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Institute Brief: Quality Employment Services: Will You Know It When You See It?

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Recommended Citation
Hoff, David, "Institute Brief: Quality Employment Services: Will You Know It When You See It?" (1999). *The Institute Brief Series, Institute for Community Inclusion.* Paper 17.
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TOOLS FOR INCLUSION

Issue No. 26 • Updated 2011

family and consumer series

Quality Employment Services: Will You Know It When You See It?

By David Hoff

Introduction

When purchasing most products or services, we typically weigh a variety of factors before making a decision to hand over our hard-earned dollars. Even the most routine purchases, such as a newspaper or candy bar, are done with some thought about the quality and reputation of the product. When spending a lot of money for something which will have a major impact on our lives, a significant amount of research is often done before making the actual purchase decision. For many types of products and services, there are lots of places to get information in order to make a good purchasing decision. Yet, when it comes to the quality of employment services for people with disabilities, the consumers of these services have little to guide them. Frequently, they have to rely on professionals to provide them with information on the variety and quality of services available. Hopefully this information is comprehensive and objective, but these professionals often have a vested interest in the selection of a specific service option and a limited knowledge of a person's unique needs.

Even though it is often not the consumer's own money being used to purchase services, it is their own life. People with disabilities and their families need to look at the selection of employment and vocational service options as they would any other major purchasing decision, since these decisions can have an impact on the person's life for many years to come. The intent of this brief is to provide guidelines and a process for people with disabilities to evaluate service options, in order to receive services that best meet their individual needs.

INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION
UMASS BOSTON UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

Why You Should Critically Evaluate Service Options

Investigating and critically assessing services takes time and energy. Is it worth the bother? **The answer is definitely Yes!**

All Programs are Not Alike

While they are sometimes portrayed as being fairly similar, all employment programs for people with disabilities are not alike. Programs vary in size, types and variety of services offered, service and staff quality, people served, and most importantly, quality of results.

You Do Have a Choice

People with disabilities have much more say in the services they receive then they may realize. Sometimes funding agencies present services available with a "take it or leave it" attitude or from the point of view of an "expert" who knows what's best. There are other times that funding agencies are simply unaware of the variety of options available. People with disabilities need to advocate for service alternatives, which means knowing what alternatives are available.

Are There Alternatives?

While evaluating programs and service options may sound like a good idea, the reality all too often has been a limited number of possibilities for services. Programs may not have the capacity to take additional referrals; there may simply be a limited number of service providers, particularly in rural areas; or, while there might be some alternatives, there may still be a lack of quality services to properly meet an individual's needs. There is still a need to evaluate what's available, to see if it's necessary to advocate for making changes to existing services or to develop creative alternatives.

Empowerment Through Knowledge

Taking the time to learn about and critically assess service options allows you to be much more in the "driver's seat" when negotiating with funding agencies and service providers, rather than passively accepting what you're being told.

Start by Figuring Out What You Want and Need

Before gathering information on services, you need to figure out what's important to you. Think about what jobs you have had in the past and what services you received. What worked? What didn't work? What did you like? What didn't you like? Some areas to think about:

- ❒ Do you need help in finding out what kind of job and career you would like and what you are good at?
- ❒ What kinds of help do you need now? In the future? Will your support needs change over time? Are there times you need more help than others?
- ❒ How active can you personally be in the job search? Do you just need some help in finding a job, or someone to take the main role in the job search including setting up and going with you on interviews?
- ❒ What are your hopes for employment? Type of job? Number of hours? Pay? Benefits?
- ❒ What is most important to you? Pay and benefits? Fun people to work with? Safety and security? Location? Job satisfaction? Potential for promotions and growth?
- ❒ What type of services do you want and need on the job? Will you need help from agency staff at the job site (i.e., a job coach)? If so, do you need help only when you start the job, or will you sometimes need help even after you've been on the job for awhile?
- ❒ How often will you need help on the job? Every day? Weekly? Less frequently?
- ❒ Do you need help with transportation?
- ❒ Do you need help managing your benefits (e.g., Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, subsidized housing)?
- ❒ Do you need help finding things to do when you're not working?
- ❒ How are services going to be paid for? Some of the funding options: your state developmental disability agency, mental health or public vocational rehabilitation agency; funding from social security through the PASS, IRWE, or Ticket to Work Program; general workforce investment resources available via One-Stop Centers; private funds of your own.

