

**DISABILITY PROGRAM NAVIGATOR GRANTEES
FORMAT FOR QUARTERLY NARRATIVE REPORTING**

June 30, 2007

Grantee Name: Iowa Workforce Development
Grant #: WI-13381-03-60
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Status of Grant Implementation and Progress To-Date:

Brief history summary: Since Alex Kielty's 10/28/02 memo describing the program, staff from state partner agencies have provided information about this opportunity to local partner staff, Regional Workforce Investment Boards and State working groups. The State Partner work group under the work incentive grant developed the plan for implementation in Iowa. Throughout the disability program navigator initiative Iowa's 16 Regions have had a navigator operating in their One-Stop Workforce Centers. During the third year of this implementation, an additional navigator was hired to focus on outreach and business development for job seekers who are deaf. At the onset of the fourth year the number of Navigators had reduced to nine, resulting in some regions opting to "share" navigators. The Project Coordinator met with regional partner groups to begin the process of evaluating the perception of value that has been added to the local service systems. Also discussions have been held with the Iowa MIG representatives to talk more about common purposes in the immediate future, as a potential funding source.

During the 4th quarter of the fourth year, focus has been given to the following activities:

- a) An agreement between DPN Initiative and Deaf Services Commission of Iowa to provide training throughout the One-Stop centers in the state began during this quarter. The commission services has three components: 1. training for one stop staff and other community agencies, providing information to enhance the capacity of the service system to address the needs of job seekers who are deaf, 2. consultation is available for individualized cases, and 3. information and training to the deaf community in the same communities as the One-Stop centers to inform them of services and resources. The DPN works with commission staff to arrange and promote these training sessions. At some one stop locations, the DPN has arranged for a "Deaf Services Day" and invited Relay Iowa personnel to provide a presentation about their services following the commission training to one stop staff and the DPN has provided training to one stop center staff on Section 188 of WIA to assure compliance to the standards related to equitable services and refresher course on assistive technology available at one stop center and how to access interpreters. One outcome of this training has resulted in these presentations being included in an upcoming community diversity conference.
- b) Through the extensive partnership among the three Iowa programs: DPN, WIPA and MIG, information is pouring into the hands of people with disabilities empowering

them with current, accurate information to make informed decisions about their livelihoods, in particular employment. Again throughout the state numerous training sessions have been conducted and continue to be scheduled for individuals with disabilities, as well as those who provide support, to learn about SSA work incentives, self employment, consumer choice options, development of "benefits liaison network", and One Stop services. The navigator has been instrumental in arranging these informational workshops. Self Employment Seminars were also conducted at locations throughout the state, sponsored by MIG, facilitated by DPN and participation by WIPA. The DPN was successful in bringing to this training local small business development centers, Small Business Administration, state vocational rehabilitation, and SCORE.

- c) Work Incentive information utilizing the WIPA services allows for individualized referral and consultation through various means: the Benefit Liaison network, and the availability of new technology through video conferencing. These two resources create mediums to bring information throughout the state to individuals considering or desiring employment who are SSA beneficiaries. During this quarter, additional DPN's became trained Benefit Liaisons and the number of referrals to WIPA program continues to climb at a rapid pace.
- d) Implementation of the Ticket to Work program through workforce regions becoming Employment Networks (ENs) is proving value to the workforce system and more importantly increasing the knowledge of SSI/SSDI beneficiaries. Two workforce regions are Employment Networks. Ticket holders are attending informational sessions to learn more about the ticket program, and One Stop services. Four additional workforce region partners are reviewing the program and are considering an application to become an EN or establish a relationship with the proposed state EN. With the support of the state partners, direction was given to submit an RFP for a state workforce Employment Network application to Social Security Administration. In conjunction with this action, service coordination among workforce partners who are other EN's (state vocational rehabilitation, state department for the blind) developed a working agreement to establish practices in providing the most effective customer service.
- e) Developing a stronger collaborative business development approach. The 7 state agency collaboration is putting the final touches on the "Employer Disability Resource Network" that will be vehicle through which they will support businesses in employing people with disabilities.
- f) Articulating our collaborative enthusiasm and support to local offices across agencies in sharing customers, resources and information through a Memorandum of Agreement, and evaluating impact through two regional workforce site visits each year. Workforce regions were surveyed about their shared efforts in achieving collaboration and were invited to host on-site visits during the remainder of 2007.
- g) Identifying the navigator function and sustaining the navigator initiative remains a high priority at local and state levels. The importance of the function is recognized and continues to receive support at all levels. Options and ideas continue to be welcomed and explored as quarterly meetings are held with local and state partners. The governance group also included this topic in their quarterly agenda.

