

## ***Lessons Learned***

### ***from the implementation of the 2015-2019 initiatives in Michigan***

#### ***Provider Transformation***

- 1. Providers prefer receiving TA from peers who have experienced transformation themselves. They tend to trust others who have the same or similar experiences to their own and who they feel will be forthright about the benefits and challenges inherent in transformation.*
- 2. Data must be collected. Must be clarified who is responsible. SME doesn't have access to system. Folks need to be trained, including SME.*
- 3. The mentoring program requires resources to be successful. Mentors need reasonable compensation for effort (a milestone payment strategy should be considered), and a resource library should be developed.*
- 4. Train the Trainer Capacity Building training should reinforce the provider transformation planning and implementation. By having the managers trained on the ACRE competencies, the transformation plan can ensure that ALL staff can be offered training and play a role in transforming services from segregated services to community integration and employment services.*

#### ***Capacity Building***

- 1. Train the Trainer Capacity Building training should reinforce the provider transformation planning and implementation. By having the managers trained on the ACRE competencies, the transformation plan can ensure that ALL staff can be offered training and play a role in transforming services from segregated services to community integration and employment services. Staff and managers trained on the ACRE competencies can reinforce the principles of Employment First and provider transformation when training staff currently providing segregated services and orienting new staff.*
- 2. The ACRE competencies and curriculum that providers, who are going through a provider transformation process, have obtained can be used to restructure job descriptions and performance evaluations. By restructuring job descriptions and performance evaluations, provider agencies can better ensure staff's capability to implement community integration and employment services and outcomes.*
- 3. Expanding the pool of instructors and trainers who can offer face to face training and on-line instruction throughout the state through a single entity ensures consistent methodology and the potential for innovation over time. By having trainers and*

instructors located throughout the state, consistent training and Employment First messaging is accessible for new employment specialists on an on-going basis.

### ***Rate Restructuring***

1. *The outcomes for employment will match where you put your money.* Outcome based payment models that support hours the participant works versus job coaching hours and based on acuity (level of care need) and fade over time to support best practice of maximum independence have national data that shows cost effective payment structures matched with increase in CIE and decrease in facility based or group enclave employment.
2. *Rate restructuring is a process and needs to be tailored to match the CIE initiative locally with collaboration between the public agencies and providers. It is critical that a transition occurs with rate restructuring that assures both the agencies and the providers are prepared for the new payment structure* It can take more than one year to thoughtfully transition funding models.
3. *Transportation as a stand alone waiver service is important.* Only having transportation available as a part of job coaching creates a dependency on job coaches and minimizes the ability to fade support and increase independence.
4. *Consistent language and codes must be implemented in waiver(s) to match the payment and best practice language.* It is critical that individual and group employment are separated in the definition and that the definition supports everyone can work in competitive integrated employment.

### ***School to Work***

1. *Clarification of roles and responsibilities is essential to building systems and trust.* Defining and clarifying roles and responsibilities is essential for building trust, awareness and understanding of the services and supports that each partner brings to the table to support students. This helps to eliminate “students falling through the cracks” or duplication of services. Shared decision-making by the transition team members help to build ownership by all, thus, ensuring the likelihood that services will be implemented as identified.
2. *Face-to-face coaching must be part of the continuum of support for local transition teams.* The Seamless Transition teams were clear the face-to-face and onsite technical assistance was extremely valuable in developing their understanding of the process because its “coaching” nature versus a traditional training. The onsite visits helped to develop strategies that reflected the local community vs. “one size fits all”. The Zoom meetings were helpful for maintain communication between the face-to-face TA events but on their own would not have been enough support.

3. *Consistency with transition practices between schools and partner agencies across the State is critical to the seamless transition process.* Consistency with transition practices across the State helps to eliminate discrepancies in services based on regions or locations in the State. It also provides a systemic approach to transition planning that all partners understand. Although Statewide consistency is critical, there must also be consideration of the local community context so there is local buy-in and support for the process.
4. *The State and local teams must develop options for sustainability.* The Seamless Transition Project was never intended to be a “one and done” project. The purpose is to create system level changes of how local teams can partner and build integrated systems of support. Once the national support is no longer available, State partners and local partners need to explore options for sustaining training and technical assistance to maintain/improve processes that have been put in place.
5. *Seamless Transition needs to align practices with current Michigan Initiatives, state plans, and interagency agreements.* Currently, Michigan has multiple initiatives focused on secondary transition moving students toward employment and adult life. By aligning these initiatives, the State can avoid duplication of services and leverage resources to support and sustain transition services/practices.

### ***Outreach***

*Family engagement is critical.* Families are important stakeholders in the process of increasing competitive, integrated employment. Creation and dissemination of parent and professional trainings resources was a good first step, but these materials must be used consistently statewide, with additional resource support, by public and private leaders and change agents.

### ***Benefits Planning and Coordination***

*Benefits planners should receive on-going training on both federal and state benefits policies in order to provide accurate assistance to individuals seeking to enter employment.* There is no formalized training in Michigan available to trained benefits counselors which covers the state specific policies which will affect an individual’s benefits when they are employed. A community of practice and support is necessary to ensure that benefits planning practitioners are getting accurate and comprehensive guidance throughout their employment journey.

## ***State Policy Transformation and Interagency Agreements***

1. *State-level leadership must embrace the vision of competitive, integrated employment.* WIOA and changes in Medicaid law create significant new mandates for increasing individual competitive integrated employment among people with disabilities. Federal law establishes new expectations of state agencies for investment in supported employment, serving people with disabilities, actively engaging people otherwise placed in subminimum wage employment and otherwise working to end use of the subminimum wage, and ensuring youth with disabilities are provided a pathway to competitive integrated employment. State agencies have now professed a clear commitment to collaboration around the provision of supported employment to people with disabilities. There is a real opportunity now for state agencies and the provider community to establish a genuine partnership approach, with equitable cost-sharing for individualized supported employment services.
2. *Michigan's ability to capitalize on WIOA is dependent on BHDDA and VR adopting the most open and flexible approach to defining their partnership,* and the partnership with the service community, as possible.
3. *Starting with a focus on people with IDD may help smooth the way to defining the mutual commitments of various state agencies,* rather than starting with a focus on people with SMI, given VR's lack of historical involvement in the development of IPS supported employment in Michigan.
4. *Nationally, many VR agencies have separate Supported Employment milestones and fee structure, funding Supported Employment cases at a higher level* to reflect the fact that Supported Employment is for people for who competitive integrated employment has not occurred or been intermittent and who have an on-going intensive need to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment.