

EmploymentFirstMaine

Systems Development / Capacity Building Work Group

Recommendations Submitted to the Employment First Maine Coalition September 19, 2014

Recommendations

Our recommendations are built on the foundational values that everyone can work, that there are an unlimited number of ways in which to make a living and that we have the technology and “know how” to realize this vision.

1. That over time, a wide range and tiered system of professional development and technical assistance be made available to providers of service (including educators) to individuals with disabilities across the state that is accessible and affordable to assure a common foundational level of knowledge and skill in at least the following topics:
 - Creating a culture supportive of employment for all (the work group believes this should be required for providers)
 - Strategic planning for agencies to address conversion of services
 - Innovative funding strategies to support an array of employment options including blending, braiding and amalgamating funding using strategies such as resource ownership, business within a business, and using SSA work incentives like PASS plans for job creation.
 - Whole life supports—wrapping a supports package around an individual that includes employment and inclusive community supports
 - Career Planning and Discovering Personal Genius [™]
 - Information on SSA work incentives and using work incentives
 - Customized Employment
 - Job development and job carving
 - Strategies to negotiate with employers

- Financial literacy, financial planning, asset development and economic empowerment
 - Evidence-based Individual Placement Supports and integration of employment into the ACT teams
2. That an Employment First 101 curriculum be developed and available in multiple formats to provide a values-based and foundational introduction to the concept that everyone can work. EF 101 should be required for case managers, educators, and policymakers and recommended for individuals with disabilities, parents and board members.
 3. That a job coach credential be established and added to the career ladder of Maine's employment support providers. Training for this credential must be accessible and affordable and jointly recognized by the Maine Departments of Education, Labor and Health & Human Services.
 4. That the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services adopt a policy of presumptive eligibility for individuals on all of the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers.
 5. That the use of sub-minimum wage certificates (14c in the Fair Labor Standards Act) be eliminated in Maine as it is in direct conflict with the Employment First Maine Act.
 6. That small group employment be phased out and eliminated as it is in direct conflict with the Employment First Maine Act.
 7. That the Maine Department of Health & Human Services' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services work in collaboration with MaineCare to submit a 1915(i) waiver. This recommendation is consistent with the recently released report by the Bazelon Center (2014), "States must cover a robust package of Medicaid-financed supported employment services for people with mental illness to supported employment under the "home and community-based services" state plan option, known as the "Section 1915(i) option." This option will permit Maine to target a set of home and community-based services, including employment services, to a set of individuals using needs-based criteria.
 8. That, as a component of the CMS required transition plan, Maine re-allocate Medicaid funded intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health funds from segregated day treatment and/or day habilitation services to pay for employment services consistent with the new CMS final rule on non-residential community services.
 9. That the Departments of Education, Labor and Health & Human Services assure and annually report that individuals with disabilities served are on a

pathway to employment and barriers are addressed in person-centered planning processes.

10. That, as a component of the CMS transition plan, Maine eliminate the conflict of interest where the individual with a disability is employed by the same agency that is providing him/her services and supports of any kind (employment, residential, etc).
11. That a mentoring program be designed and delivered to support agency leadership in their transformation.
12. That Maine's Department of Education will use the "Discovering Personal Genius" model in its transition and career planning process.
13. That provider agencies, at least annually, post a "Report Card" that identifies the number of individuals served, the number of individuals employed, the number of hours worked and wages earned.

Respectfully Submitted,

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