Improvement and Expansion of Consumer Directed Services
CI-11-01: Final Project Report

PRIMARY GOAL OF THE GRANT

Goal: To increase the number of professionals who provide consumer-directed support to people with developmental and other disabilities.

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) awarded a $215,000 grant to the Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living (VACIL). The project began October 2010 and concluded September 2012. The grant was successful in expanding awareness of consumer-direction as a manner of employment, developing related material, and establishing a web based assistant directory.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Objective 1: *Convene a Steering Committee to provide guidance to the project.*

Accomplishments
The Steering Committee met in person October 19, 2010 for an orientation to the grant, for members to get to know one another, and to identify barriers to quality consumer-directed services. Meetings were held by conference call on a quarterly basis throughout the remainder of the project.

Steering Committee members responded to a survey that resulted in members getting better acquainted. Yahoo was used to establish a listserve/discussion group for Steering Committee members.

The Steering Committee reviewed materials, discussed and provided input on grant activities, identified and explored resolutions of barriers to quality consumer-directed services, and provided input on development of the attendant directory.

Performance Measures
None

Demographics Members of the Steering Committee included the following:

Four people who use consumer-directed services
Two parents of children who use consumer-directed services
Two consumer-directed assistants
Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Mary Margaret Cash
Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), Dawn Traver
Department of Education, Marianne Moore
Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), Amy Burkett
disAbility Resource Center, Kim Lett
Public Partnerships, LLC (PPL), Peter Quinn
Resources for Independent Living, Kelly Hickok
Virginia Association of Personal Care Assistants, David Broder

Consumer Participation
Four people who use consumer-directed services and two parents of children who use consumer-directed services were members of the Steering Committee. They said that the project had raised awareness of consumer-directed employment. They liked that the focus was on the positive aspects of disability and importance of partnership in performing job duties.

Barriers None

Effective Strategies
Convening the Steering Committee meetings by conference call eliminated travel time and costs. Meeting agendas and minutes helped to keep members informed about progress of the project.

Objective 2: *Convene a Work Group to share information and to organize the work flow of the project.*

Accomplishments
The Work Group met in person on October 18, 2010 for an orientation to the grant. The Work Group also met monthly by conference call. A Yahoo discussion group was established for ongoing Work Group interaction. A Work Plan chart was developed for project activities.

The Work Plan chart is attached.

Performance Measures None

Demographics
The Work Group included the Project Consultants and Project Coordinator; advocates working at Centers for Independent Living.

Consumer Participation
Four of the Project Consultants were people with disabilities who use consumer-directed services. Two of the Project Consultants were parents of children who use consumer-directed services.

Barriers None

Effective Strategies
Frequent monthly meetings of the Work Group and use of the Yahoo discussion group allowed for quick adjustments with materials, outreach activities, and development of promotional material for the attendant directory.

Objective 3: *Develop an outreach and awareness campaign to recruit individuals interested in providing consumer-directed services.*

Accomplishments

Researched existing outreach and awareness activities and related efforts in other states. Information was reviewed from 15 states. A report was developed and provided to the Steering Committee and Work Group.

Two surveys were developed, one for employers of consumer-directed assistants and one for people employed as consumer-directed assistants. Draft survey questions were reviewed and discussed by the Steering Committee and Work Group before the final questions were posted using Survey Monkey. The purpose of the survey was to gather recruitment and retention strategies and ideas for outreach and awareness activities.

The surveys were promoted by Centers for Independent Living (CIL), services facilitators, and the Virginia Association of Personal Care Assistants. The survey was provided in paper and electronic formats.

Surveys completed in paper formats were entered into Survey Monkey by the Project Consultants. Surveys were completed by 287 individuals including 183 employers of consumer-directed assistants and 104 consumer-directed assistants.

Focus Groups were held in 14 locations throughout Virginia. 179 people participated in the Focus Groups. The Focus Groups gathered information about recruitment and retention of consumer-directed assistants and ideas for outreach and awareness activities. Guidance for conducting Focus Groups was developed in collaboration with the Steering Committee and Work Group. A summary of Focus Group input was provided to the Steering Committee and Work Group. The input was used to develop an outreach and awareness marketing plan.

Suggested outreach and awareness activities and material were discussed by the Steering Committee and Work Group. Initially, five Centers for Independent Living (CILs) implemented the activities using material developed by the project. The experience of these five CILs was discussed by the Work Group resulting in revisions to the materials.

The following documents are attached: Recruitment and Retention Report; Survey of Employers; Survey of Professionals; Survey Summary from Employers; Survey Summary from Professionals; Focus Group Guidance; Focus Group Locations; Focus Group Input Summary; and Outreach and Awareness Marketing Plan and outreach materials.

