

Kansas: A Successful Employment First State



Virginia Employment First Summit
Virginia Beach, VA
October 5, 2011

HISTORIC CHALLENGE

- Many people want to work
- Advocacy has proved the importance of HCBS but has not made the case for employment
- Too little investment in collaborative systems change
- Start with defining the basics upon which all parties agree
- Critical to recognize employment focus as our most political viable commodity



EMPLOYMENT



- Where do we begin?
 - Introduce the concept & set the stage
 - CDDO contract negotiations
 - State appointed task force
 - Initial report and recommendations
 - Marketing materials
 - Clear and consistent message
 - Frame the argument
 - Include all disability groups

EMPLOYMENT



- How do we create an agenda?
 - Get the word out & expand stakeholder support
 - Leadership
 - Buddy group/Big tent
 - Presentations/meetings
 - Family Employment Awareness Training
 - Legislative reception
 - Employment First Summit (Conversation with the Governor's Cabinet Secretaries and Directors)

From Planning to Policy – Get to Yes Before You Draft Bill

- Groundwork is key
- Build a consensus position with which no one disagrees
 - “The State of Kansas will establish integrated, competitive employment at a commensurate wage as the first priority for working age people with developmental disabilities. This initiative will be called Employment First.”
 - Everyone was at the table – broad consensus
 - “Big Tent” position did not focus on limiting employment options; we focused on prioritizing competitive and integrated options



Quick Tips – Summary of Our Policy Advocacy Activities



- Small group wrote a bill focused on the consensus position statement
- No language established mandates on public or private employee practices
- Defined a goal to direct how government sponsored programs shall be prioritized
- Accepted all ideas that do not violate the core of the bill
- Utilized multiple legislator/shepherds in both houses, not the “usual suspects”
- Relied on select experienced statehouse operatives to plot day to day strategies

What HB 2336 says-

Establishes that competitive integrated employment is the first option

Sect. 1 (b) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state of Kansas that competitive and integrated employment shall be considered its first option when serving persons with disabilities who are of working age to obtain employment. This policy applies to programs and services that provide services and support to help obtain employment for persons with disabilities. All state agencies shall follow this policy and ensure that it is effectively implemented in their programs and services. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require any employer to give preference to hiring people with a disability.



What HB 2336 says-

All state agencies have to follow...make changes to implement (cont.)

Sec. 2. (a) All state agencies shall coordinate efforts and shall collaborate within and among such agencies to ensure that state programs, policies, procedures and funding support competitive and integrated employment of individuals with disabilities. All state agencies shall, whenever feasible, share data and information across systems in order to track progress toward full implementation of the act.

(b) State agencies are authorized to adopt rules and regulations to implement this act.



What HB 2336 says-

Oversight Commission to ensure Accountability, Measureable Goals, & Objectives (cont.)

- . *5 member Employment First Oversight Commission.*
 - *Cannot be state employees (no Legislators, no bureaucrats).*
 - *5 members must be persons with disabilities or others knowledgeable of disability issues.*
 - *4 Legislative appointments, 1 Governor*

Sect. 3 (2-d) The commission shall establish measurable goals and objectives for the state of Kansas to ensure implementation of this act. The commission shall track the measurable progress of public agencies in implementing this act. All state agencies shall fully cooperate with and provide data and information to assist the commission in carrying out its duties.



What HB 2336 says-

Oversight Commission to ensure Accountability, Measureable Goals, & Objectives (cont.)

(e) The commission shall issue an annual report on or before January 1 each year which shall be presented to the governor and members of the state legislature. The report shall detail progress toward the goals and objectives and full implementation of this act. All state agencies shall cooperate with the commission on the creation and dissemination of the annual report. The report also shall identify barriers to achieving the outcomes along with the effective strategies and policies that can help realize the employment first initiative.

(f) The governor shall select from the cabinet agencies the lead agency responsible for compiling data and coordinating the preparation of the annual report at the direction of the commission. The activities of the commission and lead agency pursuant to this section shall be done within existing grants and resources.



EMPLOYMENT



- How do we move beyond policy?
 - On-going work group
 - Address issues
 - Oversight commission
 - Self Advocates Coalition of Kansas
 - Families Together
 - Let others know – get the message out
 - Acknowledge and respond
 - Employment First website
 - Second Employment Summit
 - Build on energy & excitement

EMPLOYMENT



- To implementation...
 - Great Expectations Employment Initiative
 - VR funded
 - Training, technical assistance, & evaluation
 - What does it take?
 - What are the issues?
 - What are the solutions?
 - How much does it cost?
 - Data-based decision-making
 - Changes: Person centered planning
 - Expedited referral
 - Different set of questions

EMPLOYMENT



- To implementation...(cont.)
 - Others are initiating on their own
 - Talking to each other
 - Asking for help
 - Requesting employment
 - Including on agendas
 - Telling others

FINAL THOUGHTS AND CHALLENGES

- Reach beyond the usual human service departments of government to touch state programs relating to jobs and commerce
- Advocate for inclusionary employment practices and speak out against discriminatory practices
- Protect the federal and state investments in Medicaid
- Our policy differences are less important than the needs of our clients



- For more information, contact:

Wendy Parent-Johnson

Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities

wparent@ku.edu

(785) 864-1062

Tom Laing

InterHab

tlaing@interhab.org

(785)235-5103