

GSEP Meeting
CoP for Employment
January 7, 2011

Focus: To share the concept of a Community of Practice and to encourage discussion around development of such a sustainable group around employment for people with disabilities.

- I. GSEP Priority Areas were briefly outlined
- II. Brainstorming from the Committee on each priority area
 - A. Ideas for General Outcomes/Purpose of an established Community of Practice on Employment:
 - Greater visibility and enhanced access for the members to employers
 - Shared brainstorming
 - Sharing challenges and identifying shared solutions
 - Opportunity to look at joint solutions
 - Sharing information and resources
 - Bridging cultures between our services and employers
 - Building and sharing best practices
 - B. Job Development
 - Use the forum to get information to employers
 - Find solutions to employers seeing us as a vital resource
 - C. Marketing
 - Shared marketing to decrease confusion for employers
 - Increase our professionalism and visibility
 - Develop more success stories
 - D. Work Incentives
 - This forum could be used as a chance to share information regarding work incentives and asset development strategies
 - Increase the capacity for work incentives counseling around the state
 - Eliminating myths and cultural assumptions (both for the individuals we serve and for the broader community/employer)
 - E. Data
 - Use this group to take a look at the data generated from the new systems to discover best practices, common trends, and areas of needed improvement
 - Establish baselines so the group can determine how we are doing on employment in NH
 - F. Self Employment
 - Moving it from being a hobby to a gainful employment option
 - Establish the difference between what it means to work for an employer and what it means to be self employed
 - Share information around best self employment practices and approaches
 - Share challenges of the current self employment support structure

G. Best Practices

- Build avenues for replication
- This group becomes the forum and resource for best practices

H. “The Big Picture” of why we are here and want to establish a CoP

- The address the larger social and economic issue of people with disabilities not even thinking about going to work or not thinking of it as an avenue to greater independence.
- We need to raise the bar by staying committed to the message that employment is necessary. We do this through various initiatives, but the overarching message should be that people can and should work.
- This group is passionate about employment and we need to get others – specifically those with disabilities, their families, and employers – passionate and excited about employment as well.

III. Community of Practice Overview from Deb Grabill. Answering the question of “What is a Community of Practice and how does one operate and develop?”

IV. Brief discussion around whether to pursue the concept of the Community of Practice for employment. Consensus among the group is that it is necessary and meaningful to pursue. Establishing a broader mission or overarching outcome would be helpful to the group for measuring and identifying the purpose moving forward.

V. Next meeting: The group decided to have meetings every other month.

VI.

Next Meeting scheduled for: March 10th from 1 – 3pm

**Location: Thomas Fox Chapel, 2nd Floor, Main Building
105 Pleasant St, Concord**

- **Next meeting suggestion: A handout that maps out current active work groups under the GSEP and their purpose.**

VI. Meeting adjourned at 3:15.

Discussion from 3:15 – 4pm: Workforce Development Coalitions: Informal discussion among multiple regions of current coalition development, how development was initiated in each region, and some tools for developing a coalition in a new region.

**NH Community of Practice on Employment
Meeting Minutes, March 10, 2011**

Agenda Review and Introductions

Meeting Attendees:

Amy Jenks – NH DOE Bureau of Special Education
Denise Sleeper – NH DHHS Bureau of Developmental Services
Kerri Swensen – Genesis Reg 3
Sarah Ohl- Riverbend
Chris Purington – Linkabilities
Andrea Reed – Harbor Homes
Sheila Lambert – Consultant
Debbie Bogle – Pathways Reg 2
Sarah Elechko – Moore Ctr Reg 7 (Note Taker)
Oliver Bengle – Linkabilities
Mark Thornton – Greater Nashua MHC
Peter Darling GSIL
Bethany Bilodeau – Core Vocational Services
Debra Grabill - Facilitator

Why did you come today?