Performance Measures None

Demographics
The Steering Committee and Work Group guided development of the Focus Group Guidance, surveys, Outreach and Awareness Marketing Plan, and materials. People with disabilities, other employers of consumer-directed assistants, and consumer-directed assistants completed surveys and participated in the Focus Groups.

Consumer Participation
Surveys were completed by 41 people with disabilities, 131 parents of people with disabilities, 3 spouses of people with disabilities, 26 guardians of people with disabilities, 16 siblings of people with disabilities and 27 other types of relatives of people with disabilities. Focus Group participants included 22 people with disabilities. The attached survey and Focus Group summaries include the input of people with disabilities and their family members.

Barriers
The Focus Groups were delayed by three months so that the Focus Groups would not be held during the General Assembly session. Legislative proposals to reduce personal assistant and respite services were being considered and people using these services were focused on the threatened services.

Participation in the Focus Groups was lower than expected. People preferred the convenience of completing the survey. Subsequently, the timeline for completing the surveys was extended to allow for increased participation.

Effective Strategies
The use of Survey Monkey was particularly popular among the people who provided input to the project.

Objective 4: *Implement the outreach and awareness campaign activities developed in Objective 3.*

Accomplishments
Training was provided to the Project Consultants about their responsibilities and suggested strategies for implementing the outreach and awareness campaign. In addition, these items were discussed with the Project Consultants during monthly conference calls. A total of 167 outreach and awareness activities were conducted.

Activities to provide information about consumer-directed employment were held with staff, students and participants at the following:

16 local Virginia Employment Commission Offices/Workforce Development Centers
5 local Special Education Advisory Committees
36 high schools
26 colleges
28 nonprofit organizations
8 for profit businesses
16 local DARS offices.

Information about consumer-directed employment was provided to 32 media outlets including newspaper, radio and TV. A five minute interview about consumer-directed employment was recorded and broadcast by Comcast. Information about project activities was posted on social networking sites such as Facebook. The following documents are attached: DVD of Comcast interview; and an article published in *The Free Lance Star* in the Fredericksburg area.

Performance Measures None

Demographics
Students, people searching for employment, and people interested in working as consumer-directed assistants were the primary participants in the outreach and awareness activities.

Consumer Participation Feedback from consumers was not gathered for this objective.

Barriers None

Effective Strategies
Scheduling specific presentations to school groups was the most successful strategy to reach high school and college students. Media exposure with public service announcements and newspaper articles resulted in a broad awareness of consumer-directed services.

Objective 5: *Develop a workshop outline and materials about consumer-directed services and independent living philosophy for juniors and seniors in high school, college students and others who are interested in working as consumer-directed professionals.*

Accomplishments
Researched existing workshop outlines and material used in Virginia and other states. Information was reviewed from 14 states. A report was developed and provided to the Steering Committee and Work Group. The surveys and Focus Groups described in Objective 3 were also used to gather information to be used in developing the workshop outline and material.

Met with DMAS, DBHDS, and DARS to discuss the project, requirements for their consumer-directed programs, and workshop topics. These agencies provided information about the requirements for consumer-directed assistants and services. Discussed the project with members of the DMAS Consumer-Directed Services Advisory Committee during their January 19, 2011 meeting. The information and suggestions gathered during these meetings were incorporated into the workshop materials.

The Project Consultants received training on best practices for conducting the workshops. The workshop was field tested in Fredericksburg and Richmond. Based on those tests, the PowerPoint presentation and guidebook were revised.

The workshop PowerPoint presentation and guidebook, *Becoming a Consumer-Directed Assistant* were translated into Spanish.

The following documents are attached: Workshop Research Report; workshop PowerPoint presentation; *Becoming a Consumer-Directed Assistant*; and workshop announcements.

Performance Measures

QA05 – 15 people were trained in quality assurance.
Training about conducting the workshops was provided to 15 Project Consultants.

Demographics

The Steering Committee and Work Group guided development of the workshop outline and materials. People with disabilities, other employers of consumer-directed assistants, and consumer-directed assistants participated in the surveys, Focus Groups and initial/test workshops.

Consumer Participation

People with disabilities and family members participated in the initial/test workshops. Their recommendations included the following: expand examples of job duties; abbreviate the presentation to 2.5 hours; and include time for people who are already providing consumer-directed services to talk about their experience. These recommendations were incorporated into the final workshop outline and materials.

Barriers None

Effective Strategies

Monthly Work Group meetings included a discussion about the workshops already completed. These discussions improved the confidence and knowledge of the Project Consultants who were conducting the workshops.

Recommendations from people who attended the initial/test workshops helped to improve the workshop experience for the participants and Project Consultants.