New Service Trends

In past years, there have been many changes in expectations and what opportunities people consider "best practices" in services for people with disabilities. These changes in the disability field have created the need for new methods to evaluate services. These changes include:

Movement Toward Community Based Services
In the past, when most programs (such as sheltered workshops) were facility based, it was fairly easy to tour the facility, meet program participants and staff, and make a judgment about the quality of services being offered. The current movement towards helping people get jobs in the community instead of spending their days in a "facility", is exciting and a much welcomed trend. However, as individuals work in regular jobs, it is harder to get information and see the services offered, since there is not a stationary "facility". What is needed are creative ways to evaluate community-based services.

Changes in Funding Methods:

In an effort to give people more control and choice over where the money spent on their behalf goes, the use of vouchers and other flexible financing mechanisms is increasing. The Ticket-to-Work Program from Social Security, and the Individual Training Accounts (ITA) from the One-Stop System are just two of the most obvious examples. This desirable shift to greater individual control brings with it a need to properly evaluate services.

Community Employment as a Desired Outcome
With the expansion of school-to-work initiatives, a growing number of people with disabilities are leaving school prepared and expecting to work in the community. These new graduates need to be able to decide which services are best for them, to ensure they have the opportunity for the type of job, career, and life they want.

Getting the Information

One of the challenges you will face is how to get the information you need, in order to make a good decision about which services are best for you. You can use the same strategies you would use when making any other major "purchase" or looking for professional services. For example, when looking for a doctor, people will usually ask their friends for ideas and recommendations. You can similarly talk to "customers" who have had experience using employment services. Here are some ideas on how to get information:

- ❒ Talk to friends.
- ❒ Talk to other people who have used similar services.
- ❒ Talk to other families.
- ❒ Talk to teachers.
- ❒ Ask state and county funding agencies, such as the Departments of Intellectual Disabilities, Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health, Vocational Rehabilitation, or Office for Refugees and Immigrants for a list of provider agencies in your local area.
- ❒ Contact America's Service Locator from the U.S. Department of Labor (www.servicelocator.org; (877) US2-JOBS), or your state department of employment and training for the location of your local One-Stop Center, and information on the availability of other workforce investment resources.
- ❒ Find out if state agencies have information and statistics on how successful individual agencies have been in helping people find and keep jobs.
- ❒ Interview the directors and staff of provider agencies. Ask for consumer and family references.
- ❒ Read agency's annual reports and other written material from the provider.
- ❒ Contact your local chapter of the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE).
- ❒ Contact local self-advocacy and family advocacy groups (for example, Citizen Advisory Board, Families Organizing for Change).
- ❒ Talk to your case manager at the funding agency.
- ❒ Talk to staff in local Mutual Assistance Associations and community-based minority organizations.

In gathering information, it's important to keep the following in mind:

Get a variety of viewpoints.

For example, a funding agency may consider an agency to be a good provider because they do their paperwork well. However, this may not mean the agency provides the quality employment services you are looking for, and may not be the best advocate for the people they serve.

Remember what is important to others may not be important to you, and vice versa.

For example, you may not want or need a lot of help from agency staff on the job, while other people may feel that regularly having a staff person present on the job is critical to their success. Some families simply value having some place safe for their family member to go every day, such as a sheltered workshop, while others want a good job in the community. Also, some individuals may want to work with others who are bilingual and bicultural.