- h) Persons with disabilities feeding the future pipeline of Iowa's workforce have caught some attention at the state and federal level, in the following two examples: 1. The Iowa TANF program, Promise Jobs (PJ), spearheaded by the state partners, rolled out the Promise Job Disability Specialist positions in early 2007. Since that time these newly created positions has heightened the awareness of disabilities among PJ case managers and has caught attention at the federal level TANF technical assistance contractor. Discussion is being held for Iowa to be showcased at a national audio training conference. 2. Invitation for a DPN presentation about employment of persons with disabilities to a standing legislative economic development / workforce committee is being finalized with anticipated date in late 2007.

Activities in the area of Navigator Training and Promotion

DPN State Training Schedule

Quarter April – June 2007

- April, 2007: Presentation: State Library and Data Center, ISED, DPN Function & Value Added, MIG update, DPN Roundtable
- May, 2007: Presentation: Iowa & Wisconsin DPN Exchange, "Lessons Learned from DPN Initiative (Dr. Robert Stensrud), Brag & Steal exchange, "Managing Change", "Mental Wellness in the Workplace"
- June, 2007: Presentation: Iowa Department of Economic Development, State of Iowa DPN Initiative and Priorities for 5th year Implementation, Disability Mentoring Day, DPN Roundtable

State Membership by DPN's

Iowa Disability Council/Association	State Work Group
Medicare Part D Outreach State Planning	State Transportation Council
Iowa Rehab Association Board	Governor's Council on DD
State Older Workers Council	Iowa IAWP Board

Obstacles/Barriers to Grant Implementation, if applicable:

Progress continues to be made to enhance the capacity of the workforce system and also to empower the job seekers with disabilities with valuable information that allows them to better understand employment options. Sometimes the implementation of a new program brings issues to the surface and those involved need to face critical discussion on how to work together for the best benefit of the customer. Specifically in the past quarter partnership agreements related to the Ticket to Work program and ticket assignment has allowed the partners the opportunity to discuss relationships and roles with persistence efforts to addressing these issues from a customer service standpoint and to diminish and hopefully remove any concept of competitive nature.

Other Significant Accomplishments:

Implementation of partnership among DPN, WIPA, and MIG.

The State Lead is meeting with Regional Boards and agency partnerships to evaluate the value added by the navigator position. These discussions are to be the foundation of future sustainability planning.

Direction by the state workforce partners to submit an application as state Employment Network.

Short-term Grant Goals (three - six months):

Continue to review progress on direction to Navigators by local partners, now that the roles have been developed. Articulate the value added by the navigator role in each region.

Continue to strengthen the SSA Benefits Planning and use of Work Incentives and delivery of information throughout the state, including the use of video conferencing.

Continue to establish Iowa Workforce Partners as an EN and remove any internal workforce system barrier through open dialogue, and consistent practices with all partners, realizing the Navigator role is critical to this process.

Continue to explore mutual activities with MIG and to continue delivering events throughout the state, sponsored by MIG and facilitated by the DPN.

Complete a model approach for local business development that supports the employment of people with disabilities with the collaborative planning of state partner agencies, and development of common resources and promotional materials. Outreach tools are currently being developed collaboratively among state partner agencies.

Outstanding Questions:

How to sustain the value of the navigator function throughout regions and the state?