Job-Driven Technical Assistance Center (JD-VRTAC):

Nebraska VR

Customized Employment: Exploring Opportunities with a Dual Customer Approach

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Webinar Objectives

- Explain JD-VRTAC goals, partners, TA, and Learning Collaborative
- Describe Nebraska VR’s background/services
- Explain JD-VRTAC project background
- Discuss JD-VRTAC project purpose & goals
- Describe JD-VRTAC project implementation
- Share JD-VRTAC project accomplishments
- Share challenges & lessons learned from JD-VRTAC project
- Describe current status of JD-VRTAC project
- Discuss what was most helpful from the TA and Learning Collaborative throughout this process
- Share next steps, future direction, & goals
JD-VRTAC Goals

Improve skills of state VR agency staff, other rehab professionals & providers of VR services, who are trained to provide “job-driven” VR services & supports to PWD, employers & customized training providers.

Four Topic Areas:

1. Business Engagement
2. Employer Supports
3. Labor Market Information (LMI)
4. Customized Training Providers

www.explorevr.org
JD-VRTAC Partners

Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI), Univ. of Massachusetts/Boston

**In Partnership with:**
- Jobs for the Future (JFF)
- Univ. of Arkansas/CURRENTS
- Univ. of Washington
- Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
- United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN)
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)

**In Collaboration with:**
- National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB)
- Technical Assistance Center Collaborative
JD-VRTAC Technical Assistance

The JD-VRTAC provides 3 types of TA:

- **Intensive:** 11 VR agencies participated in Cohort 1 of the center’s Intensive TA and 9 agencies will participate in Cohort 2 of the center’s Intensive TA. Agencies receiving Intensive TA become members of a Learning Collaborative to share strategies and solutions.

- **Targeted:** Several agencies have requested targeted TA related to one of the four job-driven topical areas. Additionally, the Center is hosting communities of practice and forums on relevant issues.

- **Universal:** The Center hosts and archives webinars on topics related to the four job-driven topical areas and presents project information at CSAVR and NCSAB.
JD-VRTAC Learning Collaborative

• As part of receiving intensive TA, states attended 2-3 in-person Learning Collaborative meetings to provide project updates, collaborate across agencies, and participate in topical discussions.
• Learning Collaborative states participate in conference calls with their cohort to discuss job-driven topics.
• 18 state VR agencies are part of the JD-VRTAC Learning Collaborative.
Nebraska VR is a general agency housed within the Department of Education.

12 Statewide Offices
VR Counselors- 45
VR Evaluators- 15
Placement Specialists- 30
Business Account Managers- 4
Designated Pre-ETS Team- 11
JD-VRTAC Project Background

• Applied for TA to develop and provide training to staff on the Customized Employment components and competencies with a focus on business networking, business and employer practices, job analysis, and development and negotiation.
JD-VRTAC Project Purpose and Goals

1. Agency buy-in of Customized Employment
2. Development of Business Engagement competencies
3. Development of CE components and competencies for staff and providers
4. Increase Business Engagement in Customized Employment
JD-VRTAC Project Implementation

Alignment with other priorities of the agency:

- Job-driven approach
- Meet You Where You Are
- Section 511 of WIOA
- Person-Centered Philosophy
- Hiring of 4 BAM’s
- Employer Contact Application & Talent Bank
What is Customized Employment?

A flexible process to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both.

- Task reassignment
- Modified job description by negotiation (carving)
- Job sharing
- Self-employment
JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

Customized Employment

• Agreement with DD on funding transfer to serve more individuals with I/DD.
• VCU training for CE and Task Analysis Training
• Discovery- VR Profile for SE or CE & Sample
• Statewide rollout training- 9 locations
• Success videos released
Success Video

Watch the full video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6I2MtHS01Tk
JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

Leading our Business Outreach

- Nebraska VR Placement Specialists
- Nebraska VR Business Account Managers (BAMs)

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JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

Business Outreach Strategies

• Identify existing relationships to determine primary points of contact
• Be aware of VR candidate pool and areas of interest/career choice (discussion from WIN/Jobsville and Talent Bank)
• Develop rapid engagement sites
• Identify potential customized employment opportunities, position creation etc.
JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

Communicating Business Needs

- WIN Meeting
- QE2 Employer Contact Database
JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments
JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

Business Outreach Tools

Creative Hiring Opportunities

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal income tax credit incentive provided to private sector employers. An employer may be eligible for WOTC when they hire from certain target groups of job seekers who face employment barriers. The WOTC tax credit is a one-time tax credit for each new hire and there is no limit to the number of new hires who can qualify an employer for a tax credit.

Employers that hire Nebraska VR’s qualified candidates may claim the WOTC. Nebraska VR’s Employment Specialists will interview our candidate pool to find individuals with skills necessary for specific job openings and assist with the process required to apply for up to $2400 in federal tax credits.
JD-VRTAC Project Accomplishments

Resources

Nebraska VR Business Site

• http://vr.nebraska.gov/business/
Challenges and Lessons Learned

• Systems change takes time

• Change is hard

• Referrals are up significantly; Teams have all been realigned to meet the needs

• Focus on staff strengths with new initiatives
JD-VRTAC Project Today (current status)

• Updated Service Agreements with I/DD Providers
• Newly approved Supported AND Customized Employment Milestone fee schedules
• Increasing effective communication with all partners
• WIN meeting promotion
• Letter sent to all school districts
What was most helpful about receiving TA?

• Ability to connect and learn from other states

• Presenter contacts

• State contacts who were experienced in customized employment (policies and procedures)
Next Steps, Future Directions, and Goals

• Further CE training planned
• Additional Job Restructuring Training
• Job Coach training
• Expansion of WIN Meetings
• WIOA impact Letter to Families
Other Video Resources

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhngDjEMaJ0
Questions?
Contact Information

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