

DDS SELF DETERMINATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 2

June, 2008

DDS Connecticut Employment First Kick Off!

WHY WORK?



Self determination is all about creating a lifestyle where one can experience freedom, authority, support and responsibility. These things are not easy to achieve when you are poor or underemployed. Although CT DDS has long been a national leader in helping to support people with intellectual disabilities to choose, get and keep real jobs for real pay, we'd like to do even better!

DDS is launching an "Employment First!" initiative. It's about expecting, encouraging, providing, creating and rewarding integrated employment in the workforce. It's about employment at minimum or competitive wages and with benefits. It's about employment as the first option for working-age youth and adults with disabilities. And, it's about asking the person, "what do you want to do for work?" instead of asking, "do you want to work?"... and then working with him or her to reach that dream and embark on the pursuit of a career.

Employment should be considered for all individuals supported by DDS who have an interest in paid employment and who have the potential to work.

Employment is most successful when job matches involve negotiated arrangements with employers. Employment means a real job, the potential for benefits, and the dignity that comes with gainful employment. Paid work may be full time or part time. Each worker with a disability may have his or her own individual job or work within a small group called a crew or enclave.

Why Employment First? Employment is a means to higher wages and opportunities for people to be part of their local community and to build relationships with non-disabled co-workers. Employment can result in increased income and less dependence on the service system for supports. Employment provides the rest of the community with the opportunity to experience the capabilities and contributions made by people who receive supports from DDS. Work gives people a greater sense of competence and self worth. Individuals have the opportunity to make contributions back to their communities through taxes, productive work and involvement with employer sponsored community projects.

How will we work on Employment First? In partnership with consumers, their families, providers, employers, other state agencies we will set achievable goals, establish clear policy and definitions, establish new rates that encourage employment, track and publish employment outcome data, and provide access to training and educational opportunities.

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EMPLOYMENT IDOLS!



In October of 2007 the word went out – Do You Want To Be A STAR? Do you have a great job? Do you have a REAL JOB for REAL PAY? It was time to wake up Connecticut and let people tell their employment success stories. In partnership with DDS, People First of CT and Connect-Ability, people had an opportunity to tell their employment story at the 2007 People

First of Connecticut Conference and be video taped. After reviewing many applications, 10 Employment Idols were selected to share their employment stories and receive the first ever “Employment Idol Awards” presented in CT. The Employment Idol video will be used to assist DDS to kick off its Employment First Initiative.

The Employment Idol video was created to show that people with disabilities want to work, are great employees and they can contribute to the CT work force if they are given the opportunity. It is important for everyone to know that people with developmental disabilities want to work for the same reasons as everyone else—to make good money, to feel good about themselves, and to know that hard work is rewarding and satisfying. All of the individuals selected as the Employment Idols shared their personal stories and work experiences. They expressed that they are good and dependable employees, dedicated employees, skilled employees and valued employees.

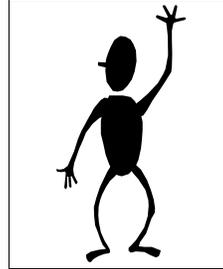
We would like to congratulate the following Employment Idols: Joan Avery, Pascale Bernard, John Case, Jessica Clark, Carlos Colon, Corey Hall, Quentin Hughes III, Jamie Lazeroff, Aaron Newton, Clayton Potter.

Real Work for Real Pay!

Let us know about your employment success story!



The Employment Idol Video is coming to a conference or training near you! Watch for it.



Joan Avery



Pascale Bernard



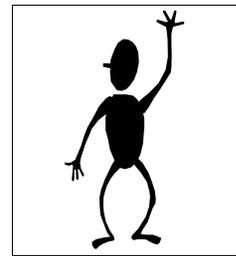
John Case



Jessica Clark



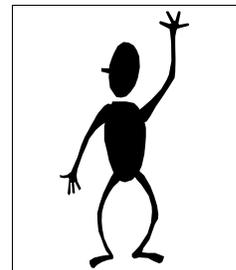
Carlos Colon



Corey Hall



Quentin Hughes III



Jamie Lazeroff



Aaron Newton



Clayton Potter

Self Advocacy: Taking Responsibility for Finding, Getting and Keeping A Job

written by Carol Grabbe

People with disabilities want jobs just like anyone else. We need better employment-real work for real pay! We want to close sheltered workshops because we're better than that! We are more capable and can do more than just piecework.

