

## 2018 Employment Workplan Highlights

### ***Tech Camp for Youth & Young Adults with Autism***

The Council partnered with the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center (SAARC) on a pilot project to provide funding for individuals with autism in financial need to participate in a Tech Camp. The camp was held at the University of Advancing Technology campus, July 22 – 28, 2018, and provided an opportunity for participants to gain a deeper understanding of all the skills needed for a successful college experience including completing the admissions process, residing in a dormitory, attending classes, collaborating with teams, using new technology, completing a group project, and taking part in student life activities. Four participants received scholarship funding from the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

Post program surveys were developed to measure participants' overall satisfaction with the camp, resulting skill development and awareness by participating in the camp, including executive functioning, social and emotional awareness, advocacy, and academic or cognitive skills. The survey also asked participants to share their favorite parts of the camp and any suggested improvements. The surveys were administered at one month post the end date of camp, and again at six-months.

### ***System Change Training for DDD/VR & Providers***

The Council formed a partnership with DDD, VR, Employment First, Arizona@ Work, Arizona Association of Providers for People with Disabilities, and the Institute for Human Development to develop a system change training on competitive employment for people with significant disabilities. The training targeted DDD employment support coordinators, VR counselors, service providers, transition specialists and special education teachers and was conducted September 18 & 20, 2018, featuring Laura Owens, Ph.D., CESP, who has more than 30 years of experience as an international leader, speaker, and publisher in the disability employment field. The free training titled *Oh Yes, I CAN Work!* was conducted in a workshop format and included a panel featuring people with disabilities employed in competitive settings, job coaches, employers, family members, audience question and answer, and examples of effective programs and strategies. Attendees were eligible for continuing education certificates.

379 individuals participated in the trainings and 112 evaluation survey results (30% response rate) were received. The partnership also referred to as the Employment Training Steering Committee, meets on a regular basis and is planning a second system change training. The tentative date for the second system change training is March 7, 2019.

### ***Training for Yuma VR Counselors on Self-Employment***

The Council took the lead and facilitated a system change pilot project centered on developing a curriculum for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors based in Yuma, an underserved rural community with one of the nation's highest unemployment rates at 22%, to assist a consumer with a self-employment outcome. The goal of the pilot project was to develop and conduct a customized training and evaluate a VR self-employment process that can be vetted and replicated in other areas of Arizona, especially rural and tribal communities. Partners included Arizona Western College Small Business Development Center, Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Arizona Technology Access Program and the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

An evaluation of Self-Employment for People with Disabilities Workshop Pilot for VR Counselors was conducted September 26, 2018. The evaluation focused on 4 major areas: Beliefs on Issues Impacting Self-Employment for People with Disabilities; Qualitative Feedback; Workshop Content, Presentation, and Policy Change Practices; and Attitudes around Self-Employment for People with Disabilities. Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council staff will visit Yuma in April to attend a workshop centered on Self-Employment sponsored by the Small Business Development Center. In addition, follow-up with the Yuma VR office will continue to determine if an increase in Self-Employment has occurred and if so, how many self-employment outcomes have been reported.