Group discussed their reasons for attending. Reasons were:

- Improve outcomes for students w/disabilities
- Improve quality of employment and to see that employment is made a priority in challenging times
- To maintain sight of the mission of employment for people w/disabilities
- To collaborate w/peers throughout the state and professionalize employment services
- Interest in economic development
- To stay informed and stay connected and to hear what is working for employing people w/disabilities
- Commitment to the cause of better employment opportunities for people w/disabilities
- To figure out the best way of preserving the employment initiative
- To find a strong and unified voice for the employment initiative
- To have the ability to create new initiatives with the power of the group in spite of the economy
- To bring information back to each region; to act as a conduit
- To have a better idea of where employment initiatives are happening
- To share ideas and take ideas back to region
- To collaborate and Share

Announcements

- Sarah O. announced the Job Developer Conference at the Radisson in Manchester and Employment Recognition Breakfast, 7:30-9 on October 13th, with the conference following at 9:30. Nominations for businesses can be made at www.nhletsworktogether.org and are being taken right now. Requirements for employers are listed on the website. There will be 5 awards given out.

- The committee that meets to work on the event is looking for new members. Anyone interested can contact Denise Sleeper at denise.sleeper@dhhs.state.nh.us.
- The Concord Area is starting a coalition, which will meet on March 18th at 8:30.
- Bethany announced the Alliance for Full Participation training. More information can be found at a link on the People First website www.peoplefirstofnh.org
- Peter announced that the Work Incentives Resource Center website has launched www.nhwirc.org
It is early in launch, so feedback is welcome. Also, they are looking for success stories to include on the website.
- Denise gave an update on the MIG: the award letter was received and was 1.2 million less than expected, although still 2 million. The next step will be to announce how each region can apply for some monies. Some of the priorities of the final year of the MIG will be success stories, the data system, EBSE, sector training, job developer training, support to workforce development coalitions and marketing materials.
- Sheila L. announced that adults with disabilities could not be in a work experience without getting paid (internship), and thus an amendment was drafted to change that and HB401 was passed unanimously through the house labor committee and will go to the full house to be voted on. This will allow for different kinds of services and experiences for adults. Once it is passed, training will be available to learn how to implement such a program. Mark acknowledged the great amount of work it takes to drive a change in legislation and well deserved congratulations was offered to Sheila.
- Amy announced the Annual Summit for the NH Transition Community of practice for November 16th at the Grappone Center in Concord. Debra added that they are discussing having youth keynotes, and noted that this is the 8th year of the Community of Practice, and the 5th year of the summit. Amy will send out more information, and suggests a quick registration, as there has been a waiting list in years past.

What describes a Community of Practice?

Answers included were:

- Leading with leverage
- Has an “organicness” where participants lead the agenda equally
- Sharing knowledge as an asset to the community
- Valuing that people are an asset because they have knowledge and expertise
- People who are coming feel the power of the community
- Human Capital
- Plurality: there can be new stakeholders and perspectives

What is a Professional Learning Community?

Answers included were:

- Coming together to learn about a topic or more about sharing resources. In contrast, a community of practice is more about taking action.
- A professional learning community is a closed community built mostly around professional learning and are people in a similar professional situation.

Debra suggests that in a community of practice membership is never fixed, and the group is always asking, “who is not at the table?”

What is the Work of the Local Coalitions?

- **Nashua:** Andrea reported that she facilitated a recent meeting and had found topics of interest to the group, so someone representing the BOND program came in. Also, Jeff Galbo from New Employment Options came in to talk about On the Job Training. In the future, Paula from GSIL is going to do a presentation on motivating people. Andrea said they have 2 hour meetings in Nashua.
- **Concord:** Sarah O. said they had one meeting in February and the 2nd will be in March. They are looking to hire an outside facilitator for the first six months.
- **Laconia:** Kerri said the first meeting was last month, and the DD side came to the table, VR, NH Works, and Genesis.
- **Manchester:** Sarah E. said that a few past speakers have become members, and group is moving forward with new membership, but needs to work to develop more participation from area agency vendors.
- **River Valley:** Debbie reported that Vermont and NH are working together. Because of the size of the region, their meetings will be held at alternative locations. They are looking for meeting space currently. A survey was sent out to group to discuss the best dates and times to meet. Sarah O. added that Vermont gets more ticket to work money than any other state in the nation.