Self advocates you can't just wait for others to find a job for you! There are lots of steps you can take to help find, choose and keep a great job.

Step 1: Let others know what type of work excites you. You probably won't find work that you like if you are not sure about what you want. You have to first figure out what kind of work you want to do. Think big and don't limit yourself! Think about what makes you really happy and enthusiastic. You need to have a positive and confident attitude when you are looking for a job.

Step 2: Get connected to people and places that do the work that you want to do. Apprenticeships, volunteering, and exploration interviews are all ways that you can learn more about your areas of interest and make contacts with people who may be able to help you find the job that is right for you. You need to spend time with people who do the kinds of work that you want to do!

Step 3: Prepare yourself. Have someone help you type up a resume that can be sent electronically to employers. Make sure you have "dress for success" clothes to wear to interviews. Practice what you are going to say about yourself during interviews. Remember, employers want to hear how you can help their company!

Step 4: Ask for an Interview. Steps 1-3 will help you to prepare for an interview. Don't do step 4 until steps 1-3 have been done. You can have your job coach help you set up an interview, or you can call yourself. If you call yourself, you will need to be prepared what to say. It's a good idea to practice with a friend who will give you honest feedback and help you sound as professional as possible.

Step 5: Wow them at the interview. First of all, make sure you are well dressed **and show up on time!** Bring your resume and be prepared to ask questions about the job and be prepared to tell why you think you would be a good employee. Think about ways you can say that will leave the interviewer really impressed with you!

Remember!

You can help yourself to get a job!

<http://www.partnersinpolicymaking.com/employer/> is a free online course that helps teach people with disabilities how to find, choose and keep a job.

Check it out. Make your life happen!

Connecting With APSE: An Employment Resource



APSE: Employment for All

APSE: The Network on Employment is a membership organization formed in 1988 as the Association for Persons in Supported Employment. APSE's mission is to improve and expand integrated employment opportunities, services, and outcomes for persons experiencing disabilities.

To accomplish this mission APSE:

- provides advocacy and education to customers of supported employment (SE) such as supported employment professionals, consumers and their family members, and supported employers.
- addresses issues and barriers which impede growth and implementation of integrated services.
- improves supported employment practices so that individuals and communities experience supported employment as a quality service with meaningful outcomes.
- promotes national, state, and local policy development which enhances the social and economic inclusion and empowerment of all persons experiencing severe disabilities.
- works to educate the public and the business community on the value of including persons experiencing severe disabilities as fully participating community members.

Locally, Connecticut APSE's is a cross disability network whose members include self-advocates, family members and professionals from all walks of life. CT APSE has sponsored numerous educational activities including a DDS Autism Pilot Information Session, a panel discussion on Individual Approaches to Employment, an Assistive Technology Workshop, and Job coach Training with Rich McAllister.

By being a part of CT APSE helps its members to be active and involved in cutting edge activities statewide and nationally and offers numerous benefits to its members including:

- Providing training on key topical areas to enhance your services and promote best practices;
- Creating a network of collaboration;
- Developing and fostering partnership with businesses
- Consultation and strategic planning
- Being part of a national movement to provide employment for all people with disabilities.



<http://www.apse.org/>

**Join the APSE
Network
and ensure**

**EMPLOYMENT
FOR
ALL!**

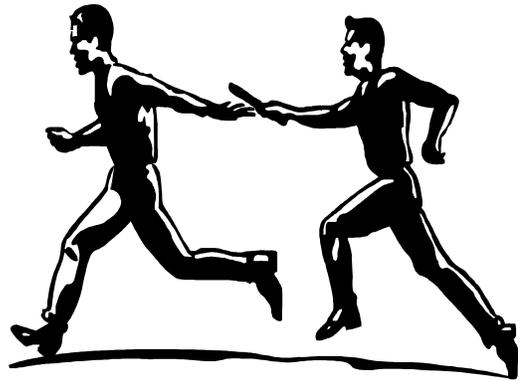
Just In Time Self-Direction News

The Department is preparing to implement the IP 6 database, which will replace the current ISA budget system. The IP 6 database will combine the individual budget, the IP 6 and form 223 into one system. Each region has designated trainers who are participating in instructor training sessions. Case management training is anticipated to start at the end of June.