Objective 6: *Conduct workshops about consumer-directed services and independent living philosophy for juniors and seniors in high school, college students and others who are interested in working as consumer-directed professionals.*

Improvement and Expansion of Consumer Directed Services
CI-11-01: Final Project Report

Accomplishments
An initial schedule of workshops was developed in November 2011. Additional workshops were added through the summer of 2012.

Workshops were promoted through the media, the internet and organizations potential attendees were likely to be connected to such as high schools, colleges, and vocational programs. Several high schools relayed information regarding the workshops and job opportunities on their closed circuit TV programming. Promotional material included brochures, flyers, Facebook postings, and media announcements. A list of suggested promotional activities was developed. The Project Coordinators met to discuss the use of these materials and ideas for promotional activities. A document, Workshop Guidance was developed for the Project Consultants to use.

Throughout Virginia, 67 workshops were held for 739 people.

The following documents are attached: Workshop Locations and Dates; Workshop Guidance; workshop promotional material; and a Summary of Workshop Evaluations.

Performance Measures
CS05 – 739 people trained in community supports.

CS01 – 23 individuals with disabilities received community support. After most workshops, the Project Consultants followed up with the workshop participants to request that the participants self-identify if they had been hired as a consumer-directed assistant. Responses were received from 23 individuals who reported that they had been hired as a consumer-directed assistant.

EM01 – Two adults with disabilities have jobs of their choice.
Of the 23 people who reported they had been hired as a consumer-directed assistant, two people identified themselves as people with disabilities.

Demographics
Of the 739 people attending the workshops: 33 identified themselves as a person with a disability and 57 identified themselves as a family member of a person with a disability.

Consumer Participation
Workshop evaluations were completed by 567 workshop attendees.
Examples of the effectiveness of workshop as described by attendees on workshop evaluations:
- *Knowing the respectable terms to use when talking about people with disabilities. Because I didn't know how people with disabilities were hurt by all the incorrect names people call them.*
- *Learning about what type of skills that are/are not required.*
- *I was motivated to be part of working with people and assisting.*
- *I love the way both presenters actually assisted each other. (One presenter has visual and hearing disabilities and the other presenter had a significant physical disability.)*
- *The actual situations that happen (stories) opened my eyes to sensitive situations.*
- *The information was clear and very well put together, they were friendly.*
- *The introduction helped me understand what a consumer-directed assistant is.*
- *More understanding of personal needs.*
- *The part that talked about the application/interview process that was about setting boundaries and saying upfront what the assistant will and will not do.*
- *Very informative of the logistics/hiring and working as an assistant.*

- Personal experience and knowledge was helpful.
- Interviews, making sure or being specific about duties and times regarding work.
-The approachability and hands on knowledge.
- Where to contact and connect with assistants.

Barriers None

Effective Strategies
Having people who were experienced in providing consumer-directed services discuss their experience during the workshops was very well received by workshop participants. The sharing of this firsthand experience helped to illustrate the experience of consumer-directed employment.

Objective 7: *Develop and promote a web based registry of individuals interested in providing consumer-directed services.*

Accomplishments
Researched Virginia requirements and practices related to directories. Researched directory use in 19 states. A research report was provided to the Steering Committee and Work Group.

The surveys and Focus Groups described in Objective 3 were also used to gather information for development of the directory.

Met with representatives of DMAS, DBHDS and DARS to discuss requirements for their consumer-directed programs. These requirements were taken into consideration during development of the directory. The directory was discussed with the DMAS Consumer-Directed Services Advisory Committee.

Public Partnerships, LLC (PPL) is the DMAS fiscal agent contractor for people who use Medicaid consumer-directed services. The Project Coordinator met with PPL to discuss the possibility of PPL hosting the attendant directory. Several meetings were held with PPL, the Steering Committee and Work Group to review draft outlines and to provide feedback.

PPL conducted trial testing of the directory to identify potential user problems. As people began using the directory, information about their experiences was shared with the Project Consultants. This feedback was discussed with PPL and adjustments to the directory were made.

PPL developed the directory which is at https://connect.publicpartnerships.com/va/login.aspx. By the end of September 2012, 246 people had placed their information in the directory indicating that they were interested in being hired as consumer-directed assistants.

The project developed a website about consumer-directed employment. www.CDSupport.info

The project communicated with Virginia Disability and Senior Navigator staff about the directory resulting in Navigator offering to assist with promoting awareness of the directory.

Ads were purchased in 67 newspapers and monster.com to raise awareness of consumer-directed employment opportunities. Inquiries from 1,184 people were received in response to the ads. The ads placed on monster.com came up in 9,243 searches resulting in 2,151 clicks onto the page listing information about consumer-directed employment. People making inquiries were directed to the directory, www.CDsupport.info, and the Project Consultant in their region.

A brochure and poster were developed to promote the directory. These are being mailed to high schools, vocational programs, colleges, local area agencies on aging, local offices of DARS, local offices of the Virginia Employment Commission, libraries and other contacts suggested by the Project Consultants.

