Breaking Barriers San Diego: San Diego Workforce Partnership

Transcript of Webinar

YouthBuild Webinar Series

Meet the Workforce Innovation Fund Round Two Grantees:
Grant Project Presentations

Wednesday, February 17, 2016
NICOLE MURPHY: Thank you, and good morning. My name is Nicole Murphy, and I am the manager of special projects here in San Diego at the San Diego Workforce Partnership. And I am the project manager for our WIF project called Breaking Barriers San Diego.

We also have another staff member here at the partnership, Tanissha Harrell, who serves as our program specialist and our lead research coordinator with our third-party evaluator. We were funded at the $6 million level to conduct a randomized control trial, and our evaluation firm is MDRC. They're a non-profit education and social policy research organization.

So our project is implementing a supported employment model called Individual Placement and Support. It has been well-tested and researched in serving mentally ill populations, and our project will use it to serve TANF and other low-income adults with a broad range of disabilities.

So IPS is a strengths-based and outcome focused approach to vocational rehab. It emphasizes helping people obtain competitive work in the community and provides the supports necessary to ensure success in the workplace. It was actually created by Dartmouth University. IPS helps individuals find jobs which are integrated in the community. These jobs pay at least minimum wage or the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.

And individuals are offered help finding and keeping jobs that capitalize on their personal strengths and motivation. And the primary goal of IPS is to find truly a natural fit between individual strengths and experiences with jobs in the community. The overall philosophy of IPS is the belief that every person that has an interest in working is capable of getting a job.

So the main components of our project include training our career center staff on this specific supported employment model and to evaluate implementation with a standardized fidelity review tool that is provided by Dartmouth University. We're also focused on strengthening our partnerships with public workforce systems and our behavioral health system of care here in our county to identify eligible individuals and have those public workforce partners participate in team-based employment services. We are also looking to create employment opportunities that include the option for the participant to disclose their disability or not to disclose their disability status.

Other key features of this particular supported employment model include zero exclusion criteria. So if somebody expressed an interest in working, we don't qualify that statement at all, regardless of the fact of where they're at in their recovery from a substance use disorder, criminal history background, et cetera. Customer choice and interest really drives the job search. So we're not looking to find opportunities with employers and then try and fit the participant into those jobs.

Rather we start with the participant and their specific interests, and then we go and find the job that they're interested in. Also of note, our staff will have a 20 to 1 community case load, and most of the services will be provided in the community versus requiring the participant to go to our career center. So we'll meet them at their mental health provider, at a welfare to work site, at a local coffee shop, or even in their home.
Our key partners for this project are TANF or our CalWORKs welfare to work providers here in the County of San Diego. The county actually contracts out their CalWORKs services. So we have two contractors that we're working with on behalf of the county. We're also working with the Department of Rehabilitation and the county-funded behavioral health providers. Again in this county the county contracts out the majority of their behavioral health providers. So we're dealing with a broad range of community-based organizations.

Types of other partners, we're working with local businesses, the regional center to identify potential participants, community colleges, adult ed, shelter and housing organizations that house individuals receiving these types of benefits, and other social service agencies.

Our goals are to enroll 1,000 individuals over the next 24 months. Half of those will be enrolled in our services provided by the AJCs and you'll see some of our target metrics here that we are looking to track in terms of outcomes. These outcomes are actually very much aligned with a traditional IPS program that only serves people with severe mental illness. So we're quite curious to see the results in serving this population with our project.

Our early successes include a really productive and successful partnership with our third-party evaluator. They were involved in a very small pilot in Minnesota about three years ago serving a TANF population. So we're very excited to have them at the table for our project. We have built a customized MIS for this project. Our folks will not be co-enrolled in WIOA services. We are not entering them into Cal Jobs.

So we had to create our own case management system, and it's been really great to customize it to the specific supported employment model we are looking to test. And since our staff are going to be out in the community a majority of the time, we've built a mobile app version of that MIS where our employment specialists can enter in some basic case notes as they are meeting with staff or with participants in the community.

Early on we've had really great partner support both with the County of San Diego and the Department of Rehabilitation. People are very excited to see that the AJCs are going to be adding this component to really enhance our capacity to serve people with disabilities. We were also very excited to have a local IPS consultant and trainer who's affiliated with UC San Diego, and she's done a lot of consulting on this IPS model for L.A. County and other agencies across the country.

The other key success that we're excited about is that the evidence that the IPS model truly facilitates a recovery process for individuals that have a disability and really thinking of themselves beyond the patient and thinking about them self as an employee and a productive member of our society.

Some of the challenges with implementation early on have just been aligning our service requirements with the various organizations that we're partnering with, Health and Human Services, the Department of Rehabilitation, and then our workforce development board, including terminology about what a disability means, whether we call it a client, a participant, or
a consumer, and just really sort of addressing how do we use common language across these very different public workforce systems.

And then additionally, since this model also encourages long-term supports for individuals after they're placed, just some challenges with how do we track the common measures that we're required to track with the Department of Labor traditionally used with our WIOA-funded programs.

And with that, thank you for letting me share this morning, and I look forward to any additional questions later on.