NTAR Leadership Center

National Technical Assistance and Research
Center to Promote Leadership for Increasing
the Employment and Economic Independence
of Adults with Disabilities

Blending and Braiding Resources to Support the Employment of People with Disabilities

August 6, 2008

Audio Dial-In Information

- Toll-Free Phone: 866.740.1260

- Access Code: 9324100

Submitting Questions for the Presenters

- Throughout the course of the webinar, feel free to email your questions for the presenters. During the Q&A period, questions will be answered in the order in which they were received.

- Email your questions to:

ntar@rci.rutgers.edu

Presenters

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- **Jack Quigley,** Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Project Manager, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services
- **Dr. Joseph Ashley,** Assistant Commissioner, Grants & Special Programs, Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services

Moderator:

- **Nanette Relave,** Director, State Peer Leaders Network, NTAR Leadership Center and Director, Center for Workers with Disabilities, APHSA

Blending and Braiding Funds: August 6, 2008

The NTAR Leadership Center

- Established in September 2007 through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

- A collaboration of partners with expertise in workforce and economic development, disability employment, financial education and asset building, and leadership development

- Created for the purpose of building capacity and leadership at the federal, state, and local levels to enable change across workforce development and disability-specific systems that will increase employment for adults with disabilities

Blending and Braiding Funds: August 6, 2008

Guiding Principles

- Increasing partnerships and collaboration among and across generic and disability-specific systems
- Increasing the use of self-direction in services, and **integration of funding across and among systems**
- Increasing economic self-sufficiency through leveraging work incentives, financial education, or other strategies that promote profitable employment and asset building
- Increasing the use of universal design in employment services and as a framework for employment policy
- Increasing the use of customized and other forms of flexible work options for individuals with disabilities and others with barriers to employment

Agenda/Objectives

- Define the concepts of blending and braiding

- Explore examples of blending and braiding resources across programs and systems to support the employment of people with significant disabilities

- Answer your questions

Defining Blending and Braiding

- **Blending** and **braiding** are both strategies to use resources in more coordinated and flexible ways

- Blending involves strategies that combine or unify separate funding sources. Strategies include:
  - Pooling: Flexible funding sources are blended into one funding pool
  - Decategorization: Funding sources are made less categorical by removing, reducing, or aligning requirements and regulations so that funds can be blended into a unified funding stream

- Braiding involves using separate funding sources together to support more seamless or unified services
  - With braiding, separate funding sources are wrapped together

Braiding Resources from Multiple Sources to Support Customized Employment Plans for People with Significant Disabilities

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Introduction

For the purposes of this discussion, people with significant disabilities refers to:

- People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- People with Mental Illness

- People Eligible for Nursing Home Care

Employment Planning

People with significant disabilities are likely to need supports for **both** job acquisition **and** job retention.

Braided Funding

This discussion is focused on braiding strategies since most states do not have collaborative options to blend funds for people with significant disabilities into single self-directed accounts.

Effective braiding strategies, however, can result in customized employment plans that facilitate choice and self direction.

Braiding Musts

Comprehensive customized employment plans containing braided funding strategies must:

- Contain sufficient resources for the person to acquire and retain a job of their choice

- Be fiscally feasible for community employment providers to implement

- Avoid disincentives for individuals and their families

- Avoid "double dipping"

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Programs

The focus here will be on the VR-supported employment process. This is typically a performance-based process with payments at key designated points of progress. The essential elements are assessments, job development, job placement, stabilization, and a concluding report.

Caveats:

    Orders of selection

    Belief

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Most state agencies serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (DD/MR agencies) offer Follow Along and extended on-site employment supports using Federal Home and Community-Based Waiver and/or state funding. They may also offer other resources such as non-employment day services, transportation, behavioral and occupational therapy, and family support services.

Caveats:

     Waiting Lists

     Eligibility Definition

     Belief

VR-DD/MR Braiding Model

Stage	>Facility-based or community-based non-work program	>Assessment, job development, job placement, stabilization, and concluding report	>Extended employment supports
Funding	**DD/MR:** Funds facility-based or community-based services	**VR:** Funds employment services **DD/MR:** Continues to fund facility-based and community-based services as needed	**DD/MR:** Funds extended employment supports and continued facility-based and community-based services as needed

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Behavioral Health

State behavioral health systems assume that supports to the individual for post-VR job retention will be provided through the clinical process. Local behavioral health agencies have developed strategies to provide post-VR supports for job retention given current funding regulations.

