DDS

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES STRATEGIC PLANNING

October 2022

State Employment Leadership Network (SELN)

Throughout the end of 2020, SELN interviewed stakeholders, met with individuals served, and analyzed internal processes of DDS in relation to employment services. Their findings were compiled in the February 2021 Findings and Observations Report which commends strengths and identifies areas of weakness in regards to employment services. The report is organized in seven categories:

DDS created seven sub-committees, one for each section of the report, and an oversight committee made up of the chairs of each sub-committee. Each of the committees are made up of diverse stakeholders including DDS staff, provider staff, advocacy groups, and individuals served by DDS services and their families. These groups were tasked with creating recommendations that address the long term goals of the respective sub-committee.

Strategic Goals & Operating Policies

1. Ensure that teams routinely discuss employment and have written vocational related goals in the IP for individuals when applicable.

2. Precisely identify the roles & responsibilities, on a statewide document, of DDS staff working with individuals during the transition process from school to DDS services, particularly Case Managers, Transition Advisors, etc.

Financing & Contracting Methods

1. Combine the pathways for GSE and ISE so that there is one singular pathway at a combined rate.

2. Replace the "Transition to Natural Supports" Benchmark to a 1-year benchmark.

3. Create an interactive tool online to submit 1X Requests to match the system that DDS has and uses internally to track the 1X Employment requests.

4. Change the deliverables for the benchmarks to require current paycheck to prove and obtain 3-month and 6-month benchmark payments.

    a. Adjust prorated amount to 15-20 hours

Training & Technical Assistance

1. A detailed ACRE certified Job Coach Training be given to all job coach staff at least once, funded by DDS. Staff will need to prove competency with the materials. The training will be instructor led and be held in person whenever possible. When this is not possible it will be held virtually in a synchronous learning model.

2. DDS should provide technical support in the form of a campaign designed specifically for employers highlighting DDS supported individuals in a variety of jobs. There should be videos as part of this using the employer, speaking in their own words, describing the value of hiring persons with disabilities and the employee specifically.

Services & Service Innovations Part 1

1. DDS Employment & Day Services webpage redesign:

-Employment services should be explained in plain language, avoiding long "paragraph format" descriptions.

-Service descriptions should be concise and focus on their applicability to family and individuals and invite the reader to seek additional information from the EDS Division.

-Language should be in the "active voice."

-Training material and the EDS Pathways Brochure should be included as additional resource material.

-Material should be presented in multiple languages. There should be indicative photos corresponding to the content that is being described.

Services & Service Innovations Part 2

2. There should be an easily accessible map on the EDS webpage that shows what available service providers serve each area. This would serve as a more "user friendly" option than the existing Providers List.

3. Individual Plans (IP's) should have employment goals or meaningful activity goals through use of Life Course (Feedback on this recommendation would be appreciated as I think it has some room to be expanded on).

Employment Performance Measurement, Quality Assurance, & Program Oversight

1. Create clear standards for measuring employment service data.

2. Define what success looks like in each employment service model.

3. Evaluate utilizing the case manager annual QSR to capture a few key employment data points. Work with the administration to determine if DDS should use this mechanism to collect employment data.

4. Capture missing employment data necessary to determine employment performance. Examples are average hours of work, wages, employer and industry, as well as other data points. Develop analytical reports or dashboards to monitor performance. Document how people are going to use this information and communicate clearly what the benefits are to get people to use it. Create analytical procedures to define, use, and share information as needed.

Leadership Part 1

1. Create a clearinghouse/inventory of the work already being done in terms of providing information on employment supports to school age children and families. Which stakeholders are performing the work and what resources and mediums are they sharing it? Is it group meetings, presentations to families etc.

2. Once an inventory of sorts is created, the work being done needs to be reviewed to identify what is being done well and where information gaps may be present or more information may be necessary.

3. Stakeholders may include DDS, business community, advocacy organizations, School districts, families, general community, state agencies

4. Develop and strengthen efforts across stakeholders already doing this work to ensure the network is constructive but also not reinventing the wheel or duplicating efforts. Combining the efforts already in play allows for a stronger, more unified voice, while also ensuring the message being presented is clear and consistent.

Leadership Part 2

5. Articulated goals must be made clear from the beginning, so everyone is measuring success the same

6. To make an employment support network successful every stakeholder needs a participatory role, including families and individuals who can share success stories.

7. The role specifically of DDS needs to be thoughtful. Some committee members thought advocacy organizations, families and the school districts taking the lead would lead to better success. DDS involvement would be from a broader policy perspective. Perhaps the agency's role would be to coordinate and convene but not lead the network.

8. Discussion on using the job developer position to help create bridges.

Operations Memo 2023-10

To: DDS Qualified Providers

From: Sean Bannon, Operations Center Director

CC: Jordan Scheff, Commissioner, Elisa Velardo, Deputy Commissioner, Katie Rock-Burns, Chief of Staff, Scott McWilliams, Chief of Fiscal/Administrative Services, Regional Directors, Private ARDs, Resource Administrators, The Alliance, The ARC CT

Date: September 29, 2022

RE: Individual Supported Employment Update

The State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) conducted a State Strategic Employment Full Assessment to assist the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) with decision making and prioritizing in regards to employment supports.

As a result of SELN recommendations, DDS created various stakeholder subcommittees to develop recommendations to improve outcomes for individuals with intellectual disability seeking to obtain and maintain employment.   We are now starting to put these recommendations into action.

Effective October 1, 2022, the following changes to Individual Supported Employment (ISE) will be implemented:

- There will be one uniform rate for the ISE Employment Incentives. ($55/hr)
- The cap on ISE hours is being removed. An individual will be able to utilize their Day funding for ISE or a combination of ISE and other Day supports – up to their LON amount.
- Whenever possible, one time ISE authorizations will utilize "Add Hours" to minimize the additional administrative burden and allow WebResDay billing in lieu of submitting "actuals".

Please note that any one time ISE Employment Incentive authorizations that are currently funded at a different rate will remain at that rate until the one time is completed. New one time ISE authorizations will be created at the $55/hour ISE rate.

Please contact your Regional Resource Manager with any questions.

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