

- 1. It is noted in the funding request the Encore project is providing Customized Employment (CE) services to Transition Aged Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (TAYIDD). Please describe how the model is being applied, the customization activities for current placements, and if the model is implementing all components of customized employment as presented by Griffin-Hammis consulting firm. Is your certification for customized employment, Cesp or both?**

Beacon Encore is providing Customized Employment services to TAYIDD in Pima County. Beacon Group applies the model in the following manner:

Each participant, and any team member that participant has chosen to be involved in the process (family member, teacher, clergy member, et. al.), has an initial pre-Discovery meeting with Encore staff to discuss what the Discovery process will look like, and to go over any questions or concerns that the involved parties may have. The Discovery process will generally start about a week following the pre-Discovery meeting. The Discovery process involves activities and conversations, at home and in the community, designed to allow the BES to get to know the job seeker as a person first. The BES places a heavy emphasis on what the participant can do and keeps the process moving in an optimistic and forward-looking manner. Beacon Encore's Discovery process seeks to identify a job seeker's skills, attributes, interests, support systems, and ideal environments. The idea is to find a fit with a local business leading to sustainable, long-term employment for the job seeker.

When the Discovery process is completed, the BES creates a list of 60 businesses, 20 each fitting three broad categories, relating to interests/skills/ideal environment discovered in the job seeker. The BES makes calls to businesses to set up Informational Interviews for job seeker. Successful calls lead to informational interviews attended by job seeker, the BES, and business owner/manager at place of business. An open ended, low-pressure conversation/interview occurs where business owner/manager has an opportunity to get to meet the job seeker as a person with skills, attributes, and personality. Usually a tour is included, further giving the job seeker and business owner a chance to get to know each other, and perhaps allowing the business owner to imagine the job seeker as a prospective employee. If appropriate, the BES suggests to business owner to consider offering a job to the job seeker. The BES plays the role of negotiation facilitator between job seeker and business owner hoping to find the right work environment, proper accommodations if necessary, and a quality long-term natural support system at the place of work. The BES is seeking a win-win scenario for participant and business owner/manager.

Upon gaining employment, the BES continues to support participant in role of liaison between participant and employer. BES works to help manager/owner/staff understand how best to support their new employee in being successful and an asset to their business. Accommodations are worked out when necessary, and any issues that any involved parties may have can be discussed with BES ensuring that communication lines are open between employee and employer, and that the employment match is given best chance possible for success.

We strive to adhere to the Griffin-Hammis model of Customized Employment as closely as possible, both philosophically and in actual practice. Our weekly Encore meetings have a common theme of making certain that we can answer the question "Is it customized?" with a resounding "Yes".

Our current placements have all benefitted from the CE process by completing full Discovery and Informational Interview processes. One of our five placements is capable of fulfilling her job duties with very little need of customizing those actual duties - the main benefit to this participant was through Discovery, and through the customization of the interview process which allowed her to gain employment which otherwise might not have been gained. Three of our other placements have benefitted from both customized jobs duties and a customized training regimen at their places of work. One placement has had a completely new customized position created for him by his place of employment.

Our BES is certified from Griffin-Hammis with a certificate in Community Employment Services with an emphasis in Customized Employment. The BES is scheduled to take the CESP exam on June 30<sup>th</sup> at 1pm.

**2. Please explain how the activities differ from supported employment practices of assessment/discovery and job carving/placement. Would a different name other than customized employment more accurately reflect the focus of the project?**

The Beacon Encore Project uses the trainings of Griffin-Hammis to create a Customized Employment program which differs from traditional supported employment models in fundamental ways. Our Discovery process does not involve testing nor traditional assessments to judge our participants. We strive to create a positive, optimistic process allowing us to know a participant as a person with skills and attributes who can become a successful employee and a strong asset to a local business.

Traditional supported employment provides supports to people with disabilities who have been identified as ready/capable of working typical/"as listed" job positions. Traditional supported employment services attempt to prepare a person to find employment among all job seekers, with or without disabilities. Whereas, Customized employment works with individuals to find "tailored" employment duties that match employee skills with employer need. Our Informational Interview process, based on the belief that all persons are ready to work now, removes barriers from our job-seekers which often times keep TAYIDD from even looking for employment – such as complicated applications and one on one interviews which often feel frightening/off-putting to TAYIDD. We allow the job seeker to capitalize on the social capital built by our BES and Beacon Group in general, while creating a more comfortable interview setting which allows the job seeker to become something more than a stereotype in the mind of a prospective employer – they become a person with skills and interests, who may be a good fit for any given business.

The Beacon Encore Project strongly believes it earns the right to be called "Customized", and we will continue to follow the personal genius of our job-seekers in striving to create long-term, sound ecological matches with local businesses, where the proper natural supports exist, instead of settling for market demand principles and reading the want ads as supported employment models have done over the years.

**3. Please confirm the Encore project is not an employment service funded by the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), or from another Arizona State Agency. Describe how this project is different from pre-Employment Transition Services funded**

**by vocational rehabilitation and how project activities are different than Transition School Work programs already in schools funded in collaboration with vocational rehabilitation. How do these services build on and extend what currently exists in these areas and how are they being coordinated with those efforts?**

The Beacon Encore Project is not funded by DDD, VR, nor any other Arizona State Agency. Encore customized employment service and pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) differ in their fundamental goals. Whereas Pre-ETS will offer 5 short, general workshops covering the educational aspects of pre-employment (job exploration, post-secondary education/training counseling, work readiness, work-based learning, and self-advocacy skills), aimed at helping a young person decide on a path; Encore offers a more in depth, personalized process of discovery and informational interviewing, which include work activities in the real world beyond the classroom. Finally, and most importantly, our customized program has only one successful outcome, that being competitive integrated employment and the maintenance of that employment, based on the ecological fit of the position and the fostering of natural supports.

Beacon Encore can, and has, served TAYIDD who have already been through the Pre-ETS process and have been identified as qualified participants for customized service. These TAYIDD are good candidates to work with as they have a more clearly identified desire to gain employment in the community, along with some classwork experience learning what Pre-ETS can teach them. Encore is able to work with these youths, building upon their classroom lessons learned, and helping them in applying these lessons to the real world tasks of job-seeking and maintaining employment once hired.

**4. If the Encore project did not receive funding from the ADDPC, would the project continue?**

If Beacon Encore Project is unable to receive funding from ADDPC, the project will be discontinued.