The following documents are attached: promotional brochure; poster; Registry Research Report, and a list of Newspapers Ads.

Performance Measures
CS03 - One program improved community supports.
The development of a statewide directory will result in improved employment opportunities.

Demographics
The Steering Committee and Work Group guided development of the directory and promotional material. PPL developed the directory. Adamski-Smith Multimedia Solutions developed the brochure and poster.

Consumer Participation
People with disabilities and family members who served on the Steering Committee and Work Group indicated that the directory was a useful tool in identifying potential consumer-directed assistants.

Barriers None

Effective Strategies
The directory was initially going to be developed with grant funds. PPL offered to develop and maintain the directory at no cost to the project. The project requested a budget revision from VBPD to redirect the funds initially designated for development of the directory. The approved budget revision allowed for the funds to be used for expanded activities to promote consumer-directed employment opportunities.

The directory was developed with significant input from the Focus Groups, surveys, the Steering Committee and the Work Group. The initial trial use of the directory by PPL helped to identify some minor problems when using the directory. These activities resulted in the development of a directory that is responsive to the anticipated inquires people looking for consumer-directed assistants most want to see listed in the directory.

Objective 8: *Identify barriers to quality consumer-directed services and suggest resolutions.*

Accomplishments
Barriers to accessing and using consumer-directed services were identified from the following: Steering Committee meetings; Work Group meetings; during the Focus Groups; and surveys. These barriers were discussed by the Steering Committee and Work Group resulting in recommended resolutions. The draft list of barriers and resolutions was provided to DMAS for their feedback, the DMAS input was incorporated into the final list.

Progress with the some of the issues identified as barriers was made during the project. One example is clarification of Medicaid-funded transportation as described as a performance measure below.

Barriers to Accessing and Using Consumer-Directed Services and Recommendations is attached.

Performance Measures
CS03 - One program improved community supports.

Consumer-directed assistants and their employers were being denied reimbursement for transportation costs through LogistiCare (Virginia Medicaid transportation broker) for providing transportation to Medicaid-related appointments. The project recommended the following: DMAS should revise their procedures to allow mileage reimbursement to consumer-directed assistants and their employers for Medicaid-related trips that are preauthorized by LogistiCare for mileage reimbursement. This matter was discussed with Bob Knox, DMAS Transportation Director who informed the project that consumer-directed assistants can receive mileage reimbursement following the existing guidelines. The DMAS long term care unit also discussed this with Mr. Knox who clarified this policy for the long term care unit. This clarification will result in improved access to Medicaid community supports.

Demographics
People who participated in the surveys, Focus Groups, and meetings of the Steering Committee and Work Group identified barriers and suggested recommendations.

Consumer Participation
People with disabilities and family members who responded to the surveys and who participated in Focus Groups, the Steering Committee and Work Group were able to provide firsthand experience with barriers and suggested recommendations.

Barriers None

Effective Strategies
DMAS voluntarily reviewing the draft document helped to clarify several issues.
All grant objectives were 100% completed.

ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEMIC IMPACT OF GRANT

People with disabilities have an additional tool, the directory, available to them in locating potential consumer-directed assistants. People who are looking to be employed as consumer-directed assistants have a tool, the directory, available to them to publish their interest, skills and abilities.

People who attended the workshops have a better understanding of consumer control, independent living, and disability etiquette.

People with disabilities who use consumer-directed services are able to access travel reimbursement through LogistiCare for consumer-directed assistants who provide transportation to Medicaid-funded services.

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) will continue to duplicate and distribute the materials developed during this project. They will also continue to offer workshops. The CILs will continue to promote the directory and guide people in using the directory. CILs that provide Medicaid services facilitation will

promote the directory to people using the paper registries maintained by CILs. Resources to continue these activities will be provided through state independent living funds provided by the Commonwealth.

Public Partnerships (PPL) will maintain the directory developed during this grant. PPL will monitor and update the directory as needed. Feedback will be solicited from users of the directory to determine if adjustments are needed to the directory. Resources to maintain the directory will be provided by PPL.

The website established through this project will be maintained and updated by the Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living (VACIL). Resources to continue the website will be provided through private funds contributed by VACIL.

FUTURE ACTIONS

High schools, vocational programs, colleges and organizations should be encouraged to continue to distribute the materials developed during this project including the guidebook, posters and brochures. Copies of the brochures and posters are available through VACIL.

Community organizations, services facilitation organizations, and agencies should be encouraged to include information about consumer-directed employment on their websites, including a link to www.CDSupport.info.

The items listed in the document, *Barriers to Accessing and Using Consumer-Directed Services and Recommendations,* should be addressed by VBPD, impacted agencies, and the disability community.