus.edu/gearup/>

MONTANA TRIO
<http://www.umt.edu/trioss/>
<http://www.msun.edu/stuaffairs/sss/mttrio.htm>

MONTANA UPWARD BOUND
<http://www.umt.edu/ub/>
<http://www.msubillings.edu/upb/>

OPI has a website, http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/CSPD/index.html#gpm1_5 , that focuses on full community involvement not just school based.

Mike Hermanson is a Program Manager with Disability Transitions (Vocational Rehabilitation - VR). VR works with providers on a regular basis giving supports to individuals getting into the workforce.

Two other individuals with VR are Barb Varnum and Barb Kriskovich. Barb V. works with services, eligibilities, and appropriate placements. Barb K. is the transitions and training coordinator and works with individuals 16-24 years of age. She is working on a pilot project in Missoula where a counselor will have office space in the high schools for a couple of hours to enable students to ask questions about Vocational Rehabilitation and how they can help transition students into a job after they graduate.

When an individual comes to VR they are placed with a Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP). The individual has an assessment, job preparation activities and then a placement. VR provides the front end of a placement into a job.

Feds look at VR and similar states and see us as a small population and rural state. Montana ranks low in terms of placement. Montana is missing learning disabilities. More training for staff is needed and a need for training to maintain supports for an individual after individual has a job.

Lori Idland is an Advocacy Specialist with Disability Rights Montana (DRM). DRM is a federally designated group that serves most any person with a disability when the issue they need assistance with is directly related to their disability. Kelly asked what type of questions DRM is getting in regards to individuals transitioning out of school? Parents don't understand that the assistance they are receiving for the child ends when they graduate. Parents have all they can to deal with taking care of day to day that thinking ahead for them after school does happen. Rural systems do not have the supports. Some schools don't do a good job informing parents.

Janet Dalton with Choteau Activities is starting to go into integrated employment. This is a big jump and challenge for this provider. It is a culture change from whether individuals want to work to more of an expectation of work. Individuals will be going out into the communities and are the communities ready to embrace this idea and will there be jobs available.

Charlie Briggs is with Easter Seals Good Will and represents Montana and Wyoming. Charlie was wondering about the possibility of schools contracting with providers to integrate individuals from school into the job workforce. Children in the school system

are not learning community skills in school. Is it possible for individual learn their skills in a job set with an employer? Charlie was asked if Wyoming has the same struggles that Montana has with transition? The answer was yes. Wyoming also has a SELN group. He will get information from them and share it with this group.

It was asked, "When are we going to have a discussion on rates for supported employment?"

Kelly is compiling information of survey results, establishing services, staff requirements and staff competencies, and working on waiver definitions. Jenece Sharkey, participating by phone, wanted everyone to keep in mind that most providers are behind rates but have concerns that other service rates will drop for a need in a supported employment rate to go up. Kelly confirmed that there has been no discussion about shifting of rates but decisions will need to be made as we do have a finite amount to work with.

Darwin Nelson is a participant with a disability. He got a job in 1987 with the Independent Record and has been working there since. He is doing well in his job, does not need any supports and walks everywhere unless a co-worker gives him a ride home. Darwin receives benefits at the IR workshop, retirement (401k), and health benefits. He has had to set up a self-sufficiency trust. Darwin's concerns are that if you have been receiving services, what will happen to his retirement and savings. Medicaid does not provide for IRA and he doesn't want his retirement to go to Medicaid. This would be another question to ask other states what they have done in these circumstances.

Deb Swingley is with the Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities (MCDD). MCDD is a citizen-based advocacy group. It's members, appointed by the Governor, work to provide increased independence, integration and productivity for persons with developmental disabilities. The group also funds projects involved with developmental disability programs. All funding is now committed.

Rita Schilling is with Job Connection and is a DDP provider in Billings. As a provider, Rita sees job options for DD individuals a challenge. Most day programs need supervision and socialization. The transition process for individuals to get into a job after school are frustrating because there is not enough resources. Individuals go from school, to VR, to DD, and then on the waitlist. School does not teach work skills and frequently does not foster independence after graduation. When individuals finish school the ongoing supports are not available. Parents and youth need to understand this.

