Braiding and Leveraging resources

Purpose of Virginia’s Disability Employment Initiative:

**Increase** the capacity of Virginia’s Workforce System to **partner on employment outcomes** for jobseekers with disabilities/veterans **and** create additional resources for **workforce programs** that serve **ALL** customers.

Joseph Ashley Rh.D., CRC
Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services: Assistant Commissioner
Disability Employment Initiative: Project Co-Director
Strategies for state level braiding and leveraging resources

**Executive Management Committee:**
- Created buy in
- Incorporated implementation strategies at local level

**Common objectives across organizations & grants that increased:**
- Use of work incentives
- Access for job seekers with disabilities in the One Stops

**Current examples leveraging resources across grants:**
- RSA Career Pathways
- DOL Apprenticeship
Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs): A service strategy for braiding and leveraging resources

IRTs are for job seekers with:

- Identified multiple barriers to employment
- An increased need for services, supports and/or resources

IRTs increase braiding & leveraging resources by:

- Enhancing cross program collaboration and service alignment
- Developing an integrated career plan

In summary:

This service delivery strategy aligns workforce partners around an employment goal, for an individual job seeker, that allows each provider to maintain their service plans while braiding and leveraging resources, funding and services. The IRT approach can be implemented immediately, with no modification to provider service models.
IRT Implementation in Virginia

360 IRTs conducted under DEI Round I

First Dollar Down (flexible spending account)
- Must be leveraged
- Gap filler

Examples of FDD spending
- training
- tuition
- software
- child care
- car repair
- prosthesis
- hearing aids
- transportation
**IRT Example 1**

**Job seeker:**
Back problems/Hip replacement, ex-felon, drug/alcohol abuse, Ticket holder, Veteran

**IRT Members:** WIOA, Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) & Employment Network services

**IRT Outcomes:**
- WIOA funded CDL Training, transportation vouchers for training
- Dept. of Transportation physical/drug screening

- DRC provided successful job search, interview skills (how to present felony conviction); addressed Ticket overpayments & Medicaid appeal (DRC is a Work Incentives Specialist Advocate)

**Employed:**
Full Time/benefits as a Truck Driver at $12 per hour

**Note:** Total Amount of Ticket to Work program payments = $8,106
IRT Example 2

Job seeker:
Fibromyalgia, ADHD, Depression, frequent job loss due to functional limitations from hidden disability, no health insurance for medication & no transportation.

IRT Members:  WIOA, VR (previous Disability Program Navigator), College Ombudsman, Public School System, Para-transit and VR AT Engineer

IRT Outcomes:
WIOA funded Career Switchers Program
College provided Special education endorsement program/scholarship for certification classes
Public Schools provided long term paid substitute position
VR provided guidance/counseling, paratransit application process, purchased medication, loaner computer for classes

Employed:
Full time with benefits as a Special Education Instructor at $40,000 annually
IRT Example 3

Job seeker:
Learning & heart transplant disabilities, transportation challenges, Ticket Holder

**IRT:** WIOA, Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC), VR and Training provider

**IRT Outcomes:**
WIA funded bulk of CNA training
DRC with First Dollar Down funded some tuition, school supplies and transportation for training program; provided low cost accommodation strategies to training provider
VR covered participation costs during the lecture portion of the training
Training provider recommended job seeker to an Assisted Living Home position opening

**Employed:** Full Time with benefits as a Certified Nursing Assistant at $12.50 now $15 per hour

**Update:** Just purchased a car!
Joseph Ashley Rh.D., CRC
Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
Disability Employment Initiative: Project Co-Director

804-662-7624
joe.ashley@dars.virginia.gov