Brainstorming Session for Conference Topics

Suggestions included:

- What is going on in other states
- What motivates people
- New employment strategies
- How to increase staff comfort levels with job development
- Use of web based technology and social media marketing
- Assistive technology
- Emerging industries
- Outsourcing
- What kinds of marketing materials/strategies work
- Solicitation of opinions of the people with disabilities
- Small business ownership

Next Meeting, Thursday, May 12th, 1-3.

Topics of discussion will include:

Developing a Mission Statement (Debra to send draft to be included with agenda.)

- Who are we? What is our purpose?
- What do we want to do as a Community of Practice?
- How will we measure the effect of our work?

NH Community of Practice on Employment Meeting Minutes, May 12, 2011

Attended by:

Caleb Wells, Amy Jenks, Chip Maltais, Sarah Racine, Jim Quinn, Jeff Galbo, Jim Hinson, Sheila Lambert, Debbie Bogle, Vern Cook, Sheila Mahon, Colleen Powers, Nicole Johnson, Molly McNeill, Emily Manire, Mark Thornton, Chris Purington, Oliver Bengle, Paula Gay, Andrea Reed, Sarah Ohl, Rocky Morelli, Debbie Bogle., Jenn Cook,

We reviewed what a C.O.P. is and where we are and how we got here.

- It is our responsibility to make these meetings meaningful/useful
- We will meet every other month on the 2nd Thursday at 1 pm

Employment conference

- October 13th at the Radisson Inn in Concord
- Breakfast and workshops
- Reviewed survey
- Added ideas and suggestions
- If interested in participating in a subgroup for planning around topics contact Sarah, Molly, Jim, or Sheila
- Nomination forms are available on NHletsworktogether.org
- Nominations due June 11th goal is to have more than 23

Updates on coalitions:

- Some coalitions are looking at creating web groups (yahoo groups) to open up avenues of communication for all group members
- Many groups are trying to make the content of the meetings relevant to all participants to keep them participating
- Another topic brought up was how to handle conflict within the group
Ex. when someone is seen acting out of alignment with best practices
A suggestion was to role play some scenarios around conflict management
- Using similar language that includes the entire group
- Who is at the table? Are schools, VR, and Employment Security?
- One group had worked on creating “Professional Standards”

Mission draft

We discussed wording, local vs. state content, and clarification of what the group stands for of the draft

The mission of the NH Employment Community of Practice is to promote high quality employment opportunities for people with disabilities through information sharing and dissemination of best practices across all stakeholders.

Comments/suggestions:

- ...promote economic independence and high quality competitive employment opportunities...
- ...through information sharing, development and dissemination of... across all stakeholder groups

Current Draft:

The mission of the NH Employment Community of Practice is to promote economic independence and high quality competitive employment opportunities for people with disabilities through information sharing and the development and dissemination of best practices across all stakeholder groups.

We will look at the suggestions for changes to the draft at our next meeting.

Next meeting July 14, 2011

Community of Practice on Employment

Updates

1. Awards Nomination Update

Molly M. told CoP about the Oct. 13th Employment Conference at the Radisson in Manchester, NH. 3 yrs ago they formed a group promoting outreach to employers regarding the successes of hiring individuals with disabilities. There have been 5 winners picked each year. All the nominees will come together at this conference, and the Governor will also be attending! This is a great opportunity for outreach: business to business, as well as business to resource. There are marketing materials created for all 5 winners, which are then shared by employers and coalitions. The conference is connected to NHEtsWorkTogether and ThinkBeyondTheLabel. 10 finalists have been selected and are being interviewed. In approximately one week the 5 winners will be picked. 18 employers were nominated this year. They were all really good nominations (more so than previous years due to growing awareness of the nomination criteria).

