

White Paper – ADDPC Submission Non-Competitive Process for Applying for Funds (Section VII Unsolicited Proposals, Grants and Procurement Policies and Procedures, ADDPC)

Proposed Project: Employment First Arizona is a State-wide collaborative initiative with the goal of increasing competitive and integrated employment opportunities for youth and young adults with developmental disabilities (DD) through two main objectives: 1. Bringing together all stakeholders in the state to share resources, create partnerships, and engage in collaborative efforts to improve data collection, develop employment first practices and increase employment rates for youth and young adults; and 2. Engaging families statewide in information sharing and educational efforts to increase expectations for youth to engage in post-secondary training and competitive employment.

ADDPC State Plan Goals and Objectives: This project is consistent with furthering ADDPC State Plan Goal 2: *In partnership with individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, others who support them and employers, advocate and expand capacity for community integrated employment.* In particular, objective 1 of the current employment first proposal will expand capacity through consortium collaborative efforts and the second objective addresses Objective 1 of Goal 2 of the State Plan: *Educate persons with developmental disabilities, their families, and other who support them about employment options, benefits, and opportunities.*

Background: Beginning in the summer of 2011 stakeholders representing Arizona Department of Education; Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities; Arizona Rehabilitative Services Administration; Arizona DD Planning Council; Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS); AzUCD at NAU; and Sonoran UCEDD at UA met to develop a proposal for increasing competitive employment for youth and young adults with DD in Arizona. Of the 18%

of individuals served by AZ DDD that are currently employed, only 3% are working in individual competitive employment, 16% are working in other integrated supported employment settings and approximately 26% are seeking employment (Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, 2012). Approximately 4% of those working in either competitive or integrated employment are youth and young adults ages 18-21 (AZ DDD, 2012). Results of the most recent Post School Outcomes (PSO) Survey collected during summer 2011 on students who exited during the 2009—2010 school year indicate that for the 255 students (or family members) who responded to the survey and were identified with a category of eligibility for special education as mild intellectual disability (138), moderate intellectual disability (51), severe intellectual disability (7), and autism (59) or (12% of total respondents to the survey) showed the following outcomes¹:

- 29 individuals were enrolled in higher education: 12%
- 50 individuals were employed (including competitive and non-competitive categories): 20%
- 40 individuals were enrolled in other post- secondary education or training: 16%
- 136 individuals were not engaged in either education or employment: 54%

(Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, 2012)

In 2010, 28.9% or 68 out of 235 cases of persons with intellectual disabilities were successfully closed with an integrated employment outcome while the remaining was simply closed from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Butterworth, Hall, Smith, Migliore, & Winsor, 2011).

¹ 117 Arizona PEAs participated in the PSO; 3619 exiters were eligible to take the survey; 2194 exiters responded to the survey (60.6% response rate); Respondents to the survey were representative of exiters based on gender, ethnicity, and category of disability, but not of students who dropped out of school.

Barriers to employment for youth and young adults with DD include: lack of funding incentives in the system for competitive employment outcomes; lack of information, education, and training to raise families expectations of competitive employment as an outcome; and sporadic coordination and information around best practices in fostering employment outcomes for those youth receiving services.

In the summer 2012, the group entered a Memorandum of Understanding outlining roles and responsibilities in the consortium for carrying out a plan to increase employment. The group also engaged self-advocates (Youth Action Coalition AZ); providers (AAPDD) and families (Pilot Parents of Southern AZ and Raising Special Kids) in support of its plan and submitted a grant to the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities for funding to assist in coordinating and carrying out consortium activities. Unfortunately the Consortium was not successful in obtaining federal funding. After meeting in October, the consortium discussed scaling back its original plans to keep the most essential activities to promote employment first in Arizona. The group agreed to submit a scaled down request to the ADDPC for funding and to utilize the Sonoran UCEDD expertise and staffing as the applicant for this grant.

Project Activities/Timeline: This would be a three year project with the long-term outcome of creating a system where state stakeholders work together on an ongoing basis to improve employment opportunities for youth and where educational, peer support, and training opportunities abound on post-secondary training, education and employment. In year 1 of the project the main focus would be on: creation of a strong sustainable consortium which will share information, data and ideas for increasing employment in policy and practice; and holding an employment first conference for families; the development of employment first resources and

speakers for use at schools (concentration on middle school, early high school) and with the disability community groups; and development of an Employment First Arizona website. The following activities and outcomes are anticipated:

1st Quarter – consortium meets to look at state strengths, challenges and gaps and begin to share information and data. Planning begins for family conference on Employment First. Review of existing resources/curriculum for families on post-secondary expectations/opportunities.

2nd Quarter – consortium compiles all state information and develops a plan for addressing gaps. Date set for Conference, venue set and speakers contacted. Work begins on Web-site.

3rd Quarter – consortium works on infusing employment first practices into their agencies and looks to partnerships with other stakeholders. Registration for Conference and gathering of Employment First best practices, available speakers and materials. Web-site on Employment First Arizona goes live.

4th Quarter -- Family Conference on Employment First held, bringing together successful employment stories and speakers and strategies for increasing opportunities for youth. Consortium reviews family input and finalizes resources and messaging products for families. Training/information session on Employment First piloted by one school and one disability group.

Project Oversight: Leslie Cohen, Director of the Sonoran UCEDD would provide project oversight. Ms. Cohen has extensive experience in project development, implementation and evaluation. The project would hire a program coordinator to carry out the day to day activities of the project including: organizing and coordinating consortium activities; conference activities; and developing Employment First Curriculum. We have identified a qualified individual if the project is funded.

Evaluation/Documentation of Outcomes: the Consortium will work to increase the % of youth and young adults competitively employed utilizing the data we currently have on employment rates and aiming for at least a 5-10% increase achievable by the end of three years. Other outcomes including process outcomes on consortium members working together on employment (surveys, minutes of meetings); families having the information they need to choose employment (surveys); and the Employment First Curriculum and Website (survey of website and products themselves.)

Budget/Budget Narrative (Year 1) – approximate amounts subject to review

Category	Amount Requested	Match
Personnel (program coordination, facilitation of consortium, gathering existing information, training)	\$50,000	
Employee Related Expenses – based on UA benefit rates	\$22,000	
Supplies, mailing printing for meetings and conference	\$800	
In state travel – mileage to meetings, parking (approx. 1100 miles in yr)	\$500	
Other – web site development, conference related expenses for venue, video taping of conference	\$10,000	
Indirect costs	\$9801	
Total	\$98,101	\$25,000 (foregone indirects)

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION ONLY