



## Supported Employment Subcommittee

Monthly Meeting Minutes

08/11/2021 via Zoom

**Members:** Becki Koehler, Goodwill; Laurie Ackerman, Ollie Webb; Cheryl Montgomery, NorthStar; Sam Comfort, Angels Guardians; Saige Vohs, UNMC; Ryan Neal, Region V; Carla Lasley, VR; Kristen Larsen, NCDD

**Attendees:** Becki Koehler, Laurie Ackerman, Carla Lasley, Kristen Larsen

1. Historical overview of Subcommittee
  - a. Very active back when DD waivers started to change significantly
    - i. Nebraska state leadership was saying the changes were a directive from CMS
    - ii. This subcommittee researched what other state's waivers and supports
    - iii. Developed a strong relationship with subject matter expert Dr. Lisa Mills
    - iv. Took findings to the state; subcommittee was correct and there was no federal statute
  - b. Ticket to Work program 1999 [Choose Work! - Ticket to Work - Social Security \(ssa.gov\)](#)
  - c. Previous DD Director was very supportive (Joni?), from pre-employment services forward
  - d. Work Innovations & Opportunities Act (WIOA) created a shift of responsibility from the state/waivers onto VR, but it is in the waivers and state should feel ownership
2. SWOC Analysis of Supported Employment in Nebraska
  - a. Strengths:
    - i. Passionate providers
    - ii. Person-Centered Planning work being done with Mark Friedman at NCDD
    - iii. Medicaid Insurance for Workers with Disabilities program [Medicaid Insurance for Workers with Disabilities \(ne.gov\)](#)
    - iv. "Invisible" benefits from supported employment that save money down the road, such as positive behavior changes, improved mental health
  - b. Weaknesses:
    - i. Providers in survival mode
    - ii. Spin on publicly released data give impression things are fine
    - iii. Previous local experts have retired
    - iv. Hard-pressed to find experts on benefits planning in Nebraska
    - v. Waitlist for certain services
  - c. Opportunities:
    - i. NCDD contracting with Dr. Lisa Mills to complete state-wide assessment
      1. Results will help influence senators
      2. Could utilize her previously published work on the subject as well
    - ii. NCDD has received proposals regarding transition programming
    - iii. ARPA funding
    - iv. Educate and reenergize younger generation of leaders
    - v. Summer Institutes with school transition staff and guardians to unify and amplify advocacy efforts
    - vi. CLL student workers can help raise awareness & support subcommittee's efforts

- vii. Reenergize APSE trainings
  - d. Challenges:
    - i. Funding – states only have so much money to go around
      - 1. Providers end up doing things for free because ‘best practices’ are not supported by current waivers
    - ii. State doesn’t feel ‘ownership’; abdicate responsibility to VR
3. Becki Koehler was voted as subcommittee spokesperson to report out at NASP meetings

**Take-Away Message:** Work is the natural way we all integrate and contribute to our communities on a daily basis, and everyone should have that opportunity.

**Next meeting:** (2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays) September 8<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm via Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/94532611647>

If you would like to join the Supported Employment subcommittee, please email [alana@neserviceproviders.org](mailto:alana@neserviceproviders.org)