2. Advancing Employment in NH Conference

Sarah O. told CoP about the Conference format. There will be a key note speaker, an employer panel (to talk about what their experiences & insights), 6 different workshops (work incentives for employers, job carving, job coaching & transition to natural supports, HB401-legislation concerning adult internships, on the job training and placement), a consumer panel (to speak about what works and what doesn't), as well as a Job Developer panel (to address challenges, offer information, and ask questions about different regions; Lisa Hatz will also speak about the partnership between businesses and job developers). There is a minimal fee for attending: early registration is \$50, and this will increase by \$10 as each week passes. August 15th-the registration form will come out. Right now they are identifying learning objectives. This is the first conference in a long time on employment. Would any CoP member like to join planning for this conference? If so, contact Denise Sleeper. Should this be a function of the Cop? Perhaps work groups will form for this task?

3. Workforce Coalitions: Updates, Successes, Challenges

Concord: Sarah O.-Meets the 3rd Friday of each month at 21 Fruit St., Concord, NH. Has developed a Code of Ethics and are in the process of working on Marketing Materials (Coalition rack card, Hiring guide for employers). Private CRP & Human service organizations are involved. They are currently in the process of involving the schools. Working on Coalition Rack card w/2 employers and die cuts. Discussing how to determine which participants are on coalition card-possibly those members who signed code of ethics. Denise S. gave reasoning for the formation of the Coalitions & Marketing Materials: Create efficiencies to raise professional standards and demonstrate to employers we are professional and that we collaborate to increase employment for individuals with disabilities. Address employer needs and improve access to resources. There are currently 7 coalitions statewide.

Monadnock: Molly M.-Small core group which brings own lunch to monthly meeting. Have struggled to involve 2 providers who are interested but have had internal conflicts. They have formed a Yahoo! Group, with an administrator. Are working on Marketing Materials. Long term goal: Partner w/Monadnock Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce to have after hours networking opportunities. Have decided not to invite the schools because they don't want to mix messages due to a separate transitional program

that is already in place. Deb G. commented on how the groups' sets own missions, but the standards unify and help create sustainability. Denise S. educated CoP on how I am Success/We are Success is NH specific campaign while *Think Beyond the Label* is a national campaign. The We Are Success Campaign became an official sponsor of the NH Forum on the Future - where Business, Education, and Government come together to address workforce and economic development issues in the state of NH.

Lakes Region: Sarah R.-Just had 6th meeting. Signed Professional Standards and began to discuss what we want our Coalition Rack card to consist of. Also talked about what format we would like our meetings to have, for instance should we have presentations, work on chamber outreach, ECT? Professional Facilitator Susan Covert will attend August meeting.

Manchester: Jane D.-Has school system and NHES (very knowledgeable). Recently had a panel of HR from businesses who talked about what they would like to see, and qualifications of candidates. Added an opportunity for problem solving to permanent agenda: ex/what to do if a client sabotages a job opportunity? The Moore Center is the only member of coalition that is not a vendor for VR. They have started sharing leads.

Denise S. stated herself and Jim H. would like to offer assistance to the coalitions. Some ideas they've been discussing include: 1. Survey for local employers-each region would have own results. Could learn a lot about local employers and what they want. Coalition members could come up with the questions. 2. Look at region and figure out natural employer events-include a category to recognize employers for hiring. This would be embedding recognition event within events that are already occurring. 3. Employment Success Stories-generating into coalitions.

Deb G. talked about a resource to connect with education and transition=5th Annual Transition Summit, November 16th, all day, at the Grappone Center. Includes individuals and organizations focused on improving secondary outcomes for kids with disabilities, as well as all kids. Received 23 proposal topics: services and opportunities for students with disabilities, mental health, what school districts are doing, technology. Featured speaker is a young man who is visually impaired. He will speak about his personal journey and moderate a panel. The emphasis is on youth driven transition planning. If interested in attending, contact Amy Jenks.