Self-Directed participants will be getting information in June on a new procedure for Criminal History Background Checks. This procedure applies to anyone they are interested in hiring. The new procedure has certain criminal felony offenses that the DDS will not authorize for payment and includes a department review of all other offenses with the employer prior to making any decision to hire. Self directed participants cannot have a candidate start work until all pre employment requirements are met.

Revisions to the cost standards and the prior approval process have been made and will be effective for July 1, 2008. Each region has scheduled case management review sessions to go over these changes. Beginning July 1, 2008 all prior approval requests will be directed to your Self Determination Director. The state funded allowance was expanded to provide more flexibility to more people. Look for the quick reference in the cost standard document, which will be posted on the J Drive under the Case Manager table of contents in June.

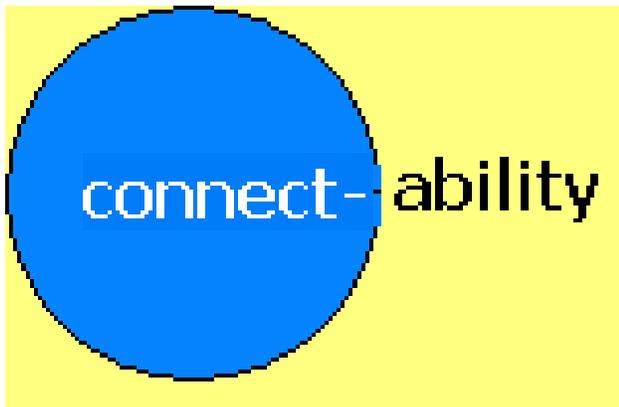
Individuals attending overnight camp though an individual budget are required to use a vendor on the qualified provider list. The rate is based on the 24-



hour group respite rate of \$126.80. In addition to the base rate above, the staff modifier is applied to each 24-hour period as determined by the person's Level of Need. The determination of minimal, moderate or comprehensive will be made by PRAT. Please use the rates listed below. You will no longer have to add the staff modifier to the 24-hour camp rates, as they are included below.

The rates are as follows:

- The rate for a person with a **minimal** LON is \$ 126.80 per day.
- The rate for a person with a **moderate** LON is \$ 161.03 per day. The vendor is expected to provide some additional support hours to the camper based on the person's Individual Plan.
- The rate for a person with a **comprehensive** LON is \$ 218.08 per day. The vendor is expected to provide significant additional support hours to the camper based on the person's Individual Plan.
- The **transportation** to and from camp is **included in the rate** and cannot be billed separately.



Written by Amy Porter, Department of Social Services

What is Connect-Ability?

Connect-Ability is a new initiative designed to connect job seekers with disabilities to employers. The purpose is to identify and reduce barriers to employment for people with disabilities and aging workers. This initiative was created through the funds the Department of Social Services receives through its five year Medicaid Infrastructure grant.

We know there is a lot of interest in the topic of disability and employment, and a lot of interest in learning strategies to get connected. In fact, almost 400 people have called the Connect-Ability line in the last year, and we have had almost 17,000 unique visitors to our website. You may have also seen or heard some of the Connect-Ability advertisements that have been playing on TV or on the radio and that have been in newspapers, magazines, etc.

What goals are we focusing on?

Our workgroups continue to create strategies around the transition from school to work; stakeholder education; recruitment, hiring, and promotion; and transportation.

There are exciting developments in each of these areas, and you can get a sense of the work we have been doing by visiting our website at www.connect-ability.com. As an example, let's talk about transportation.

Transportation is such a critical issue for people with disabilities. DDS staff and self-advocates have been active in our Steering Committee and workgroups, particularly the Transportation workgroup. They worked with other state agencies, advocates and providers to put on Connecticut's first Transportation Forum focused specifically on issues relevant to job seekers with disabilities. The forum was a great success, and kudos go to Varian Salters and Robin Wood for their work on this event.

What's next for us?