All too often, the expectations for people with disabilities or the services available have not been very high.

Services which are regarded as good by many people, may not be good enough for you.

Remember that numbers don't tell the whole story.

Look at both objective job placement data (number of jobs, hours, benefits) as well as the quality of jobs, and the quality of relationships that staff have with program participants and families.

What to Ask

In gaining a comprehensive "picture" of an organization and judging whether it's the right one for you, the following questions may be helpful.

Agency Structure

- ❒ Is the program based in the community (an office) or is it run out of a facility (like a sheltered workshop)? If it is based in a facility, does a new program participant have to spend time in the facility before or during the job search?
- ❒ Does the agency offer a variety of services, or is the agency strictly focused on community employment for people with disabilities?
- ❒ What are the agency's guidelines for service eligibility? When it is unclear whether a person will easily succeed in employment, are they willing to give people a chance?
- ❒ Who does the agency serve? People with what kind of disability? What ages? What gender, races, and cultural backgrounds?
- ❒ Where does the agency receive funding from? If the agency is mainly government funded (as most are), what specific state agencies provide funding? Is there more than one funding source? How stable is that funding?
- ❒ How many people does the agency serve? *(Note: Studies have shown that agencies which serve more than 100 individuals are generally not as successful in meeting the individual community employment needs of people with disabilities—Institute for Community Inclusion, April 1994)*

Placement

- ❒ How many people did the agency assist in finding jobs in the last year?
- ❒ What types of jobs has the agency helped people find?
- ❒ How long do individuals stay in the jobs they find with help of the agency?
- ❒ What do people earn? How many hours are they working? Do they get benefits (health insurance, vacation)?
- ❒ Does the agency offer individual placements? Are group placements (enclaves) used?
- ❒ What happens when a person does not succeed on a job?
  Is the agency willing to help a second or third time to get a job?
- ❒ Can the agency help me get a job in my community?

Staff

- ❒ What kind of staff turnover does the agency have? How long has the director been there?
- ❒ How many staff are available to help people (i.e., direct service staff)?
- ❒ What kind of qualifications and credentials do staff have?
- ❒ Are there bilingual and bicultural staff?

Services

- ❒ Ask agency staff to describe the typical process for providing services for an individual. How does the agency tailor services to individual needs? What opportunities are provided for the person to exercise real control and choice over the services provided?
- ❒ What kind of planning process is used to design services, job search and support? How are family, friends, residential providers and other significant individuals involved in this process?
- ❒ How does the agency help people figure out what kind of job they want (i.e., how do they do vocational assessment and evaluation)? Does the agency use community settings?
- ❒ What role does the agency take with employers

and people with disabilities in job search efforts, placement, job accommodation and ongoing support? Do they view their role as one of providing assistance and support, or is it more of a "take charge" authoritative approach?

- ❒ Does the agency offer services and materials in different languages?
- ❒ How does the agency assist individuals in managing the impact of income on public benefits (e.g., Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, subsidized housing)? What is the level of agency expertise and resources in benefits management?
- ❒ How does the agency emphasize the use of existing "natural" supports from employers and the community, rather than staff and the agency providing all necessary assistance and support?
- ❒ How does the agency assist and support individuals during periods of unemployment or underemployment?
- ❒ Does the staff talk about the individuals served in respectful and adult-appropriate ways?
- ❒ Does the agency create a welcoming environment? Are people greeted when they have an appointment? Does the agency have a welcome letter or packet for new consumers?
- ❒ Can the agency provide recommendations from people who have previously received services from them?
- ❒ How does the agency fund and provide for the long-term support needs for the people they serve?
- ❒ Does the agency appear to be organized and professional?
- ❒ What is the reputation of the agency in the community?
- ❒ Does the agency have common bathroom and dining facilities for staff and consumers?
- ❒ Do you feel comfortable with the way you are treated? Are your questions answered in a way that respects and acknowledges your concerns and provides real answers?
- ❒ How will services respect an individual's unique cultural traditions and beliefs?

