

Using Community Action Teams to Create Employment Opportunities

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Minnesota Employment Training and Technical
Assistance Center (MNTAT)

“If I had asked people what they wanted, they’d have said faster horses.”

Henry Ford



Job 1: Change Expectations

Americans with disabilities are viewed as economic assets.



The Minnesota Employment Training and Technical Assistance Center (MNTAT)

- Established through a grant from Pathways to Employment (PTE), the Minnesota Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, in April of 2009.
- Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC is the contractor for the grant. www.griffinhammis.com
- The grant provides funding through March 31, 2011.



- *The purpose of Minnesota's Pathways to Employment (PTE) is to increase the employment rate and earnings of people with disabilities, and meet the needs of Minnesota employers through full use of the state's workforce.*
- *"We need everyone in the workforce for business to thrive and communities to prosper."* *The Minnesota value proposition (NTAR)*

Minnesota APSE
Strategic Planning Function

- ✓ Mission Driven
- ✓ Strategic Plan
- ✓ Standing Committees
- ✓ Annual Training Conferences
- ✓ Oversight of integrated employment initiatives

Minnesota Employment First Coalition
Coalition Building with Stakeholders

- ✓ 3 Employment First Summits
- ✓ 2 Mini-Summits
- ✓ Employment First Manifesto
- ✓ Minnesota Scorecard & Family Consensus Report
- ✓ National White Paper on Employment First
- ✓ Building Employment First Champions & Coalitions

Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative (MEPI)
Coalition Building & Policy

- ✓ Partnership with National APSE
- ✓ 13 Listening Sessions with stakeholder groups
- ✓ Policy analyses & written briefs with systems change recommendations
- ✓ Annual Disability & Employment Conference
- ✓ Building policy champions with stakeholders and CATs
- ✓ Improving policies to increase competitive employment of Minnesotans with disabilities

Minnesota Employment Training & Technical Assistance Center (MNTAT)
Coalition Building & Practice

- ✓ Partnership with Griffin-Hammis Associates
- ✓ Web-Based Training Resources & Materials
- ✓ Topical Webinars
- ✓ Training & Technical Assistance
- ✓ Annual Disability & Employment Conference
- ✓ 4 Community Action Teams (CATS)
- ✓ Workforce training to improve employment practices & outcomes

The Minnesota Employment Training and Technical Assistance Center (MNTAT)

- The mission of MNTAT is:

To design and broker state of the art person-centered employment training and technical assistance to increase the participation of all Minnesotans, especially people with disabilities, in the workforce.

MNTAT Community Action Teams

- The CAT approach creates Integrated Learning Communities to demonstrate how collaborative efforts of a variety of interested stakeholders resources and strategies are better leveraged to support individual job seekers to achieve their employment goals.
- The initial goal of each Community Action Team is to support five (5) individuals with varying disabilities to become employed.

MNTAT Community Action Teams

In addition CATs will:

- Work to identify areas in practice and policy that impede or enhance CE implementation and outcomes
- Work collaboratively and strategically to resolve those issues locally
- Share identified issues with Minnesota APSE for statewide impact via the Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative

MNTAT Community Action Teams

- Community Action Teams (CATs) are organized and trained to utilize flexible strategies and tactics to increase individualized employment outcomes for people with disabilities in their local communities.
- 4 CATs statewide
- Made up of a broad representation from the community (i.e. schools, businesses, providers, community organizations)

MNTAT Community Action Teams

- GHA/MNTAT consultants conduct classroom training GHA's ACRE approved Customized Employment Training Curriculum.
- GHA/MNTAT Consultants provide field-based technical assistance to:
 - Work directly with job seekers and their families
 - Help coordinate collaborations
 - Implement strategies to blend funding
 - Help develop additional resources
 - Do outreach to the local employment community
 - Help with benefits analysis and planning
 - Problem-solve identified barriers in practice and policy

MNTAT Community Action Teams

- **Training and technical assistance will result in the creation of successful wage or self-employment for no fewer than 5 job seekers (representing a cross-section of disabilities)**
- **Each employment outcome will demonstrate the use of replicable, evidence-based practices including:**
 - Discovery
 - Interest-based negotiation
 - Strengths-based customized employment
 - Blended funding
 - Typical workplace supports

Customized Employment

- Based on Interest-Based Negotiation between the Job Seeker and the Employer
- Person-Centered
- One-Person-At-A-Time
- Identifies the Ideal Conditions of Employment using Discovery
- Includes Self Employment

Exploding the Myths about Individual Growth & Development

- **We really don't change much as individuals over time, but rather become more and more of who we already are.**
- **Our greatest opportunities for growth are associated with our core individual strengths.**
- **What employers need the most from us?
To consistently bring and contribute our unique strengths and qualities.**

Marcus Buckingham

“Qualified” & “Quality” Job Seekers

Qualified? The job
seeker fits the job.

Quality? The job fits
the job seeker



Customized Employment

- Not a Service or Program –
It is an Approach
- Not Group-Based
- Not Labor Market-Driven
- Not looking for that Dream Job
- Not Vocational Evaluation & Testing
- Not Interest Inventories

Customized Employment

- Especially effective for Individuals with High or Complex Support Needs
- Applicable to anyone, with any disability (or without) seeking employment
- Circumvents the Comparison of Applicants made in Competitive Hiring
- Relies on natural relationships, supports, training

Customized Employment

- **Discovering Personal Genius**
 - A playful approach that reveals life themes
 - That presents a path of Discovery
 - That begs Investigation
 - That creates Options
 - That breeds Innovation in job development
- **Go where the career makes sense**

Discovery Outcomes

- Transforming talents into action one person at a time
- Using customized employment strategies to find, craft, or create jobs that fit who people really are

MNTAT Community Action Teams

- 3 CATs up and running
 - Anoka County
 - West Metro
 - Ramsey County
- Each with a different focus and make up
- Anoka – mental health
- West Metro – inclusion of residential provider
- Ramsey County – school-age job seekers

MNTAT Community Action Teams

Key Lessons Learned

- The value of integrated learning
- Change is more effective when everyone is involved in the process (cross-systems)
- Integrating policies and practices works better from a team approach
- Focus on the positives—what works!
- Focus on one individual at a time

MNTAT Community Action Teams

- Next Steps
 - 1 additional CAT for the remainder of 2010
 - Outside of the Metro area
 - Working with individuals, families and others to expand the CAT approach
 - Implement CE strategies to create highly tailored outcomes with the job seekers within each CAT
 - Documentation and analysis of CAT outcomes and processes by outside organization
 - Expand customized approaches to employment
 - Greater involvement of schools

For More Information

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