

Independent Study of LRS-OCDD Data

Human Development Center

Need. On July 1, 2011 OCDD adopted an official Employment First (EF) policy (i.e., *Employment will be the primary outcome for all persons receiving OCDD services who are of working age*) and in the same memo stated that "employment is characterized by *typical jobs with competitive compensation that are fully integrated into the workplace*" (italics added). There is widespread support for Louisiana implementing EF policies across state agencies, providers and advocacy organizations (c.f., Work Pays Coalition). The Louisiana DD Council's 5-year plan (Objective 9.1) advocates for: (a)...policies that incentivize services for individualized integrated, competitive employment, (b)... sheltered workshops to transition people into individualized, competitive, paid employment and discontinue admissions into segregated day programs, and (c)... implementation of ongoing multiagency employment data collection, management and analysis.

We hypothesize that a significant number of Louisianans receiving non-work services were never determined ineligible by LRS. However, in an EF state, no person should receive non-work services before being given the supports and services necessary to pursue employment (see OCDD and DDC characterizations of employment above). Because Medicaid is payer of last resort, individuals with disabilities should go through all phases of the LRS vocational assessment including discovery, or person centered assessment, and trial work assessments with necessary supports before a determination that the person will not "benefit from LRS employment services" and thus be considered eligible for non-work services. Data are needed to guide EF policy development, implementation and analysis.

Plan. We propose conducting an independent study to determine the characteristics of persons receiving segregated non-work day treatment/sheltered workshop services and identifying the "path" that lead those individuals to the those services. A brief outline of possible study variables and procedures is attached.

Expected Outcome. The data from this study will provide a baseline for identifying policies and practices that will move Louisiana toward becoming an Employment First state and support meaningful employment outcomes for Louisianans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Estimated Funding. \$35,000