

Employment First Task Force: Aug 27, 2014

1. Welcome and introductions

2. A meeting has been set with the Governor on Sept. 15 to present the task force report. Commissioner Payne will handle arrangements concerning attendees. Task Force members will receive an electronic copy as soon as it is available.

3. Grant updates

- Conference on Oct 15 to wrap up activities for the ODEP grant to DIDD. There is an opportunity to apply for additional tech asst hours. (1-200 hrs with 1-2 experts). The event will be held at the Maxwell House hotel from 9am-4pm. We are targeting policy staff.
- The TNWorks grant from AIDD is making videos available on line, creating webinars and other materials. Task Force members should make use of these resources. VKC is working with DOE to develop more materials for school personnel. This grant is a 5 year grant, with 3 years remaining.
- The DEI grant that DOL has is ending Sept 30 but will operate through March 31. An application is being put together for the next round. If awarded it will begin Oct 1 and last for 3 yrs. The focus will be on youth age 14 - 24 years. A copy of the grant application will be shared with everyone on the task force. Same 5 areas will be participating in new grant: areas 1, 3, 8, 10 & 13.

4. Workgroup Updates

- **Individuals & Families.** Nashville and Memphis groups meet monthly. One activity is parents mentoring parents. Conference calls are scheduled to compile responses to the new Waiver concept paper. Margaret Lee Thompson will meet with the parent coalition at the Think Employment Summit. A Chattanooga chapter began in August. It was a small but diverse group of parents. Considering renaming the parent coalition. To family member coalition to include other family members such as siblings.
- **Data.** Almost 1700 families have completed the family survey. Have heard from all counties except seven counties. High importance is placed on jobs in the community vs sheltered workshops. Few parents feel that this is really going to happen. The important criteria to families is job satisfaction rather than wages. Parents believe barriers to be around willingness of employers, support for agencies and transportation. The Longitudinal Data System is moving forward. Currently there is data on a

million students. A dashboard will be up by the end of the month- we will be able to look at all students with and without disabilities in regard to postsecondary destination, jobs, etc.

- **Policy.** The MOU draft is complete. The ambitious timeline is to have the MOU signed by all Commissioners by the Oct. 15 event. There is a second companion piece planned after the MOU to assist in implementation. Also, we plan to follow with an MOU focused on adults. Elise recognized TN Voc Rehab for facilitating VR eligibility for students with intellectual disabilities in postsecondary programs on college campuses. These programs in Tn have a strong focus on career development and employment.
- **Employers/Providers.** There is an outreach effort to employers. Materials and a plan for outreach is complete. Trainers are being trained to present the info to employers. There are 30 trainers being trained. This group also submitted comments on the Waiver concept paper. The workgroup has developed several products: information flyers on making the business case for employment of people with disabilities, quality employment providers and Section 503. Bob Nicholas commented on the Randy Lewis presentation sponsored by DLAC. Bob is working with others on a video with Randy Lewis that will be used with employers. We need to think about what we do when employers are ready to hire and need to be referred to a community provider that provides employment services. A workshop is being planned for providers on responding to interested employers.

5. Planning for Year 2

- Meeting frequency will be determined after we decide on activities for Year 2; also Task Force/TNWorks subcommittees will be meeting. Amy will send a doodle poll. Sarah will share dates for TNWorks so we can work around these. Susie suggested that DOL and DRS use one of the meetings to provide an overview on the new WIOA.
- Strategic planning will occur at one of the quarterly meetings. There is concern about spending time in a lengthy planning meeting. It was suggested that the plan be put together incrementally throughout the year. Wanda will schedule a meeting with Cissy Mynatt to discuss how we can develop a strategic plan for the year most efficiently. Several task force members supported having a strategic plan and reporting on progress to the community at large. Attending the planning meeting with Cissy will be representatives from the 4 work groups and anyone else from the task force who is interested.

6. **Think Employment Summit.** 240 registered so far. 100 youth are registered. Registration. Is closed but all task force members are encouraged to attend. Contact Jenn Rowan (Jennifer.L.Rowan@vanderbilt.edu). The Summit is on Sept 17. Participants from across the state will be presenting and attending.
7. **Occupational Diploma.** Alison Gauld distributed a document that will be used to assess students who are seeking the Occupational Diploma. She reviewed how the tool will be used. Included is an option for a 2 year paid or unpaid work experience to count toward the Occupational Diploma. The tool can also be used to share with an employer so that they get a profile of the student's skills. Alison mentioned Cleveland and Bartlett schools are moving ahead quickly. The Arc TN assisted DOE by taking the assessment to communities across the state to get feedback from employers about the usefulness of the Occupational Diploma. Sarah Harvey attended these meetings as well and said that the information gathered will be useful to task force members. There was great employer turnout in Lawrenceburg. There is no limit of how many students can apply for and receive the Occupational Diploma. Cherrell Campbell - Street said that she brought up the inclusion of students with disabilities in the Drive 55 initiative. Mark Cate from the Governor's office asked Commissioner Hatter to come up with a suggestion to accomplish this. Alison will send Cherrell a presentation about the Occupational Diploma for DHS to use in preparing their proposal for the Governor.
8. **Conversations that Matter.** Carrie said that 9 meetings will be held for families who have services to give them an overview of what is happening in the area of employment services. Families will be asked a series of 4 questions- e.g., what do you like about the current services, what would it take for you to feel better about the future plans.
 - **Other items.** Will McMillan mentioned an event at War Memorial - swearing in of Glenn Funk, who has a child with a disability.