

RTAC Expert Summit

Session 2:

Employer Engagement

Hugh Bradshaw, Vermont

Amy Porter, Connecticut

Brenda Moore, ICI

Purpose of WIOA

- Increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services
- Support the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems
- Improve the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development
- Promote improvement in the structure and delivery of services through the workforce development system
- Increase the prosperity of workers and employers
- Increase employment, retention and earnings, skill, and credential attainment, improving the quality of the workforce

New Services Under WIOA

- Providing training and Technical Assistance (TA) to employers regarding the employment of people with disabilities, including disability awareness and the requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Providing consultation, TA, and support to employers on workplace accommodations, Assistive Technology, and facilities and workplace access
- Assisting employers with utilizing available financial support for hiring or accommodating individuals with disabilities

New Services (cont'd)

- Working with employers to:
 - Provide opportunities for work-based learning experiences including internships, short-term employment, apprenticeships, and fellowships
 - Provide opportunities for pre-employment transition services
 - Recruit qualified applicants with disabilities
 - Train employees who are individuals with disabilities
 - Promote awareness of disability-related obstacles to continued employment

The Challenge of Implementation

- Need to define and communicate the change in philosophy to a dual customer approach
- Need to create new employer-specific services
- Need to partner with other components of the workforce system
- How?

Using the VR Program Management Framework

- One approach is to use the Management Framework, which supports an integrated perspective for managing change
- All VR programs operate in a unique context, and this framework promotes adaptability and flexibility, recognizing these differences

The VR Program Management Framework

- Leadership
- Mission & Strategic Planning
- Customers
- Communication
- Workforce & Human Resources
- Services & Processes
- Partnerships
- Data, Quality Assurance, & Metrics
- Outcomes

Leadership, Mission, Strategic Plan

- Top level commitment to defined goals and values in relation to the role of employers and labor market information in the new world of WIOA
- Mission needs to address the needs of both individuals with disabilities and employers
- Strategic Plan should include the new dual customer approach and the short-term and long-term objectives by which the change will be measured

Customers

- Responsive to the needs of multiple customers within the framework of the agency goals and values
- Change in philosophy for some agencies to recognize the employer as an equal customer, which is where the agency values become increasingly important

Communication

- Multiple lines of communication – who needs to know what? And when?
 - Internal: Importance of communication between counselors and employment staff
 - External: Communication with customers, partner agencies, workforce system, employers
- Clear expectations around the services to be delivered to employers, and both the quantitative and qualitative outcomes that will be achieved

Services and Processes

- Models vary between states. Considerations:
 - Alignment with core values
 - Performance improvement approaches
 - Quality measures
 - Customer service
 - Statewide consistency

Services/Processes (cont'd)

- Resource: Checklist*
 - Recognize employers as end-customers
 - Manage your employer partnerships
 - Develop talent solutions for employer partners
 - Align performance and incentives to employer measures
 - Share performance data across network partners
 - Develop recruitment strategies based on employer partnerships

**Source: US Chamber of Commerce Foundations (2014). Managing the Talent Pipeline: A New Approach to Closing the Skills Gap.*

Partnerships

- Mutual cooperation and responsibility
 - Alignment with mission
 - Mutual benefit
 - Active engagement in decision making
- Workforce partners are also working closely with employers, and the work needs to be coordinated and aligned in a way that benefits employers, job seekers, and the overall workforce system

Outcomes

- WIOA presents new performance accountability measures, and the system as a whole needs to be designed to meet these new targets
- New outcome goals need to be developed within the system and then clearly communicated to all staff
- Data needs to be relevant and inform decision making

Wrap Up

- Summary
- Questions?????

Contact Information

Hugh Bradshaw

Hugh.bradshaw@vermont.gov

(802) 871-3054

Amy Porter

Amy.porter@ct.gov

(860) 424-4864