David H. From the Institute of Disability talked about the Summer 2011 edition of the Rap Sheet on employment for people with disabilities that are available online. He also told CoP about an online training for employment specialists that are almost ready to be announced. Starts September 12th and runs for 4 weeks. It requires about 5 hours of participation per week. Residents of ME, NH, and VT can do it for free as long as they register and agree to be part of the post training survey. It is scenario based and features live videos. Approximately 50 people total can participate in the training. After turning in assignments and taking a test at the end, participants will receive a certificate of completion. Denise S. will forward CoP members information when it becomes available. IOD is working on how to apply for ACRE certification with a combination of online and in person training in addition to the ACRE training already available in NH. More to come on this topic. Denise recommended inviting Lisa Hatz, Interim Director for NHVR and Matthew Ertas, Bureau Administrator for the Bureau of Developmental Services to speak about each systems expectations for ACRE at the September meeting.

Mission Statement

(proposed) The Mission of the NH Employment Community of Practice is to promote economic independence and high quality competitive employment opportunities for people with disabilities through information sharing and the development and dissemination of best practices across all stakeholder groups.

Discussion occurred regarding: information sharing vs. dissemination, economic vs. financial, does independence implies forced to get off of benefits?, stakeholder vs. community partners.

(Voted and Passed) **The Mission of the NH Employment Community of Practice is to promote economic independence and high quality competitive employment opportunities for people with disabilities through information sharing and the development and dissemination of best practices among all community partners.**

*Deb G. announced that she will not be facilitating the CoP anymore. She has begun a new job for the American Institute for Research in Washington. She will be working from home on several different research projects, which focus on children's mental health. She spoke about how a CoP is different from a typical committee: the community sets its own agenda and operational decisions, people come together because they are passionate about a topic and want to be involved, it's an overriding network which extends networking opportunities...in summary a CoP is non-hierarchical and voluntary.

Conversation about standardizing agenda. Members agreed to keep Welcome/Intros, Updates (Training and Professional Development, Workforce Coalitions), and Community of Practice Development/Structure of Group. One thing is CoP has not talked about how to evaluate the work we are doing...Perhaps with Surveys? Deb G. will make sure Denise S. has survey and power points about CoPs. The Bureau of Developmental Services can be the administrative backbone for CoP at this point in time. If anyone needs to get onto email list, the easiest way is to give her a business card. Person who facilitates needs to have been at previous CoP meeting.

Next Meetings:

Thursday **September 8th** from 1pm-3pm, Thomas Fox Chapel, 105 Pleasant St., Concord NH.

Facilitator: Denise Sleeper

Note taker: Sarah Reynolds

Thursday **November 10th** from 1pm-3pm, Thomas Fox Chapel, 105 Pleasant St., Concord NH

Facilitator: David Hagner

Note taker: Molly McNeill

**NH Community of Practice
Meeting Minutes September 8, 2011**

Employment Special Expectations & Certification Requirements:

- Bureau of Developmental Services:
 - Understand that more specialized training is needed and that there needs to be funding for these services
 - Want to create a better relationship with VR and make sure that their basic resources are being used

- Vocational Rehabilitation: Jim Hinson
 - Going to make it required at some point in the future that all CRPs have some type of formal training
 - The foundation training will be the ACRE training which is a national recognized training
 - Trainings will also include OJT
 - On 10/31/11 Voc Rehab will be releasing new paperwork for Supported Employment Customers

- BDS and VR will share employment data at the next NH Employment Community of Practice Meeting in November.

