**Employment Services Course Overview**

**COURSE SERIES DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND**

Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in partnership with the Community College of Vermont and TransCen, Inc. is offering a series of courses for employment staff, working under the Creative Workforce Solution (CWS) umbrella, who serve job seekers from vulnerable populations.  The course series is intended to provide the essential processes, tools and resources necessary for staff who are in the early stages of providing employment services to job seekers in Vermont.

**ACRE CERTIFICATION**

Upon the completion of the foundation course and one of the disability specific introductory courses (Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health or Transition), an ACRE (Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators) Certificate of Achievement will be issued once CCV has been approved as a provider.  The completion of the ACRE Certificate and a minimum of 1 year of experience as an Employment Specialist will also prepare one to take the national Certified Employment Support Professionals (CESP) examination and receive the CESP Certificate. A course for people working with people receiving TANF has also been developed.  While an excellent resource, the TANF course is NOT part of the ACRE certificate series.

**DELIVERY METHOD**

These courses are on-line, instructor-led and are offered over the course of a semester.  Online courses are flexible and allows students to complete work based on their own schedule within each week. The Foundations Course is a 9-week course with specialty courses offered immediately following for 2 weeks. The courses are a combination of webinars, activities, peer discussion boards, case studies and field assignments.  Participants are asked to find a mentor (either a supervisor or an experienced peer in the field) to provide support as needed. The instructor can assist with this as needed.

**COURSE SUMMARIES:**

**Foundations Course (9 Weeks. Required for all participants)**

Assisting job seekers from vulnerable populations achieve integrated employment outcomes of their choice requires employment staff to be competent in effective discovery and assessment, job development and placement; employer outreach and negotiation; and workplace supports. This on-line, instructor-led, 9-week, 30 hour Foundation Course provides sufficient depth to be valued across multiple levels of the CWS initiative, specific to the service delivery environment in Vermont; one that will enhance the quality of employment services to local employers; and increase the likelihood of successful employment outcomes. Employment specialists taking advantage this course series will be better equipped to serve as labor market intermediaries - not just assisting the people they serve in obtaining employment, but establishing a return on investment for employers as well.  The Foundation Course consists of the following:

*Online Instructor-Led Modules (4)*

1. Application of Core Values and Principles of Practice

2. Individualized Assessment and Employment/Career Planning

3. Community Research and Job Development

4. Workplace and Related Supports

**Transition (2 Week Specialty. Successful Foundations Course Completion Required)**

It is important to be aware of the unique challenges affecting transition aged youth and the strategies that are most effective when working with this type of job seeker through this Employment Services Transition Introductory course. Employment specialists taking advantage this course series will be better equipped to serve as labor market intermediaries - not just assisting the people they serve in obtaining employment, but establishing a return on investment for employers as well.  The Employment Services Transition Introductory Course Curriculum was developed by TransCen, Inc.  TransCen, Inc. was responsible for the development Employment Services Certificate Course Series, the authors of the Foundation Course as well as the Transition Introductory Course.

*Key topics that will be covered related to youth transition services will be:*

1. Application of Core Values and Principles to Practice, Discovery and Assessment
2. Community Research and Job Development, Workplace Supports and Career Development

**Mental Health (2 Week Specialty. Successful Foundations Course Completion Required)**

It is also important to be aware of the unique needs of people with mental health/substance abuse challenges and the strategies that are most effective when working with job seekers who have such lived experiences through this Employment Services MH Introductory course. The Employment Services MH Introductory Course Curriculum was developed by Laura Flint with the Vermont Department of Mental Health along with additional assistance from the Vermont Cooperative for Practice Improvement and Innovation.  Ms. Flint has provided evidence-based supported employment training and implementation consultation for over 15 years.  We would like to recognize the Dartmouth IPS Supported Employment Center as part of the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center for allowing its materials to be included as part of the course and Ken Minkoff, ZIA Partners’ Senior Systems Consultant and VCPI Lead Consultant for his consultation and contributions to the course.

*Key topics for Employment Services MH Introductory Course will be:*

1. Engagement Strategies, Introduction to Mental Health, Employment and Recovery, IPS Principles 1 – 4
2. IPS Principles 5 – 8, History of Supported Employment and Related Legislation, Vermont Resources

**Developmental Disabilities (2 Week Specialty. Successful Foundations Course Completion Required)**

It is also important to be aware of the unique challenges affecting DD recipients and the strategies that are most effective when working with this type of job seeker through this Employment Services DD Introductory course. The Employment Services DD Introductory Course Curriculum was developed by the University of Vermont’s Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.  The Center on Disability and Community Inclusion has extensive experience developing curriculum and providing training to professionals who provide employment services to job seekers with developmental disabilities as well as conduct research and provide technical assistance on a broad range of projects benefiting consumers of developmental disability services. UVM Center on Disability and Inclusion: <http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/>.

*Key topics that will be covered:*

1. Historical Overview, Vermont Structure and Services, Discovery and Assessment
2. Community Research and Job Development, Workplace Supports and Career Development

**TANF (2 Week Specialty. Successful Foundations Course Completion Required)**

*(This course does not count towards ACRE Certification but provides valuable information for individuals working with people in poverty or receiving TANF)*

The Employment Services TANF Introductory Course Curriculum was developed by the Rocky Mountain Human Services’ Center for Technical Assistance and Training (CTAT).  CTAT has a broad range of experience providing employment services to TANF recipients as well as developing and delivering training for professionals providing employment services to TANF recipients.  Assisting job seekers from vulnerable populations, such as TANF recipients, achieve integrated employment outcomes of their choice requires employment staff to be competent in effective discovery and assessment, job development and placement; employer outreach and negotiation; and workplace supports that was learned through the Foundation Course.   It is also important to be aware of the unique challenges affecting TANF recipients and the strategies that are most effective when working with this type of job seeker through this Employment Services TANF Introductory course.

*Key topics for Employment Services to TANF recipients will be:*

1. Context Matters – Building the Foundation to help prepare yourself and the job seeker
2. Bridging the Gap: Connecting your job seeker to Resources for increasing daily stability and job retention