We know that there are job seekers with disabilities looking for the opportunity to get a job. And we know there are employers who are looking to fill positions. We will keep working on finding the easiest ways to get these groups connected. We are developing tools for companies to use in recruiting new members, helping them identify new recruitment methods, hiring strategies and ways to retain their employees. And we are developing tools for job seekers to get noticed, to get the interview, and to get the job!

If you want to learn more, get involved, or get connected, you can talk with Beth McArthur or Robin Wood, at DDS, or you can call our Connect-Ability line at 1-866-844-1903.

Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act

(*A summary of an article written by *The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*)

INFORMATION IS POWER!

**KNOW YOUR
EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS!**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Title I of the ADA makes it unlawful for any employer to discriminate against a qualified applicant or employee because of a disability in any aspect of employment. The ADA covers employers with 15 or more employees, including state and local governments. **It is important to know how the ADA protects people with intellectual disabilities.**

An estimated 2.5 million people in the United States have an intellectual disability- approximately 1% of the United States population.⁽³⁾ Estimates also indicate that only 31% of individuals with intellectual disabilities are employed, although many more want to work. Persons with intellectual disabilities successfully perform a wide range of jobs, and can be dependable workers. The types of jobs people with intellectual disabilities are able to perform will depend on individual strengths and interests. yet, many employers still exclude persons with intellectual disabilities from the workplace because of persistent, but unfounded myths, fears, and stereotypes.

People with intellectual disabilities want to work!

Important Things To Know

1. **ADA limits the kind of medical information that an employer can seek from a job applicant.** For example, an employer may not ask the following types of questions:
 - Whether or to what extent a person has an intellectual disability
 - Whether an applicant takes medication
 - Whether an applicant has been hospitalized in an institution
2. **ADA requires the provision of reasonable accommodations both in the application process and to help employees with disabilities to do their job.** Examples of reasonable accommodations for persons with intellectual disabilities may include the following:
 - Someone to read or interpret applications or other written material
 - Demonstrating rather than describing what the job requires
 - Modifying tests, training materials, policy manuals, etc.
 - Providing training/information at a slower pace or allowing more time
 - Modified work schedule Allowing for Job Coach Support

These are just a few ideas contained in this article. Learn more by reading the entire article online at http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/intellectual_disabilities.html

Quality Indicators for Competitive Employment Outcomes

Summary of Virginia Commonwealth University
Region III CRP-RCEP Fact Sheet

Supported employment quality indicators can be viewed from the perspective of the:

- individual with disability
- employer
- funding agency paying for the supported employment service

Use Of Benefits Planning

Successful employment outcomes must include a review of critical issues with person's disability benefits.

Individualization Of The Job Goal

Individuals make choices regarding potential jobs and their career paths. The person is encouraged and assisted to explore job and career interests and to build an awareness and understanding of job possibilities.

Quality Of Competitive Job

Real work for real pay is the desired outcome. Twenty hours or more per week brings access to benefits, better wages, job advancement, paid sick and vacation leave. Higher hours of employment also improve access to social interaction with co-workers.

Consistency Of Job Status With Co-Workers

People's jobs are similar in the workplace in terms of how people are hired, supervised and compensated; the opportunities they have to interact with co-workers; and access to opportunities for job advancement and career opportunities.

Employment In An Integrated Job Setting

Integration and community participation are important outcome measures of quality supported employment services.

Quality Of Job Site Supports And Fading

Supports to obtain and maintain jobs are key. Employment plans include detailed job analysis, identification and use of community and workplace supports, systematic instruction, compensatory strategies, orientation training, and workplace accommodations.

Presence Of Ongoing Support Services For Job Retention And Career Development

Long term supports to maintain a job are critical to success. These include supports when job requirements or the person's supervisor changes as well as supports for job enhancements.

Following these quality indicators can potentially improve services and job outcomes for people with disabilities. Interested programs can download a copy of the indicators in a fact sheet developed by VCU by visiting: <http://www.crp-rcep.org>

Registration Coming Soon!

SAVE THE DATE!

JUNE 25, 2008

Keeney Center
Wethersfield, CT

“Employment First!” Training

Session Topics

Self Advocacy & Employment
Using Benefits to Support Employment
Individualized Job Development