Consumer and Family Perspectives

Qualitative research has pointed out the need for consumers and family members to critically evaluate service options. Among the implications of this research:

Professionals working with individuals with disabilities need to understand the importance of meaningful work in the lives of people with disabilities

- Work plays an integral role in developing self-esteem as well as a sense of being part of society
- Work needs to be consistent with the individual's goals and interests, not just compatible with available job openings

A need for a variety of individualized supports and opportunities on the job

- Use of natural supports of co-workers and supervisors on job site
- Flexible job coach support that responds to individual and family needs

Greater consumer and family involvement in the vocational rehabilitation system

- Education of consumers as to their rights and responsibilities in the VR system
- Empowerment of consumers to take control over their decisions
- As appropriate, active family involvement of family in rehabilitation system through support and information sharing

From Consumer and Family Perspectives on the Meaning of Work, By Ruth Freedman and Sheila Fesko, Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston

What is a Quality Program?

If you want a job in the community, here are some guidelines for deciding whether a program is the right one for you. No program is going to meet all these perfectly, but programs should recognize these as important things they should work toward.

Eligibility

Everyone has the right to a job in the community, without regard to label or severity of disability.

Individual Choice

The individual receiving services helps decide what services are provided, how they are provided, and which staff provide them.

Service Setting

Services are provided in integrated community settings (e.g., businesses in the community), with the chance to spend time, communicate and develop friendships with people without disabilities. Services respect and try to accommodate diverse cultural and lingustic preferences.

Assessment

Assessment (evaluation) is not done to figure out "what's wrong" and how to "fix it," or to see if the person is "ready" to work. The agency helps the person figure out their dreams, hopes, interests and capabilities. Jobs and support services are developed in response to what the person wants and needs. Community settings (i.e., real employers) are used for all assessments.

Service and Placement Design

Rather than "fitting" people into existing programs, people are helped to find their own jobs (not group situations), and are paid directly by the employer at the competitive wage for the job. For example, a program may give options such as, "You can go in our janitorial training or food service training program" or "You can go to our enclave at the supermarket or the packaging company." What they should be saying is, "Let's find out what kind of job you would really be happy doing, and we'll help you find it."

Use of Community Resources

The program makes every effort to help people use services and resources used by all community members (people with and without disabilities). "Special" services for people with disabilities (such as special transportation) are used only when there are no other possibilities. For example, a person who wants to learn office skills or English as a second language would be provided help to take a course at the local community college, rather than receiving the training from a disability agency.

Behavior Challenges

A good provider realizes that people have a right to work in the community, even if they act differently or have behavior problems. Instead of controlling or modifying behavior before a person is given a chance at a job, emphasis is placed on matching the person in a situation which meets their needs and/or lessens the impact of the behavior. People are placed in jobs where their behavior is acceptable (e.g., an individual who speaks in a loud tone of voice is placed in an active, noisy work environment), in places which will not cause behavior problems (e.g., an individual with a compulsive eating disorder is placed in a job with no access to food), or simply in environments where they are given more control, thus reducing problem behavior over time.

Training and Staff Role

Training is done to the fullest extent possible by the employer. Agency staff see their role as providing

consultation to supervisors, co-workers and other community members, to help the person with a disability succeed on the job. Staff do not replace typical employer training and support, but only add to it if necessary.

Training On The Job

Training and support are customized to the specific needs of the individual, the employer, and the social aspects of the job. Training and accommodations are always done in ways that are respectful of the individual, and encourage integration into the job environment. For example, co-workers interact and give feedback directly to the employee, and not through the job coach; the job coach does not speak for the employee.

Skill and Social Match

In developing jobs, the agency not only looks for a job which is a good match to the skills, culture, and interests of the individual, but also finds jobs which a person is comfortable in socially. For example, a person who is naturally quiet and likes to keep to themselves, would not be placed in a job which requires lots of personal interactions and where everyone else is outgoing.