With a system change, individuals that will be transitioning can be taught “how to” instead trying to teach them “want to”. Individuals need to decide what do they want to get out of this service? Make money, be social or feel useful? What motivates them? Montana needs a system change to help individuals reach their goals.

When a rate system is set up it should be incentivized. Job coaches or staff are not making any money.

For training staff

- Staff need to be good in salesmanship
- Staff need to build relationship with employer
- Skills teaching/training & development needed for individual
- Employers should know about disability and have interest
- Consensus building will be needed:
 - Voc-Rehab desires
 - Client desires
 - Employer desires

All will have to think outside the box.

What does the business community want from us?

What is reasonable/not reasonable?

Providers may be able to provide support for other providers.

To help make the transition process better there are two areas to work on:

- (1) Staff development
- (2) Transition piece.

There should be one philosophy for all agencies to follow.

Lori Lundberg is a Case Manager Supervisor for the state. Lori mentioned that case managers could use training to help find way through state system for resources to help individuals transition out of schools. Training on what different state agencies have to offer and what they can do for an individual would help. Some case managers have individuals that don't have funding and do a lot of work for them.

A case manager (CM) can be considered gate keeper for individuals. It is important for a CM to believe individuals can work in the community and the individual's team all need to be on board. It is hard work to find employment for DD individuals. To sum up what is needed: (1) CM's need training, (2) team needs to all be on board, and (3) get CM training without interfering with billable hours.

How many individuals are already working at age 16? Those that are working, parents have found jobs through friends or have taught them a skill. Some individuals have

been through VR, some have decided day programs, if individual gets in supported employment it may not work, and then back to VR for a different training of a job skill. VR will not keep doing this cycle. What is lacking in some cases is peer support. Get back to annual trainings.

Nathan Dudley is a Behavioral Specialist with the DD Program. Before he had this position he was a job coach at Helena Industries. Job coaching requires two things: Role and Relationship with consumer (is job best thing for consumer/positive quality job for consumer to have pride in) and Role and Relationship with public (employer). Both will need a lot of training. A great asset to have would be public relationship training to increase your resources and how to meet people. Creating a mechanism for job coaches to listen, participate, and evaluate if job would be meaningful. Any training should be on going not just a few days. Constant learning and improving of skills is needed.

Tim Plaska is the Community Supports Bureau Chief with DD Program. In this position Tim supervises the Regional staff and services. Before this position, he worked several years at West Mont, a DDP provider. In the time he has worked with DDP he has seen most of the provider workshops. Tim would like to see DD individuals in more meaningful and functional activities in the day programs. Recycling is a dirty job. Would we want to do that and can we do better for our individuals? Some providers are doing a great job in finding work for individuals and some providers are struggling. Can staff be creative and come up with work ideas?

Group Discussion –

How do we get the word out? What questions should parents and students ask?

It was suggested that for individuals transitioning out of schools that pamphlets could be created to inform parents and students what is available to them for their preparation of leaving school and after school is out.

Lori Idland offered to go and speak to high schools across the state.

CTAT (Centers for Technological Asst. Training) can be used as a training tool.

Rate of pay for job coaches with DDP is low. Can this be changed?

Could joint trainings be done among departments? There is need for autonomy among the departments, but also a need to make sure agencies are doing the same processes.

What type of training do employers need? Are there grants that can be tapped into when hiring an individual / tax breaks? How do we get past attitude barriers? Train employers on the disability and how to recognize signs of when problems may occur.

Can job description be changed and carved into something a DD individual can do?
Have a power breakfast and invite prospective employers to explain the benefits of hiring a DD individual (loyalty, happy to have a job, great attitude).

What can a job coach do? Job coach should do research, know their business, know positions (jobs) available, and how can an individual fill the job.

Job coaches may need to go to business to observe and to see if viable work place for DD individuals. One can't place an individual if you don't know job requirements.

What companies have developed training programs already? Walgreens, Bank of America. These are skill based trainings.

What makes a good day program?

- Based on PSP consumers will be educated in finding contributing activities that individuals can engage in
- Such as – challenge their mind/ encouraging social action
- Staff make up 90% of program – they get people engaged
- Providers need resources to support division.

Kelly will set up College of Employer for the SELN members.

Funding resource will have to be explored for projects that SELN may consider doing.