

Human Development Center Quarterly Report to the DD Council (July 2012)

Update/progress on agency initiatives

During the past three months, the Employment Consortium conducted nine (9) two-day "Basic Supported Employment" (i.e., an introduction to the philosophy, goals and general strategies for accessing, delivering/participating in supported employment). A total of 71 persons completed these trainings during the past three months; 33 participants were job-seekers with disabilities and 38 participants were support staff. During the fiscal year 187 individuals have participated in 20 different Employment Consortium trainings. During the past quarter, trainings were held in the following locations: Alexandria, Lake Charles, Hammond, New Orleans (4), Baton Rouge, and Lafayette.

Status of agency's activities/participation on DDC plan initiatives and impact

HDC supports several of the Council's plan initiatives. In this report, I will highlight our activities related to Employment. DDC funding and support for the Employment Consortium initiative, along with other concurrent events, has helped to give rise to a number of other Community Employment activities of HDC faculty and staff. Some of the activities that have "spun off" from the seed-funding of the DDC are briefly described in the bulleted list that follows:

- HDC staff continue to provide a 40-hour competency-based Supported Employment training. This training is based on the national competencies identified by APSE (the national association on employment). The training fits another need in the state that the DDC funded training does not directly address. That is, the 40-hour training prepares Job Coaches and Job Developers to take the national accreditation test. This curriculum complements the more introductory/awareness level training funded by the DDC. The DDC funded training provides the bottom up push for greater access and better quality services to support the community employment aspirations of persons with disabilities. The 40 hour competency-based training for Job Coaches and Job Developers will provide the knowledge and skills to service providers so that community employment outcomes can be achieved.
- HDC supported the establishment of a state chapter of APSE to create another venue for both advocacy and professional development related to improved access to, and quality of, Supported Employment services in Louisiana.
- HDC staff are now working with two Supported Employment vendors in Greater New Orleans to assist them to begin providing supported employment services to their clientele by training and mentoring the agencies' job coach and job development personnel.

- Two of HDC's ongoing grant funded projects (US Department of Education: Post-secondary Education for All Collaborative and US Department of Justice sub-contract from Institute for Educational Leadership: Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program) have included and achieved employment outcomes for students with identified intellectual/developmental disabilities served by the respective projects.
- HDC submitted a preliminary grant proposal to the Organization for Autism Research (OAR) to implement a project designed to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing strategies to support and enhance self-determination of job seekers with autism spectrum disorders within the job seeking, learning and maintaining process. We are still waiting to learn if we will be invited to submit a full proposal.
- HDC is in discussions with Mr. Martin and his staff at LRS to determine if it is possible for HDC to provide the match funds to LRS so they can pull down the additional funding that would be necessary to continue to provide Benefits Analysis and Work Incentives Planning to Louisianans in southwest, central and northern parishes in the state. These discussions are underway as a result of the termination of WIPA projects funded by the Social Security Administration. Although the federal legislation authorizing funding for WIPA projects ends on June 30, 2012 as a result of the failure of Congress to reauthorize that portion of the WIA that funds WIPA projects, HDC continues to investigate strategies to continue providing benefits planning and work incentives education.
- HDC staff continue to participate on OCDD's Employment First committee.
- HDC staff continue to participate on the Work Pays consortium.
- HDC staff continue to assist LRS with policy and procedure review, as requested.