Social Inclusion

Jobs are developed and services provided so that people not only get a job, but also get the chance to make friends and participate in social activities connected with the job. People are encouraged and provided assistance to participate in such activities as: going to lunch with co-workers, coffee club, birthday celebrations, social gatherings and parties outside of work, and company sports teams.

Career Development

Services are provided in a way that supports ongoing career development. Individuals have the opportunity to improve their skills, change positions and jobs, and change careers. Career development includes the opportunity for increased hours, benefits, and employment on a full-time basis with financial independence.

Holistic Approach

Having a good job is seen as one part of your life that relates to other things, including social relationships, recreation, and where you live. Services are provided so that a person is able to experience all aspects of community life.

The purpose of employment services for people with disabilities are not simply to help a person with a disability get a job.

Employment is about people:

- Reaching their full potential
- Becoming participating community members
- Having a valued role, with the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else
- Experiencing and enjoying all that life has to offer
- Defining themselves and their place in the world

A job is simply one of the ways for these things to happen.

The Disability Service System: How Is It Organized?

The disability service system can seem confusing with numerous funding sources and public and private agencies. The following information can help people with disabilities better understand how the service system is organized and operates.

Public Agencies

There are a variety of public agencies involved in employment for people with disabilities. While the structure varies significantly from state to state, in general these public agencies operate in two ways:

1. Providing services directly to individuals who qualify for their services.
2. Funding community organizations (typically private, non-profit agencies) and private contractors to provide services to individuals.

Some public agencies both provide employment services themselves and fund employment services to sub-contractors who provide more intensive services, while others are strictly funding sources.

Some public agencies may have limited funding or waiting lists for services, while others may not. Also, not all people with disabilities are eligible for funding or services from all agencies, but individuals may be eligible for services from more than one agency. It is therefore important for people with disabilities to check all the options that they may be eligible for.

How do public agencies operate?

The specifics of how public agencies operate varies significantly from state to state. Different agencies in the same state may also operate differently. In some cases, agencies have a central office, with a network of local offices throughout the state. In some cases agencies are a separate department in the state government, while others may be a department or office in a larger state agency (such as in a department of human services or labor). Services may also be administered at a county level, possibly through a county mental health or public health department. Case management and service coordination is also handled in a variety of ways. This may be done by a public agency, or it may be handled by a private agency under contract with the state or county. Also, in some states, a number of different agencies may collaborate to fund services for one person; in other states, a person may typically receive funding from only one agency. Consumers and families may find it useful to become familiar not only with the agencies in their local area, but the structures they use to fund or provide services.

Public agencies include:

Intellectual/ Developmental Disability (IDD)

Each state has an agency or department that is responsible for services for people with developmental disabilities and intellectual disabilities. The name varies from state to state – Division or Office of Developmental Disabilities, and Department or Office of Intellectual Disabilities are typical names. The scope of services provided and individuals served varies from state to state. IDD agencies typically provide long-term funding for individuals. A listing of state IDD agencies is located at ***www.nasddds.org/memberagencies/index.shtml***

Mental Health Agencies

Every state has a public mental health department or agency that meets the needs of individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Services are both short-term and long-term in nature. A listing of state mental health agencies is available at ***www.nasmhpd.org/members.cfm***

One-Stop Career Centers/America's Workforce Network

Every local major population area has a One-Stop Center through which all individuals (including people with disabilities) can access a variety of publicly funded employment and training services. One-Stops are a major component of America's Workforce Network, coordinated by the U.S. Dept. of Labor. Locations of local One-Stop Centers, and information on other services of America's Workforce Network can be obtained by contacting

America's Service Locator at ***www.servicelocator.org*** or by phone at 877-872-5627.

