The Vermont Progressive Employment Model Replication and Evaluation

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The Vocational Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (VR-RRTC) on Demand-Side Strategies is a national center for improving vocational rehabilitation (VR) responsiveness to employer needs.

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- Project Partners: VR agencies in VT, NE, AL and CSAVR
Talking points for the session

• VTPE: What exactly are we studying?
• How are we doing it?
• What have we learned so far?
• What is next?
Video clip

VTPE DEMO

Progressive Employment
A Vermont Voc Rehab Success Story

Hugh Bradshaw: Progressive employment in VT
Library: Library assistant
Labranche lumber: Mill worker
Siding company: Packer
Nursing home: NLA

VocRehabVermont
Explore VR
VTPE: Key features

- Dual customer design
- Team approach
- Focus on high-risk or difficult to place consumers
- Emphasis on rapid engagement
- Mechanism for set-asides or training offsets or work experience pay
- Liability and workers’ compensation insurance for trainees
- Data tracking tools for jobseekers and employers
Study Design: Key features

- Learning collaborative approach for model replication
- Impact evaluation
- Process evaluation
But first -

- Define and “extract” the model
- How do you take something that developed organically in Vermont, package it up, and test it out in another state?
- Convince others to try it out (as part of a research study)
Build a Learning Collaborative

• LC as a research vehicle
  – Peer-to-Peer support
  – Wrap around training/TA
  – Tweaked from previous LCs: Embedded evaluation

• RFP process: accessible

• Research requirements: negotiable

• 4 states joined
Impact Evaluation: Design

• Develop customized evaluation plans
• Data points: VTPE yes/no, work experience type and “dose”, milestone dates
  – Link to CMS [outcome data]?
  – Link to employer data?
Process evaluation: Design

- Fidelity visits/observations
- Ongoing site visits, phone calls, informal check-ins, LC meetings
- Semi-structured interviews near end of implementation cycle
- Qualitative effort to capture jobseeker and employer perspective (in design)
Overall:
Flexible & dynamic study design

Ongoing impact evaluation data analysis and process evaluation (fidelity reviews) inform:

1. Research methodology & model refinement
2. Training & TA
3. Plans for future research
What have we learned so far?
Nebraska

- Parallel pre-existing philosophy to VT VR
- Rapid Engagement promoted, within context of voc eval
- All clientele potentially eligible statewide
- 4 Business Account Managers (BAM)
- All employ services in house
Oregon (Commission for the Blind)

• Small agency (~13 VRC), rural aspect
• Primary target group, clients 2+ yrs in
• 1 BAM statewide
• CRPs assist with placement
Maine

- Transition youth Portland, Lewiston
- 1 BAM
- Selected CRPs deliver PE employ services
Florida (Division of Blind Services)

- Larger agency
- 7 districts starting with stuck cases (2 yrs+)
- 1 BAM serves 7 districts
- In house employment specialists, eventually CRPs to assist
Early observations

• VR programs vary widely in policy/procedures that could impact model (both across agencies and within agencies)
• CRP vs inhouse employment services
Early observations, cont.

- Team approach from earliest contact
- VRC and employment staff - handoff vs active participation
- Roles of employment specialists, VRCs, BAMs, CRPs supportive of VTPE
Early observations, cont.

- Early engagement is encouraged
- Can services be delivered prior to plan?
- Plan can be easily modified?
- What is “job readiness”?
Early observations, cont.

• Agency position/policy regarding dual customer approaches that include employers

• Work experience compensation (set aside) and liability insurance
Future

• Moving along the continuum of innovative practices – from *Emerging → Promising → Evidence-Based* (citation: RRTC on EBP)

• NIDILRR Stages of Research
For more information

• Visit: ExploreVR.org for more resources on Progressive Employment

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