Long-Term Care

Many people with significant disabilities have been placed in nursing homes due to the lack of appropriate alternatives. Some want to have the opportunity for employment. Federal Home and Community-Based Waivers to fund community living alternatives to nursing homes offer services that could be used for employment supports (most notably personal assistance).

Caveats:

    Belief

    Restrictive Waiver Regulations

    Personal Liability

SSI/SSDI

The SSI or SSDI benefit can assist in funding private pay arrangements for employment supports for job retention.

Related Social Security resources include:

Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program (WIPA)

Social Security Work Incentives (e.g. PASS, IRWE)

Ticket to Work

One-Stop Centers

One-Stop Centers are the hub of the generic workforce system. One-Stop Centers have continued to make progress in developing the capacity to serve people with significant disabilities. The following resources may be available at a One-Stop Center:

Staff Supports

Resource Rooms

Individual Training Accounts

On-the-Job Training

Job Listings

Disability Program Navigators

School Districts

There are rich opportunities to braid educational funding for transition with VR and adult extended employment supports for a seamless transition from school to work and adult services.

Natural Supports

Supports from co-workers and friends should be included in customized employment plans regardless of the availability of funds for supports. Inclusion in the workplace and the community is a powerful contributor to successful employment outcomes.

Conclusion

Creative strategies for braiding resources can create opportunities for additional people with significant disabilities to be employed.

Blending and Braiding Resources to Support the Employment of People with Disabilities: A Sampling from Virginia

Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG)

The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) was awarded a third MIG for 2008–2011.

DMAS has successfully partnered with the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) for the past six years.

Collaboration Based on Common Goals Across Agencies, Programs, and Organizations

- Eliminating barriers to employment for people with disabilities

- Increasing employment and earnings potential for workers with disabilities

Increasing Work Options and Building Trust in Use of SSA Work Incentives

- Section 1619(b) of the Social Security Act
  – NOVA WIB, SSA, DSS, DMAS, DRS

- Work Incentive Training (WIT) Program
  – VBPD, DMAS, DRS, vaACCSES

- Work Incentive Specialist Training (WIST) Program
  – DMAS, DRS, vaACCSES

Increasing Work Options and Building Trust in Use of SSA Work Incentives

- WorkWORLD
  - DRS, DMAS, DMHMR, DOE, DBVI, DSS, VBPD

- Medicaid Buy-In, *MEDICAID WORKS*
  - DMAS, DRS, DSS, WIPAs, others

Supporting Job Seekers with Significant Disabilities

- Merging employment with transportation and housing planning
  - VBPD, DMAS, DRS, TJPDC

- Assistive technology (AT) kits and video teleconferencing systems for targeted One-Stops
  - Placed in workforce areas not covered by the Work Incentive Grant (WIG)

Supporting Job Seekers with Significant Disabilities

- MIG funds AT Business Displays
  - Targeted for trade shows and other employer venues
  - Shows how equipment can make jobs "do-able"

- "AT in the Workplace" 30, 60, 90 minute presentations
  - Developed with Region 3 Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC), the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, and the Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS)

Braiding Grant and Program Objectives with Funding to Accomplish Common Goals of Supporting Job Seekers with Disabilities

- DPN initiative supports several defined MIG outcomes and key strategies
  - Increasing use of Virginia's One-Stop workforce system
  - Increasing understanding of work incentives and use of benefits counseling services
  - Conducting outreach and providing information to employers throughout the state on hiring workers with disabilities from this often untapped pool of qualified applicants

Braiding Grant and Program Objectives with Funding to Accomplish Common Goals of Supporting Job Seekers with Disabilities

- MIG supports the two Senior DPNs
  - Lead the effort to ensure that AT kits are utilized in the One-Stops
  - Promote use of video teleconferencing systems to connect the One-Stops and Work Incentive Planning Assistance (WIPA) projects
  - Facilitate access between WIPAs and One-Stop customers and staff
  - Conduct accessibility surveys at One-Stops and follow-up on implementation plans

Question-and-Answer Period: How to Submit Your Questions

- Email your questions to:

    ntar@rci.rutgers.edu

Question-and-Answer Period

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