(For additional info on One-Stop Centers, see the ICI publication "One-Stop Career Centers: A Guide for Job Seekers with Disabilities")

Social Security Administration

The Social Security Administration funds employment services through the following programs.

Ticket-to-Work Program: Under this program, individuals receiving Social Security disability benefits (Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance) receive a "Ticket to Work." Individuals can use this "Ticket" to obtain services from any qualified provider of employment services. Learn more about the "Ticket" program at ***www.yourtickettowork.com***.

IRWE (Impairment-Related Work Expense): Individuals can exclude disability-related work expenses (such as job coaching, transportation, and accommodation costs) from the gross earned income counted in figuring cash benefits.

PASS (Plans for Achieving Self-Support) Program: Individuals can pay for employment and training services by putting aside income that would normally result in a reduction of their cash benefits.

*(Find additional information at **www.ssa.gov/work**)*

School System

Individuals with disabilities who receive special education services and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) are entitled to provision and/or funding of employment services by their school system until they turn 22 (in some states this may be higher) or until they graduate, whichever comes first.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Each state has a public Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) system. To be eligible for VR services, a person must:

- ❒ have a physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment;
- ❒ be able to benefit from VR services in terms of employment; and
- ❒ require VR services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment.

Priority is given to people with the most significant disabilities. VR services are typically oriented towards a specific employment goal and therefore are usually time-limited in nature. An individual's case is typically closed, and funding of services is discontinued, once an individual is stable on a job for 90 days. If an individual is going to need funding for job support beyond 90 days (such as job coaching services), then another source of funding must be found for these services.

Agency for Blind and Visually Impaired

Each state has an agency that serves individuals who are Blind or Visually Impaired. These agencies are part of the VR system, but are considered to be separate from basic VR services. They may be housed within state VR agencies or function as a separate, co-equal department.

Links to each state's Public VR Agency, and Agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired can be found at ***http://askjan.org/cgi-win/typequery.exe?902***

(For additional info on VR, see the ICI publication "Getting the Most From the Public Vocational Rehabilitaiton System")

Private Agencies

A variety of private agencies provide employment-related services to individuals with disabilities. The major funding source for these agencies is typically one or more of the public agencies listed above. (Other sources are federal grants, private foundations, charitable contributions, and user fees.) These organizations vary considerably in size, type of services, quality of services, and population served. For example, some agencies focus exclusively on employment, while others offer a wide variety of services, such as non-employment daytime activities, housing and family support. Some agencies focus on one population group (such as individuals with developmental disabilities), while others serve people with a variety of disabilities. These community based organizations go by many different names, but some of the more typical ones are:

- Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs)
- Supported Employment Programs
- Employment Service Providers
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services (for individuals with mental health issues)
- Club Houses (a program for people with mental health issues)

National Resources

Association for Persons in Supported Employment

451 Hungerford Drive, Suite 700
Rockville, MD 20850
Voice: (301) 279-0060 ; Fax: (301) 251-3762
jenny@apse.org
www.apse.org

National supported employment organization. Has state and local chapters.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

West Virginia University
P.O. Box 6080
Morgantown, West Virginia 26506-6080
Voice: (800) 526-7234; TTY: (877) 781-9403
Fax: (304) 293-5407
jan@askjan.org
www.jan.wvu.edu

Info on employment issues and accommodation

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

1825 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20009
Voice/TTY: (202) 884-8200; (800) 695-0285
Fax: (202) 884-8441
nichcy@aed.org
www.nichcy.org

Main focus of NICHCY is on children and youth, however maintains state and local listings of disability-related organizations, parent groups, and professional associations, applicable to all age groups.

