

**Governor's Task Force on Employing People with Disabilities
Meeting Minutes
8/5/2013**

Overview

Opening Comments—Laurie Gill, Cabinet Secretary, Department of Human Services- Chairperson for the task force. Our plan is to move through 3-4 meetings to develop an action plan and move recommendations forward to the Governor. Reimbursement paperwork is available and Eric Weiss will handle that if you need help. There is a membership listing in the binder of those who agreed to be on the task force. Categories on task force are businesses, individuals and family members, legislators, non-profit stakeholders, providers and state government.

Introductions and Review of Timeline-Secretary Gill-There will be time for guests to address the task force at the end of the meeting. Today we want to bring forth basic information about current practice in South Dakota, what's working and not working, solutions and recommendations, based on information about what is currently happening. We will have an hour to brainstorm to find bottlenecks today, the second meeting is to find potential solutions to tweak or change to move our system ahead. The third meeting we will plan to gel some recommendations and formulate a plan. My goal is to present our plan and recommendations to the Governor by the end of October. The fourth meeting is optional if needed and we will keep that date reserved.

Governor's Initiative & Task Force-Secretary Gill- This task force is part of a larger Employment Works Governor's Initiative. Task force members know the goal is to increase employment of South Dakotans with disabilities and make South Dakota an Employment First state. Let's first look back at what led up to this meeting. People with disabilities have a disproportionately low employment rate when compared to people without disabilities. The US Census Bureau shows (2008-2010) individuals without a disability are 3 times more likely to be employed than those with disabilities. Nationally, 9.4 million (6% of the population) people with disabilities are employed, and 52% earn less than \$25,000, which results in an earnings gap. Diversity is important in the workplace and hiring people with disabilities is a way for employers to diversify their workforce. Other benefits include utilizing an untapped work force and expanding your

customer base. In fact, 92% of the public view employers that hire people with disabilities more favorably.

Gov. Daugaard assisted Governor Markell of Delaware and held forums as a part of the 2012-13 initiative of the National Governor's Association (NGA) to explore ways that governors can provide the leadership necessary to make significant advancements in employing people with disabilities in their states. The theme is "A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities". The goal is to advance employment opportunities by educating employers, supporting state governors to develop blueprints for their state, and establishing public/private partnerships. Two roundtables with self-advocates, business leaders, etc. were held in 2012. More than 60 meetings and literature reviews have been conducted. In February 2013, Governor Daugaard announced he would form an initiative in South Dakota. The Division of Developmental Disabilities became members of the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) in January 2013. The Governor and state representatives attended the NGA in Seattle, accompanied by other employers, and determined this task force was needed.

Current Practices

DHS Overview-Secretary Gill-DHS guiding principles are fiscal responsibility, ethical actions and decision making, culturally responsive services, and a "no wrong door" approach. The DHS Mission statement was reviewed, with four primary goal areas, objectives and strategies (action items) for carrying out the mission. DHS works with a variety of Boards & Councils, comprised of four divisions: Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), the South Dakota Developmental Center (SDDC), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI).

Division of Developmental Disabilities-Dan Lusk-DDD mission and services provided include the Choices Medicaid Waiver, Family Support 360 Waiver, Respite Care, and Private Intermediate Care Facility Services. DDD serves approximately 5,000 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Waiver provides Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) in lieu of institutional care at SDDC in Redfield. State law changed the terminology from Mental Retardation to Intellectual Disability. In 2010, focus became more on employment and recently positions were

added as Community Living staff to focus on employment. In 2009 the Alliance for Full Participation state team was developed, now called South Dakota Employment First Alliance. The State Employment Leadership Network started in Jan. 2013, with membership paid by a grant by the SD Council on Developmental Disabilities. A state assessment was completed and SELN staff from University of Massachusetts held focus groups with stakeholders in South Dakota, which resulted in a Findings and Observations Report. They established five goals as a result: develop strategies that are sustainable and create lasting change, support businesses, leverage resources, prepare next generation, address culture and expectations related to work. A Financial workgroup has been developed to incentivize employment and change the billing within the Division's structure.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in South Dakota-Gaye Mattke-Gaye reviewed the mission statement and discrepancies in labor force participation between people with and without disabilities. She reviewed people served for divisions (DRS and SBVI), eligibility and services VR provides. Other employment activities sponsored by the divisions are transition services activities, employer partnerships, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) events and Governor Awards. The National Employment Team (NET) links South Dakota with national employment opportunities with some of the nation's largest employers. Gaye shared the Return on Investment: For every \$1 VR spends, VR clients saw an increase in earnings of \$8.96 and paid back \$1.79 in taxes.

Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR)-Marcia Hultman- Employment Services through the Labor Exchange matches an employer with the appropriate employee. DLR is the largest job bank in South Dakota, with 10,788 job listings today. DLR has 15 local offices across the state. Employers can post jobs online through the DLR website SD Works. DLR provides job search assistance, job counseling, assessments, Job Search Assistance Program (JSAP), skills training with Workforce Investment Act funds, and case management services. The Disability Employment initiative (DEI) is a \$1.9 million grant covering the western portion of South Dakota, working with Black Hills Works, with hopes to offer this program statewide. The purpose of the program is to take all resources in an area and work with an individual with the end goal to obtain employment. The program is for people with disabilities ages 18-24, and it

uses an Integrated Resource Teams (IRT) with youth as the driver of the team. To expand this statewide, the goal is for current trainers to provide training to all DLR staff and work with the employer community. This grant is about creating a system so that it is sustainable when the grant is gone. The grant is currently in year two of a three year grant. Outreach is included in this grant, including a video created by Governor Daugaard, which can be found at www.sddei.org. VR and DLR managers are going to be participating in joint manager's meetings at the local level to increase collaboration between the agencies. VR and DLR are co-located throughout the state.

Department of Social Services (DSS) - Jolene Brakke-Economic Assistance, the Medicaid program and Behavioral Health services are different programs under the umbrella of DSS. One program under the Medicaid program is Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD). DSS & DHS implemented this in October 2006. It allows for full Medicaid benefits while earning more. The program can also serve individuals denied Social Security benefits due to work, would lose SSI due to spouse, or are over the resource limit for SSI. To qualify, a person must meet criteria to be eligible for Medicaid, must have a disability determination, must be employed, have resources less than \$8,000. It looks only at individual resources and earnings must be submitted quarterly. Currently, there are 280 people on this program. For outreach purposes, training was provided to community support providers, centers for independent living and mental health centers. It's not a waiver but part of the state plan, and not limited to a specific number of people on the program. Shelly Pfaff asked for some information about services through DSS for people with behavioral and mental illness, or to include that as a presentation in the next meeting.

Department of Education (DOE) -Melissa Flor-The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 created a State Performance Plan (Indicator 14). This measures outcomes of a student on an IEP a year after graduation to follow up if they have employment, other employment (self-employment, etc.), higher education or post-secondary or a combination. Only 4 year colleges are considered higher education in SD, not technical institutes. Four events the Dept. of Education is involved in include Catch the Wave, Youth Leadership Forum, Project Skills and Self-Advocacy Training.

What's Working? What's Not Working?

Task Force Discussion: Reasons for Low Employment Rate of People with Disabilities-20% of people with disabilities are employed nationwide. We need to bring private and public entities together around the table and come up with a plan with 4 top priority areas.

Feedback from the Task Force:

- Supported employment has been limited (job coaching, additional training, and fade back but ongoing supports of at least two times per month). There is limited access and availability for people with most significant disabilities. There is a lack of well-trained job coaches and a competitive nature between job coaches for job openings, which results in a lack of collaboration between job coaches.
- Recommendation to redirect resources so they can be effectively and efficiently used. Financial disincentives to work have to change.
- Transition services are working, but could expand upon that by moving it into lower grades for self-advocacy, etc.
- Access to information all in one place would be helpful. Freedom to Work website has a place for a wide variety of services-could frequently asked questions be added to the site to help employers and parents? DLR through DEI is creating an electronic rolodex for resources, search by key words and names to navigate. This will be rolled out in the fall. No stigma attached when people walk in to the DLR doors.
- No Wrong Door approach needs to be expanded and improved.
- Family support for employment and self-employment is needed.
- Increase expectation of work in society, in schools, with teachers and parents. One way to do that is to tell success stories, including those from employers.
- Accessibility of online applications can be problematic for people with disabilities as the system will "time out" before they get the application completed.
- For employers, there is a fear of having to discipline an employee and what are the ramifications of this with someone with a disability. Training for provider staff bringing employers in along with them to dispel fears is recommended.
- Identify employers willing to hire people with disabilities. Business representatives from DLR to take VR staff in to introduce them to employers they work with.

- Lack of consistency throughout transition and employment, as well as a lack of summer employment options for students. Track students who work more than 20 hours per week as this seems like a low bar. Project Skills is working. Some good pre-employment training is happening and recommend that happen earlier.
- Reimbursement structures should be looked at in service rates.

Task force participants requested to take the lists of what's working and what isn't working and put them into categories and send them to task force members who will come to the next meeting with ideas. The group would like to take a look at employment of people with disabilities to see who they are and where they are working. Additional data will be provided. Data from SELN is a subset. ICI and RSA have data that could be accessed.

Handouts, agenda and minutes will be available on the DHS website. Some written testimony has been received from the public and will be shared with this group.

Public Dialogue-There is a fear by employers to hire people with hearing disability due to cost of interpreters. Improve communication access for people with hearing loss.

Adjourn-Come back in a couple weeks prepared to work on top priorities. Next meeting is Tuesday August 27 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at RedRossa Hills Conference Room in Pierre. Thank you!