



Oregon Competitive Employment Project

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The mission of the Oregon Competitive Employment Project (Project) is to enhance the quality of life in Oregon by achieving, maintaining and advancing the competitive and inclusive employment of persons with disabilities. The project is funded by a four-year Medicaid Infrastructure Grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and is part of the Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Upcoming Oregon conferences

The Competitive Employment Project will be participating in two conferences in the coming quarter. Members of the team will participate in both conferences and staff a display table highlighting some of the Project's activities and partners. The conferences are:

- **Options for Success!** A two-day conference for people with disabilities and their families on obtaining tools for successful employment outcomes April 12-13 at Southern Oregon University, Stevenson Union, Ashland. Project staff will participate on the panel for the "**Benefits Planning Resources: Where Can I Get Help?**" session on April 13. The Project also will have an information table showcasing a few of the grant's various projects as well as information about some of our partners.

This conference was rescheduled after it was cancelled due to a snowstorm in February.

For more information: janet@workablesolutions.org

- **"Building Futures" Transition to Education and Employment Conference 2007.** A two-day conference for students and young adults with disabilities, parents and professionals May 15-16 at Embassy Suites Hotel, Tigard. A Pre-Service Day on **Building Futures with Benefit Planning and Work Incentives** targeted for professionals

Continued on page 2

will be May 14, but all are welcome. The project will have an informational table at this conference and will be participating in the Pre-Service Day events.

For more information:

www.orpti.org/buildingfutures.htm

New Freedom Initiative Conference

The Competitive Employment Project staff attended the 2007 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) 7th annual New Freedom Initiative (NFI) Conference in Baltimore, Maryland from March 5-8 titled "Access to Community Living: Promoting Independence and Choice." Hundreds of CMS grantees from all 50 states were in attendance for this conference that focused on policies, programs and tools to make independence and choice a reality for the people we support. Sessions covered a wide array of topics from balancing long term care systems to promoting choice and independence through employment. Thomas Nerny, of the Center for Self-Determination, gave a moving and inspirational speech titled "The Challenge to Change —From Better to Great." NFI conference materials can be found at:

www.nashp.org/cmsconference2007.

NCHSD Technical Assistance Partner News

Many of you have had the good fortune to work with, or hear one of Peter Baird's presentations. Peter was one of our technical assistance consultants through the National Consortium for Health Systems Development (NCHSD). He recently accepted a position with MDRC, a social policy research group

in New York City. Peter will be working with MDRC on two Social Security grants that deal with youth transition services and benefits, as well as doing other activities dealing with disability, employment and health care. We will miss his expertise and guidance, but we truly wish him all the best in his new venture.

Joe Entwisle, Barbara Otto, Sara Salley and Melissa Turner from NCHSD will continue to provide the Project with expert technical assistance. As a matter of fact, Joe will be in Oregon for the June 14, 2007 Competitive Employment Project Leadership Council meeting!

For more information:

www.nchsd.org

Project staff travel to Vermont for benefits planning

In January 2007, the Competitive Employment Project staff members traveled to Vermont to receive training and technical assistance on that state's benefits planning and outcomes analysis systems.

Studies of Vermont's benefits planning system demonstrated that individuals who received these services were more likely to significantly increase their earnings and to decrease Medicaid costs. The project received training and materials from Vermont that will help Oregon develop a system of benefits planners and accurately track outcomes. Project staff also met with partners from Vermont to discuss topics including TANF/Vocational Rehabilitation collaboration,

Continued on next page

employment issues for persons with brain injuries, and outcomes evaluation for Medicaid buy-in programs.

For more information email:
damon.terzaghi@state.or.us

Region 10 Employment and Disability Conference

On January 30-31, 2007, project staff attended the Rehabilitation Services Administration Region 10 Conference in Portland. The focus of the conference was approaching employer relations in new ways. The need from employers for a single point of contact approach was emphasized throughout the conference. Oregon's initiative is on formal training for vocational rehabilitation counselors on job development techniques. Other Region 10 state initiatives include Washington's new approaches for assessing career choices for consumers and Alaska's new "Job X" collaboration between employers and community rehabilitation providers to use job leads more effectively. Speakers and panel members representing various businesses discussed developing good employer relations, issues for marketing people with disabilities, which industries and occupations looked promising and how to develop a career from an entry level position. Some of the employers included: Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Oregon Health & Science University, Nordstrom, Doubletree Inns, Southwest Washington Medical Center, and O'Neill and Associates.

For more information email:
karen.c.bigler@state.or.us.

'Leading for Authentic Cultural Competency: Recognizing Pseudo-Attempts'

Project staff attended cultural competency training on February 21, 2007 led by facilitator, Guadalupe Guajardo, a Technical Assistance for Community Services (TACS) lead consultant. Guadalupe addressed the specific obstacles facing diversity leaders today, and shared practical advice for creating successful organizational outcomes. The training included information designed to increase acceptance and normalize the stages required to create true cultural competency, identify predictable obstacles and barriers, create clear communication practices and policies, and recognize and establish the criteria that spells success.

For more information email:
karen.c.bigler@state.or.us

Transition to College and Career Day

Project staff attended the March 14, 2007 College and Career Day in Portland sponsored by Incight and Do-It. College and Career Day engages high school transition students on topics ranging from employment, college enrollment, self advocacy and work-based learning options. This year's agenda included panels of employers and transition students currently enrolled in college or already fully employed. The employer panel had representatives from Fred Meyer, Nike, PGE, Lewis & Clark College, NW Natural Gas and Kaiser Permanente. Discussion on the student panel centered on how first year

college students with disabilities handled their successes and challenges in a new environment.

For more information email:

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Project grant to the Community Transition Center Campus (CTCC)

The Community Transition Center Campus located in Southeast Portland is a program that provides students with vocational opportunities and meaningful work experiences that can be utilized in the community. CTCC students develop practical life, social and work skills in a supportive environment that emphasizes independence and self-sufficiency. The CTCC staff recently applied for and received a small grant from the project to purchase equipment for woodworking and landscaping projects that will enhance students' skill base, find encouragement in their pursuit of new endeavors and better prepare them for competitive work in the community after graduation.

For more information email:

karen.c.bigler@state.or.us

Good information!

Access Technologies, Inc.

Access Technologies, Inc. (ATI), established in 1990, is Oregon's statewide assistive technology program. ATI is part of a national network of technology-related assistance programs designed to increase access to assistive technology (AT) devices and services for individuals with disabilities and their families, and to facilitate the development of a consumer-responsive AT service delivery system. ATI staff work with consumers, service providers, state agencies, private industry, legislators, and other interested individuals to facilitate the development of a statewide system to provide AT services.

ATI offers a wide range of services from training and technical assistance, ergonomic assessments in the workplace, a device loan library, a used equipment marketplace, donation center, sales and rentals, online resources and publications.

For more information:

accesstechnologiesinc.org,

1-800-677-7512

or email: *info@accesstechnologiesinc.org*



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