Pacer Center

8161 Normandale Boulevard
Bloomington, MN 55437-1044
Voice: (800) 537-2237 or (952) 838-9000
Fax: (952) 838-0199
TTY: (952) 838-0190
pacer@pacer.org
www.pacer.org

Resource center for individuals with disabilities and their families

Office on Disability Employment Policy

U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210
Voice: (866) 487-2365; TTY: (877) 889-5627
www.dol.gov/odep/

Information on employment issues

Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities

U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite S-2220
Washington, DC 20210
Voice: (202) 693-4939; TTY: (202) 693-4920
Fax: (202) 693-4929
ptfead@dol.gov
www.dol.gov/dol/_sec/public/programs/ptfead/main.htm

Advocates and coordinates a variety of national efforts to increase employment of adults with disabilities

Self Advocates Becoming Empowered

P.O. Box 30142
Kansas City, MO 64112
sabenation@gmail.com
www.sabeusa.org

National self-advocacy organization

Social Security Administration (SSA)

Office of Public Inquiries
6401 Security Blvd., Windsor Park Bldg.
Baltimore, MD 21235
Voice: (800) 772-1213; TTY: (800) 325-0778

SSA has a national network of regional and local offices

- Emp. Support Programs: www.ssa.gov/work
- Disability Programs: www.ssa.gov/disability

TASH

1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 235
Washington, DC 20036
Voice: (202) 540-9020; Fax: (202) 540-9019
info@tash.org
www.tash.org

National disability advocacy organization. Has state and local chapters.

Glossary of Disability & Employment Terms

Clubhouse Program
A psycho-social rehabilitation program for individuals who have psychiatric disabilities, with an emphasis on participant control, working in conjunction with paid staff. Clubhouses often provide assistance with employment.

Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP)
A community-based agency, typically private and non-profit, that provides employment services to adults with disabilities. The majority of funding for most CRPs comes from government agencies and funding sources.
Employment Specialist: A staff member from a human service agency who helps people with disabilities obtain employment. This term is sometimes used interchangeably with the term "job coach".

Enclaves
A group of individuals with disabilities who work in a community business with ongoing support and possibly supervision provided by rehabilitation agency staff.

Job Coach
A staff member from a human service agency who assists an employee with a disability with their integration into the work place.

Natural Supports
Natural, supportive relationships that are fostered and developed among individuals with disabilities and non-disabled co-workers and others. An emphasis in recent years in the disability field has been on using these relationships to support an individual with a disability, rather than relying on paid staff for assistance and support.

Person-Centered Planning
A planning process that focuses on the individual and his/her interests, strengths, and needs. Emphasis is placed on the planning process being controlled by the individual with a disability, with involvement by individuals of their choice from their personal network. There are numerous models of this type of planning available.

Provider Agency or Vendor
A private agency that offers residential, vocational, and/or support services that are purchased by state human service agencies.

Situational Assessment
Identifies an individual's vocational interests and skills through the performance of job tasks in a variety of actual work environments in the community.

Supported Employment
The provision of ongoing support from an external source (e.g., a community rehabilitation provider or state agency) to an individual in a paid, community-based employment setting, where the majority of the workers do not have disabilities. Supported employment typically uses a job coach (also known as an employment specialist or consultant) to provide assistance on the job.

Transition
In the special education and rehabilitation fields, the process of a student's movement from school-based, school-sponsored activities and services to community-based and/or adult services.

ICI

Institute for Community Inclusion
www.communityinclusion.org

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www.twitter.com/ICInclusion

YouTube
www.youtube.com/communityinclusion

This issue of *Tools for Inclusion* was funded by the New England TACE Center (Region 1), a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston. The TACE Center is funded by the US Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration (grant #H235M010131). The original publication was funded by a grant from the US Department of Education,National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. Points of view or opinions do not necessarily represent official US Department of Education policy.

TACE NEW ENGLAND
Region 1

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Sheila Fesko, Ruth Freedman, Marty Gold, Ashley Hunt, Melanie Jordan, Joe Marrone, David Temelini, Cindy Thomas, Margaret Van Gelder for their contributions. Special thanks to Liz Obermayer, self-advocate, for her excellent editorial feedback and guidance in the preparation of this material.

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