

Transcript – Introduction to WINTAC Website

Hello and welcome to the website for the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center or the WINTAC.

The WINTAC is a national center that is funded to provide training and technical assistance to state vocational rehabilitation agencies and related rehabilitation professionals and service providers to help them develop these fields and processes needed to meet the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or WIOA. The WINTAC is funded by cooperative agreement from the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The WINTAC has operated and led by the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University, but we have several partners across the nation. These partners include the National Disability Institute and their LEAD Center. The George Washington University Center for Rehabilitation Counseling, Research and Education, the University of Arkansas CURRENTS, PolicyWorks, the Career Index, the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Syracuse University's Burton Blatt Institute.

The WINTAC will be providing technical assistance training to State VR Agencies and partners on five major topic areas related to the implementation of WIOA.

The first topic area that the WINTAC will be providing technical assistance on is the provision of Pre-employment Transition Services to students with disabilities and supporting [inaudible] services to youth with disabilities. The anticipated outcome of this technical assistance will be the implementation of effective and efficient PETS for students with disabilities that set forth Section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The second topic area that the WINTAC will be providing technical assistance on refers to the implementation of the requirements found in Section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act that are under the purview of the Department of Education. Section 511 refers to sub-minimum wage employment. The anticipated outcome of this technical assistance will be implementation by state vocation and rehabilitation agencies in coordination with local and state educational agencies and with the Department of Labor of the requirements in Section 511 of the Rehab Act that are under the purview of the Department of Education.

The third topic area that WINTAC will be providing technical assistance on will be the provision of resources and strategies to help individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment including customized employment and supported employment. The anticipated outcome of this technical assistance will be the increased access to supporting employment and customize employment services. For individuals with the most significant disabilities including youth with the most significant disabilities, we're seeing services under the state vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.

The fourth topic area that the WINTAC will be providing technical assistance on will be integration of the state vocational and rehabilitation program into the workforce development system. The anticipated outcome of this integration will be an increased percentage of individuals with disabilities who receive services through the state vocational rehabilitation agency and who achieve employment outcomes in competitive integrated employment. And also the improved collaboration between state VR Agencies and other core programs and partners of the workforce development system.

The fifth and final topic area that WINTAC will be providing technical assistance on refers to transition to the new common performance accountability system under Section 116 of WIOA including the collection and reporting of common data elements. The anticipated outcome of this technical assistance will be implementation of the new common performance accountability system under section 116 of the WIOA.

The WINTAC will engage in several technical assistance and training activities. These include knowledge development activities such as a review of evidence-based best and promising practices in each of the five topic areas previously discussed, the development of toolkits for each topic area, and an assessment of the need of each VR Agency related to the five topic areas.

The WINTAC will provide technical assistance at three levels. The first level is universal general. The second is targeted or specialized. And the third is intensive or sustained technical assistance. We will provide intensive technical assistance to at least 23 state vocational rehabilitation agencies over the life of the project which is five years at a minimum. The WINTAC, however, will provide intensive TA to as many problems as we have resources for.

The WINTAC will engage in coordination activities that include establishing a community practice for each of the topic areas previously identified, and coordinating and collaborating with other relevant projects and technical assistance centers.

In addition to the technical assistance activities noted above, the WINTAC will engage in three Workforce Innovation Pilot Projects whose goal is to demonstrate how VR programs and their partners can effectively respond to WIOA. The first WIPP will be the career index plus, a labor market information system that includes a functional capacity evaluator and real time job matching specific to local areas. The goal of this workforce innovation pilot project is to provide a tool that VR and workforce agencies can use together to assist mutual clients to obtain and maintain employment.

The second workforce innovation pilot project is a program we call SARA. SARA is an artificial intelligence software program that communicates with clients and with case management systems from VR and from workforce without requiring them to modify their system. The goal is to demonstrate that two systems can integrate and gather and report uncommon data elements without changing the case management systems and to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of both systems in response to the new performance accountability system.

The third workforce innovation pilot project is called our peer mentoring project. In this WIPP youth with disabilities that have been successful mentor other youth on how they can move towards self-sufficiency through higher education and meaningful career, the goals to demonstrate the positive effect of peer mentoring including establishing high expectations and instruction and self-advocacy on educational and employment outcomes for youth with disabilities.