Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration

Employment First Initiative

Colleen Gauruder

Statewide Coordinator for Transition and Employment

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Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)

In FY 2008, the DDA provided funding for 10,594 individuals to receive Day or Supported Employment (SE) services;

- 6373 individuals, or 60%, received Day Services; and,
- 4,221 individuals, or 40%, received SE services.

Ask Me! Project

- Ask Me! is a quality of life survey conducted with individuals receiving DDA services that measures 8 life domains, including, for example; Material Well-Being, Rights, Transportation Availability, Social Inclusion, Personal Development and Self-Determination.

- According to the October, 2007 Ask Me! Project Report;
  - “Supported employment is **the** major contributor to quality of life;”
  - People with supported employment services “have **higher quality of life** in all eight domains than people with day habilitation services.”
  - 56% of the respondents report having the chance to earn good money; 57% report they are getting training to help get a job; and, only 58% report choosing the job or what they do on most days.

State Employment Leadership Network (SELN)

SELN is;

- a multi-state (17 states) collaborative project furnishing support and technical assistance to state DD agencies that are dedicated to improving employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities;
- a community of practice for successful coalition building around cross-cutting issues; and,
- co-sponsored by the National State Directors of State Developmental Disabilities Services, (NASDDDS) and the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of MA/Boston;

Maryland's "Employment First" Initiative

- Maryland joined the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) in December 2007, through funding provided by the Maryland Medicaid Infrastructure Grant and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council. Since that time, the DDA;
  - Completed a written self assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the current employment service system
  - Held two focus group sessions to gather input related to the self assessment from internal DDA staff and multiple state and local stakeholders
  - Committed to becoming an "Employment First" state
    - Created an "Employment First" Advisory Committee
    - Created an "Employment First" Policy Subcommittee

Maryland's "Employment First" Initiative

- Maryland stakeholders include representatives from;
  - People On the Go of Maryland – Statewide Self Advocacy Group
  - Family Members
  - The Arc of Maryland
  - Maryland Association for Community Services (Provider Group)
  - Maryland DD Council
  - Maryland Dept. of Disabilities
  - Maryland Division of Rehab. Services
  - Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration
  - Maryland State Department of Education
  - Maryland Disability Law Center
  - Providers representing each of DDA's 4 regions
  - Maryland Association for Persons in Supported Employment
  - Resource Coordination
  - DDA regional office and headquarters staff

Maryland's "Employment First" Initiative

- In the coming year, the DDA will;
  - Develop an Employment First Policy, stating that ***employment will be the first service option offered to all individuals with developmental disabilities***
  - Develop a strategic Employment Plan that addresses goals with the following themes;

Maryland's "Employment First" Initiative

Employment Plan Key Themes:

I. Strategic Goals and Operating Policies
II. Leadership
III. Financing and Contracting Methods
IV. Training and Technical Assistance
V. Interagency Collaboration
VI. Services and Service Innovations
VII. Employment performance measurement, quality assurance, and program oversight

Maryland's "Employment First" Initiative

Additional activities include:

- Implementing new Waiver services; Employment Discovery and Customization and Community Learning
- Developing a policy to remove barriers to individuals accessing DD Waiver services and the Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program simultaneously (a.k.a. Medicaid Buy-In)
- Developing a DDA Transitioning Youth Policy that clearly states that Employment is the "**first"** or preferred service option to be offered to youth exiting school
- Implementing the DDA & Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) MOU and Addendum

Contact Information

Colleen Gauruder

Statewide Coordinator of Employment and Transition Services

Developmental Disabilities Administration

201 W. Preston Street

4th Floor

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

410-767-5566

gauruderc@dhmh.state.md.us

www.ddamaryland.org