

ABSTRACT: Work Center Transformation

ISSUE

Thousands of New Yorkers with disabilities work in sheltered workshops that could succeed in community competitive jobs and/or become successfully self-employed.

GOAL #4

Develop and implement a statewide transformation process to transition programs and individuals from sheltered/segregated to competitive/integrated employment.

RATIONALE

In New York State hundreds of work centers provide sheltered employment for many thousands of people with disabilities. Transforming work centers to entrepreneurial incubators for individual or cooperatively owned businesses, or explore new ways of embedding fast track to competitive employment for people best served in integrated settings will be a cooperative process between NYMWP and work centers. A new agency self-assessment tool will be developed that will help work centers gauge their readiness and commitment to change and develop action plans toward transformation. Partners from advocacy groups will ensure that the process reflects the needs and wishes of consumers and their families. Best practices for entrepreneurship and individually customized integrated employment will be developed, trained, facilitated and supported through on and off site TA and through state agency funding and regulation improvements. Ultimately the goal is that anyone currently in a work center will have an opportunity and get the support they need to start a business or obtain and sustain competitive employment.

STATUS

NYSRA, Cornell and BBI are developing an assessment tool that will be available to all work centers. A paper on work center transformation, incorporating feedback from NYSRA members from a 2009 think tank is in press that will guide the effort. Models for customized approaches to entrepreneurship will utilize the 2009 'Primer on the StartUP NY 4 Phase Model' as one of the resources available to work centers. Regional interagency dialogues on entrepreneurship are being scheduled that will explore how state agencies can coordinate efforts to assist former work center participants to become self-employed. NYSRA, APSE and NYAPRS will participate on a Transformation Committee to help guide efforts.

2010 KEY IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

- Customize an assessment tool to meet the goals of the transformation initiative
- Establish Transformation Committee
- Conduct a data analysis of demographics and funding streams
- Develop a policy analysis of factors affected by transformation
- Obtain Commissioner review and input
- Identify up to three pilot work centers that are best positioned and ready for transformation and receive TA/training
- Develop intensive, transitional and extended work center transformation protocols and processes at each pilot
- Review and benchmark agency affirmative businesses against accepted social entrepreneurship principles and practices

PARTNERS

- APSE** – Association for Persons in Supported Employment
- MISCC EC** – Most Integrated Settings Coordinating Council Employment Committee
- VESID** – Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities
- OMRDD** – Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
- OMH** – Office of Mental Health
- CBVH** – Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped
- DOL** – Department of Labor
- DOH** – Department of Health
- NYSRA** – NYS Rehabilitation Association
- NYAPRS** – NY Association for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services

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