

Montana SELN Stakeholder Meeting
June 3, 2015
Helena, Montana
9AM to 1PM

Taking Stock: Where are we and what are our current priorities?

Review of 2011 Priorities and Actions

What's changed since 2011:

- There is now a strategy in place for retrieving some data on employment status (type of employment setting, hours worked, wages)
- Improved working relationship, problem solving, and collaboration between VR and DDP
- Significant change in VR use of extended employment service. VR has prioritized using extended employment for ongoing support for community employment in cases where ongoing supports from other sources are not available.
 - Currently 30% of VR funds are going to community supports and Montana VR is aiming for 50%.
- Service definitions implemented across waivers
- Although it is being discontinued, the 1037 Waiver did support a younger group of individuals transitioning to employment
- Online training for employment specialist curriculum established and is mandatory for VR vendors.
- Transition capacity building initiative is being implemented by VR, OPI, and Workforce Development
 - Interagency training is being planned for Fall 2015 implementation and DDP is invited to participate.
- Case Managers have updated guidelines for referral to VR
- Project Search implemented in Bozeman
- Progress in reducing the waiting list (50/year)
- The "20 hour rule" for supported employment funding was addressed
- Loss: The ability to "trade" or shift cost plan dollars from one individual to another person to pay for employment services
- DDP significantly changed their screening process in a way that allowed new people to receive services
- The approach to a cost plan involves more creative thinking about how to best use the funds available
- Some providers report a net gain in individuals being supported to find/maintain jobs in community employment



Parking lot issues

- Addressing the role of employment as a priority in the cost allocation tool
- Role of the residential side in supporting employment outcomes
 - Impact of varied schedules
- Transportation
 - After hours transportation needs
 - Often underused in cost plans when transportation is not provider based

What's new? 2015 Stakeholder Surveys reflect challenges and successes

- Funding insufficiency still shows up frequently as a barrier in being successful in employment.
- Clarity in process, role of VR and DD, was identified as an issue as well as the need for clarity in the process of moving from sheltered workshop to integrated employment
- Surveys reflected the strengthening of VR and DD communication
- Respondents rated employment as a high priority, and the importance of clear data rated highly
- Training has improved, but more training was requested for supporting people with more significant disabilities and training for clarity in understanding the service process
- Need for more clarity and specificity in state goals, and common understanding of service definitions
- Rural barriers were noted
- Service needs and need for innovation was identified in the areas of both long term and natural supports as well as need for creative employment options
- Mixed response noting positive supports from Case Managers towards employment as well as need to do whole day/whole life planning

What else is new that is missing from surveys?

- Montana is an ASPIRE grant recipient - the Disability Employment and Transitions Division (in VR) is the lead for Montana. ASPIRE is a multi-state collaboration headed by Utah. DDP is not involved in the implementation, but can get updates during their monthly meetings.



2015 Priorities Brainstorming and voting results

- **Funding structure (18 votes)**
- **Systematic Transition from school to work (12)**
- Support service innovations (4)
- Clarify interagency processes and braiding of resources (4)
 - Guidance for standard practices for braiding VR/DD (2)
 - Develop a resource guide on the pathway to employment (2)
 - Role of Extended Employment (EE) funding and relationship to DDP resources: Updated referral guidelines for use by case managers with timeframes for VR, roles and responsibilities
- Strengthen employment Outcome Data (2)
 - Done, but need more efficient and comprehensive approach
- Strengthening role of employment in PSP: Done, but needs to be revisited (1)
- Staff Competency Standards (1)
- Communication and outreach
- Waiver service definitions and guidance to the field
- Guidance on definition of employment o
 - Done through the new waiver definitions, and with new HCBS rule. Waiting for guidance from CMS and incorporate definitions in PSP
- Coordinated interagency training Plan

Brainstorming on possible action steps for the two top priority focus areas:

A) Funding Structures discussion of proposed action steps:

Of note to consider when determining solutions:

- **Request for clarification:** What are we talking about when we talk about needing to address funding structures?
 - Two most often mentioned issues are the high need for flexibility and the need for addressing the fixed resource allocation.
 - Is the issue how money is allocated to agencies?
 - Is it the invoicing process?
 - Is it the rate structure?
 - Is it how units are defined?
 - Is it the range of billable services?
 - Is it the service definitions?



Action step ideas to addressing Funding Priority (follow up work for Montana SELN - needs timeline and “who/how” for each step. Some more easily achieved than others.

- State of Montana dedicates line item funding to employment (in cost plans as well as increasing state staff dedicated to employment)
- Review unused funding in individual cost plans statewide to fund additional services including those needed by other persons (expand employment funding)
- Explore other non-waiver funding for emergency and medical costs currently using unused funding
- Identify a way to measure or assess if cost plans are being allocated reasonably or effectively for the individual and statewide
- Develop a process to periodically reassess individual needs rather than only in response to health or safety crisis
- With the closure of MDC, look closely at the Money Follows the Person process as a possible functional model for resource allocation
- Make the cost plan allocations more flexible internally. For example, instead of having separate budgets, allocate one lump sum and allow flexibility between service line items
- Expand the use of co-worker supports and natural supports
- Redesign the rate system from zero (idea precipitated by the closure of MDC)
- Talk with successful states
- Talk with providers
- Employer and coworker supports need to be optimized
- Use provider training stipends in innovative ways
- Mechanism to “graduate” a person from support and be able to move people back into system - fear of losing money on the ICP keeps people from giving up a dollar. Fix that.
- Waiver with an emphasis and commitment to employment
- Streamline the transition between VR and DD
- Expand use of assisted technology
- Incentivize employment services through the rates
- Through rebasing process, secure new appropriations and revenues
- Review and improve the billing process and systems



B) Transition from School to Work: Action step ideas generated from brainstorming exercise

- Leverage and engage with VR system's 15% commitment to transition services and other WIOA commitments to address employment for youth with disabilities age 14 on up
- Early and frequent outreach to young people and families to build expectation of work at a young age
- Preparing parents and students for post-school opportunities in employment
- Work with physicians to raise expectations and awareness of abilities
- Conduct employer fairs for families
- Continue developing youth supported employment groups
- Resolve access to schools
- Increasing awareness of adult service agencies and specifically DDP
- Address Montana's practice of graduating students at age 18
- Identify service models for schools to learn how they work, involve employment agencies in the model of providing employment services
- Come up with some funding options for transition model programs in schools
- Provide benefits planning for younger families and youth
- "Whole life" training in school curriculum
- More interagency training on the roles and responsibilities to raise awareness
- Early commitment to long term funding

