Blueprint for Success:

Employing Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Experience
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Employment First:
Vision ~ Opportunity ~ Reality
It is a Journey!
“Work makes me excited and happy, especially when I do something new, for instance when learning new tasks. Getting a paycheck makes me feel proud that I have done a good job and I earned it myself.” (Adult with ID)

Building The Foundation
How We Started

- Cross-Stakeholder Planning Team Established: 2006
- Strategic Plan for Employment Adopted- 2008
- Procurement Clarified Service Expectations: 2009
- Employment First Policy: Adopted 8/2010
- Plans from Providers regarding Transformation of Center-Based Work Programs: 8/1/11
- Area Office Employment Plans with ID goals: FY’12
- MOA with Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission to cost-share services: Focus on Transition-Age: FY ‘12
- Standard Rates for Employment & Day Services implemented in FY ‘14
Activities Initiated to Promote Integrated Employment

- Training:
  - Comprehensive Series for Employment Specialists/Job Developers
  - Conferences
  - Best Practice Forums on selected topics
  - Forums on Conversion of sheltered work to IE

- Technical Assistance for Providers
- “School Days to Pay Days” Publication
- Self-Advocate Peer Employment Training Project: Explore, Prepare, Act

Development of the Blueprint: The DDS Commissioner Asked a Workgroup in 2013 to do the following:

- Design a phased-in plan
- Increase inclusive and higher income work opportunities
- Phase out sheltered workshops
- Work with stakeholders, such as ADDP and The Arc of Massachusetts
- Outreach to additional stakeholders
Blueprint Design Features

- Foundation
  - Value and importance of employment
  - Benefits to individuals, communities, and businesses

“[Having a job is important to me because] I want to be normal, and be respected as an equal. To be paid the same as others doing the same job. I don’t want to be treated as less than equal or a poor handicap person. (Adult with ID)"

Blueprint Features Continued

- Strengths
  - Success of individuals employed in a variety of different businesses
  - Increase in businesses who have partnered & opened their doors
  - Success of large employment provider network
  - Clear voice of self-advocates, families, and allies
  - Service innovation
  - Strong collaboration of DDS, providers, families and consumers.
**Blueprint Features Cont.**

- Challenges
  - Fear of change, loss of stability and the unknown when leaving workshop
  - Will I still see my friends?
  - Availability of jobs from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
  - Impact of earnings on Social Security & other benefits
  - Limited transportation options
  - Competitive jobs in current economic climate

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**Goals & Schedule for Implementation**

**Fiscal year 2014:**

- Cease sheltered workshop referrals as of Jan. 1, 2014
- Begin planning to prepare for phase out of all sheltered workshop services by June, 30, 2015
  - Maintain hours of day service to ensure stability for families and residential providers
Plan Schedule Continued*

Fiscal year 2015

- Transition from sheltered work to individual or group supported employment and/or expanded Community Based Day Support programs
  - Current # of hours of service provided remains the same

Fiscal years 2016 – 2018

- Increase pace of transition to individual and group supported employment
- Continue development/expanded scope of CBDS

Recommendations:

Need for Financial Investment
Request for $26.7 million* over 4 years

*Net cost to state is approximately $13 M given 50% SGF 50% FFP
**Steps to Success**

- FY '14: Planning year for assessments and determine best alternative service option
- FY 15: Investment needed to transition all sheltered workshop participants to individual or group supported employment and/or CBDS
- FY ’16: Funding needed for increased movement from CBDS to individual or group supported employment
- FY ‘17 & 18: Investment needed to support continued movement to integrated employment

**Resources to Build Capacity – Commitment from DDS**

- **Engagement with and support to individuals & families**
  - The Arc of Mass, MASS, and MFOFC
  - Training, informational materials, resources, peer support
- **Staff development and training**
  - Employment specialists/job developers and DDS staff
  - Benefits training and resources and specialized topics
- **Technical Assistance & Consultation for Providers**
- **Expansion of Regional Employment Collaborative Model**
Maintaining Momentum.

Steve Case

“You stick it out. You just got to.”

- Read his story -

Thank You & Questions

A copy of the Blueprint can be obtained at www.addp.org
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