

Supporting Employment First Ad Hoc Committee Report

Friday, March 29, 2019

The employment committee met February 1st and approved 5 new projects for Federal Fiscal Year 2019, staff will be releasing them in the next few months.

1. **Research on Best Practices for Transition-Aged Youth** – will conduct a systematic evaluation of the transition services currently provided across the state and identify areas of strength to build upon, as well as areas of potential improvement.
2. **Creating a Diverse Workforce** – the purpose of this new solicitation is to assist businesses/organizations in developing or expanding and executing a disability diversity initiative in their place of employment. Will focus on recruitment, retention, and advancement and lead to increased employment outcomes of workers with disabilities
3. **Demonstration Project with Community Colleges & Universities** – will sponsor activities to expand access and support services for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities at AZ community colleges and four-year colleges to have the capacity for educating all students. The demonstration project calls for postsecondary institutions to provide students with disabilities access to the full range of courses offered and to have the opportunity to attend, learn and grow from their participation.
4. **Customized Employment and Credentialing Program** – Customized employment is a flexible process designed to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate or employee and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both. It is based on identifying the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job candidate or employee through a process of discovery. Customized employment also identifies the business needs of an employer. Together, these create a match resulting in a customized position. Council will partner with Vocational Rehabilitation on expanding delivery of training on customized employment.
5. **Training for Job Coaches and Job Developers** – The Council is planning to sponsor a project to create and administer a model job coach and job developer training program. The Council will partner with Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Developmental Disabilities, and the Arizona Association of Providers for People with Disabilities (AAPPD) on expanding delivery of a unified and cohesive training to employment service providers.

I had the privilege to attend a meeting on Friday, March 22nd, with the City of Tempe's *Building Employment Supports & Training* (BEST) project coordinator and the Vocational Rehabilitation team led by Janice Bradford. The BEST program is a new and innovative project funded by the Council to increase disability diversity and create opportunities for employment. Council staff set-up the meeting to bring the two organizations together and to start building a working relationship to help facilitate referrals to the BEST program. Previously, the BEST team met with the Division of Developmental Disabilities and employment service providers to share information on the program and establish a pathway for referrals. I'm glad to see agencies talking and working together and I'm excited about this new employment project and I'm confident it will lead to good employment outcomes.