

Service Provider Promising Practice

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TOPIC:
Employment performance
measurement, quality
assurance, and program oversight

Work Inc. (Massachusetts): Using Data to Track Job Development Activities During Organizational Change

Background

Work Inc. is a medium-sized CRP in Massachusetts that has served people with IDD for the last 32 years. Over the last 15 years, since Work Inc. began tracking employment services data, its approach to employment supports in the community has evolved. The agency's data-tracking methods have both guided and developed alongside this change process.

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Implementation

In 2002, Work Inc.'s employment services team set up two databases: one to track information about job seekers they were serving, and another to track information about employers who had offered placement opportunities. Employment staff responsible for job coaching and job development also set a goal to spend 40% of their time each week working directly with the business community.

In 2009, the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) established the goal of eliminating sheltered employment options. DDS began requiring CRPs to develop plans to transfer their customers into community employment.

At this time, Work Inc. was revising its strategic plan. Management hired a consultant to review organizational employment data, collect qualitative data through interviews and focus groups, and study local and state employment trends.

Work Inc. used the consultant's findings to support the closure of the majority of their center-based services. The data-tracking tools Work Inc. already had in place were important as employment staff began helping a much larger number of people find community employment.

Over the last five years, Work Inc.'s community employment services team has continued to adapt data-tracking tools into a robust, sophisticated system through the use of Salesforce (www.salesforce.com/), a leads-tracking tool. The employment team uses Salesforce to document their job development activities and job seeker outcomes.

The vice-president of workforce development for Work Inc. says that staff adopted this system quickly, regularly submitting their case notes. For example, the Salesforce system allows them to enter the number of times an employment specialist has observed a job seeker in work or non-work situations, and notes taken during each observation. Salesforce then lets staff document the steps they take as they carry out their work with individuals.



Impact

Data-tracking has been integral to organizational change at Work Inc. However, as the employment team maximizes the flexibility of their data-tracking system, the long-term effects on job development practices at the CRP have yet to be fully understood.

The vice-president of workforce development is studying the data for guidance on engaging in job development with a wider variety of employers. Work Inc.'s employment team plans to use their data to support job-development strategies that result in high-quality employment outcomes.

Suggestions for Replication

- » Employ a data-collection system that is relatively easy to use, yet able to yield the information necessary to continually improve services.
- » Establish systems that can be adapted as new strategies emerge in the field or goals change within your organization.
- » Have a clear set of metrics for benchmarks and outcomes. Develop clear expectations against which to measure performance.

For more information on this practice contact thinkwork@umb.edu



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