Updates:

Trainings

- Supervisor training will be coming at some point in November 2011

- Next ACRE training starts October 20th
 - Only 25 individuals will be accepted
 - Contact Sheila Mahon at sheilsa@mds-nh.org for more information regarding registration

Conferences

- Employment awards breakfast
 - October 13 2011 7:30am
 - Radisson Manchester
 - Recognizing the top 5 employers in NH

- Employment Conference
 - Starts directly after the Employment Awards Breakfast

- Transition Conference November 16th at the Grappone Conference Center

Next Meeting: November 10th 1:00pm-3:00pm, Tom Fox Chapel

Facilitator: David Hagner

Note Taker: Molly McNeill

Employment COP

November 10, 2011

Facilitator: David Hagner
Mahon

Note Taker: Sheila

Present: Amy Jenks, Jim Quinn, Darren Deth, Nicole Tikkanen, Jin Hinson, Denise Sleeper, Jenn Cook, Mark Thorton, Peter Darling, Terri Tedeschi, Naomi Preble, Candice Crane

Employment Leadership Award & Conference- Event was held on October 13th and overall went very well. www.NHletsworktogether.org has the winners and rack cards on each winner. DRED at their annual Summit will be recognizing all 5 winners with RKM receiving an award as the top model employer.

122 people attended the conference; feedback on sessions was very high. The question is being asked on whether or not to have the conference next year. Conference feedback:

- Panel was important & powerful. Information on the Job Coach and their support being critical also the issue of disclosure being very important in order to support someone to the best of their ability
- Bonding session was very informative
- Some mixed reviews on afternoons- some were less organized, asking for feedback instead of providing information
- Day was a bit long for those who attended both the breakfast & conference. Some feedback on keeping it all on one day but a shorter day

APSE Exam

The registration deadline is coming up quickly. Exam is Dec 2nd. Will be offered in May 2nd. There will be a training event that afternoon too.

Training & Professional Development

IOD Employment Training

- Adolescent training that includes RENEW and has a focus on employment. 5 CMHC are participating in the training.
- Online "Employment Consulting & Workplace Supports" training. 24 completed, 12 of which in NH. Its time limited due to some in person coaching. Will run again in Feb. It is a 4-week training, an average of 4 hours a week on line, plus follow up. May have an opportunity to be "honorary student" to view the course.

Transition Summit

- NH COP on Transition is putting on its 5th Transition Summit. Nov 16th – 253 have registered. Youth Driven Transition is the theme of this years Summit. 33 students are attending & participating in the breakout sessions. Dan Habib will be previewing his new film at the Summit

VR Update

VR had their Federal review, and the feedback was very positive. NH exceeded its closure goals (26's). Looking at being able to share VR data and other employment data to share with the group.

Workforce Coalition Updates

Lakes Region Coalition

- Susan Covert facilitates their meetings and helps to share information from other Coalitions she is working with. Group is still new and growing, lots of sharing starting to take place. Having guest speakers come in and present

Nashua Coalition

- In a bit of a rut- the group is transitioning from the MIG offering support & struggling with shared facilitation. Looking to try and jumpstart the group again

North Country Coalition

- Just had 2nd meeting. Susan is also facilitating the group. Have a wide range of community/employment providers participating.

Concord Coalition

- Have had guest speakers come in and discuss what they look for in employees or to discuss work incentives. People like this approach with having presenters come in.

Monadnock Coalition

- Are working on marketing materials and looking to meet with someone to discuss social marketing and using it as a tool to outreach to employers.

Upcoming meetings

Suggestion was made to have Susan Wells from VT VR, and Hugh Bradshaw from VT to come and discuss their coalitions. Hoping for at least 2 members of each Coalition to come. Also exploring using video conferencing for those who cannot make the drive to Concord. Will ask them to come to January 12th meeting

Another suggestions; looking into social media and ways to create sharing between coalitions; professional development; the group mission & ways of disseminating information on the group; VR data; disability statistics; labor projections/industry trends; managed care

January Meeting:

Facilitator: Darren Deth

Note Taker: Amy Jenks