

8-1-14

To: Employment First stakeholders
From: Statewide Employment First Coordinator Mike Maley
Re: Employment First: VR/DD Supported Employment Trainings
(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

For the past two weeks, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) held a series of trainings around the state on the topic of Supported Employment. The trainings were held in collaboration with staff from the Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS) and Employment First. The last training is Aug. 27 in Bend.



Kerith Williams (left) and Breanna Guthrie from Linn County Developmental Disabilities helps brainstorm ideas on client experience at the recent VR/DD training in Albany.

(Photo: Lightflies)

According to Ann Balzell, the Developmental Disability Policy Analyst for VR, the trainings were unique because they brought together VR counselors with service coordinators from Community Developmental Disability Programs (CDDPs) and personal agents from brokerages.

“Staff from VR and CDDPs have the same goal in mind: to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities obtain and maintain jobs in the community,” Balzell said. “We thought it would be useful for them to come together, face to face, to collaborate and share ideas and best practices.”

The interactive Supported Employment trainings were geared to help staff from VR and ODDS understand each other’s systems, and also discuss ways that field staff could work together to make the process more clear and streamlined for their clients.

The training opened with a collaboration rating exercise, with participants breaking out into groups and rating how well their regions collaborated on pre-plan

(effective and smooth referrals), plan (development, monitoring and outcomes) and post-plan (transitioning to long-term supports).



Samuel Pearce (left) and Sunny Farley from Resource Connections of Oregon (RCO) discuss ideas with VR counselor Heather Lynch (far right) at a recent VR/DD training held in Albany.

(Photo: Lightflies)

Next, training coordinators led the participants through information on common items in VR and ODDS plans, highlighting areas where VR's Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and the Individual Support Plan (ISP) in ODDS could complement each other.

Other topics discussed at the training include Discovery/Career Exploration, and best practices around supported

employment.

Participants spent much of the training time centered in group activities, which allowed people from VR and county developmental disability offices to interact and share ideas. Participants seemed energized and excited about the possibilities for further collaboration.

Thank you all for your continued involvement, support, and advocacy for services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Oregon. If you have comments or other questions, please email them to employment.first@state.or.us

~ Mike

- Additional photos from the VR/DD training in Albany are at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dhsoregon/sets/72157645972439586/>
- Discovery training with Griffin-Hammis Associates is under development. Registration will open in the next few weeks for two-day trainings in the following months/locations:
 1. September: Portland & Pendleton;
 2. October: Medford, Bend & Eugene;
 3. November: Salem.

Please note that employment service providers will be given priority to attend these trainings. Registration details will be announced soon.