Objective Statement: Pennsylvania will be an Employment First state. Employment is the first priority for people with disabilities.

State Employment Leadership Network Initiative and Employment Resource Rebalancing Initiative

Pennsylvania currently receives technical assistance from the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) for all employment initiatives. We are also participating in the Employment Resource Rebalancing Initiative—a cross agency initiative in which the Federal Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) will provide technical assistance to increase integrated employment outcomes for people with disabilities. We are awaiting the findings report and further instruction.

Employment First Policy and Service Definitions

The current draft Employment First Policy will be revised to include a clear definition of employment, guiding principles, expectations, collaborations, outcomes, and clear requirements for all stakeholders. The Employment Supplement will be deleted. We will review and revise the draft service definitions. The service definitions will be flexible and incentivize employment. The draft documents will be reviewed by ODP Management, Executive staff and Leesa Allen for approval.

Office of Developmental Programs/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Collaboration

An ongoing employment initiative is to establish better collaboration between the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and ODP so that both agencies can maximize services. To that end, we created a seamless referral process between ODP and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) for new waiver participants that will meet CMS assurances that the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) is the payer of last resort. A joint bulletin between ODP and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), number 00-14-05, was released June 30, 2014, entitled “OVR Referral Process for Employment Services”. This bulletin ensures that people can receive employment services from OVR without risking waiver services and reflects the commitment between ODP and OVR to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. A copy of the bulletin may be accessed on the DPW website by using the bulletin number. An addendum to the AE Operating Agreement has been written and reviewed by our legal department and will be sent to all AEs for signatures.

Align Bureau of Autism Services and State Centers with ODP Employment Initiative

ODP must align employment policy, service definitions, and data collection with the needs of the Bureau of Autism Services and State Centers. Current policies, service definitions, and data collection processes must be reviewed and reconciled with draft service definitions and the employment first policy. A thorough evaluation and report of findings will be completed by the Bureau of Autism Services and then reviewed by Executive Staff. State Center employment expectations, policy, and data collection needs will be reviewed and
aligned with the ODP employment initiative. Employment leads will be identified at all State Centers to provide consistency throughout the state. Data collection goals will be reviewed for each State Center and needs and resources will be identified. A findings report will be completed for review by Executive Staff and the Waiver Streamlining team and then finalized.

**Develop Employment Data Tracking System**

We will develop a data tracking system for employment performance measurement, quality assurance, and program oversight. Current systems used by Administrative Entities (AEs) and providers will be reviewed, as well as those in use by other Commonwealth agencies. The SELN will provide recommendations and resources on systems being used in other states. A report will be drafted and reviewed by ODP executive staff. An Employment First work group will develop and recommend criteria for a data collection system for review by ODP executive staff. A data collection system will be developed and implemented on a pilot basis to ensure that necessary changes/enhancements can be made before statewide implementation.

**Help Sheltered Workshop Providers to Move Toward Supported Employment Services**

ODP has quarterly meetings with Sheltered Workshop providers to help assess their needs and to update them on current trends and the CMS Final Rule. We will use these meetings to help sheltered workshop providers will form workgroups to come up with solutions and resources. The SELN will help to determine information needed regarding the current ODP providers, the services they provide, the individuals they serve, and their needs to create an enhanced supported employment service delivery system. A findings report will presented to ODP Management and Executive staff. The SELN will help to develop an implementation strategy to help sheltered workshop providers to build capacity as supported employment providers.

During the May 29th Extended Team meeting, our Implementation Team met with the Futures Planning Team group members and shared an overview of activities since December 2013 and our steps for the next 6 months. Our plan going forward is to:

- Collect information, both internal and external to Pennsylvania regarding employment data collection systems and how to help sheltered workshops to build capacity to provide community based employment services.
- Release the joint ODP/OVR Bulletin to streamline the current referral process.
- Revise the current draft Employment First Policy and Service Definitions.
- Align the ODP employment initiative with the Bureau of Autism Services and the State Centers.
- Plan and conduct face-to-face forums across the state to discuss changes to our employment service delivery system and to obtain input from individuals and family members.

We are also seeking additional input during our research phase on promising employment practices and pilots, employment data collection systems, and promising transition practices and pilots for our Implementation Team to review. Please submit any documents regarding employment to Diane Cashman at Dcashman@pa.gov.