



Graduate to Work E-News

University of Montana, Rural Institute Transition Projects

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A Quarterly Newsletter produced by the Eastern Montana Graduate to Work Project

MCDD Grant Brings Additional Resources to Rural Eastern Montana

By Kim Brown and Ellen Condon, University of Montana's Rural Institute

For two years (2002-2004), the Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities (MCDD) funded the Graduate to Work Project (GTW), a collaborative effort between The University of Montana's Rural Institute and the Missoula County Public Schools. The purpose of GTW was to implement a customized model of career planning in Missoula high schools and to pilot collaborative agreements between Vocational Rehabilitation (VR); Workforce and Developmental Disabilities (DD) agencies; families and schools to promote transition from school to work.

Schools found that the model not only enhanced transition planning and employment experiences, it also resulted in improved Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and curriculum. Feedback from Missoula-based employment vendors indicated that when the customized model was used, job development was more individualized, streamlined, and thus more cost-effective for VR.

The Council authorized a third year of funding (October 1, 2004 through September 30, 2005) and requested that the Institute share information about this model with schools, employment agencies, DD staff, case managers, Workforce personnel, VR counselors, students and families in the extremely rural and remote areas of eastern Montana.

The focus of Eastern Montana Graduate to Work (EM-GTW) is on the provision of

training and technical assistance around customized employment, Social Security Work Incentives, self-employment, and collaborative funding of transition from school to work for students with developmental disabilities.

EM-GTW staff provides training at no charge to schools, agencies and families. To maximize participation across Montana's vast distances, training formats include a combination of on-site sessions, teleconferences accompanied by PowerPoint visual presentations, and METNET interactive compressed video. Video and audiotapes of the sessions are available for check-out through the state Parents, Let's Unite for Kids (PLUK) library.

In addition, staff created two internet listservs (open to all interested parties) - one to share information about general transition topics and the other to address issues specific to Social Security and working beneficiaries. They also established an internet-based question and answer forum to enable people to post questions and receive responses related to Social Security and Work Incentives.

MCDD recently awarded a fourth year of funding that will enable the Rural Institute to further build capacity in eastern Montana. Project staff will mentor local VR, DD, school and adult agency staff, as well as families and individuals with developmental disabilities, to implement the customized model with two adults and two students.

Continued...

Resources:

ODEP - Office of Disability Employment Policy, Customized Employment Fact Sheets
www.dol.gov/odep/more.htm#fact

The Advance, Volume 15, 1, June 2005 Customized Employment - A Discussion: An interesting "Model" or the Next Generation of SE? Callahan, M. & Rogan, P.
www.apse.org

TASH Connections, Volume 28, 9/10, 2002. Customizing Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities.
www.tash.org/publications/newsletter/previous_newsletters.htm

University of Montana's Rural Institute
<http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/transition>

Marc Gold & Associates
www.marcgold.com

Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC
www.griffinhammis.com

For information about how these concepts are being applied to students visit these links:

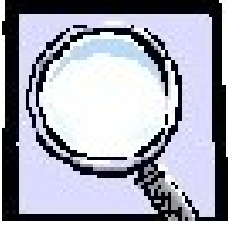
The Individualized Career Planning Model <http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/transition/careerplanning.asp>

Customized Career Planning Articles <http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/transition/Onesizearticles.asp>

More tools and resources for the process of Discovery <http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/transition/Discovery.asp>

Samples of Customized Employment with Students www.myti.org

MCDD Grant Brings Additional Resources, cont.



The Rural Institute will provide both on-site and long distance technical assistance and training.

Customized employment strategies addressed as part of GTW and EM-GTW include:

Discovery: a person-centered process that guides service providers and schools in getting to know a person in terms of interests, abilities, support needs, and contributions for the purpose of planning for employment.

Vocational Profile: a strengths-based, narrative document that captures information about the individual and guides the job search. (Several employment and Workforce agencies are offering this as a billable evaluation service, funded by VR, to job seekers as an alternative to more traditional vocational evaluations).

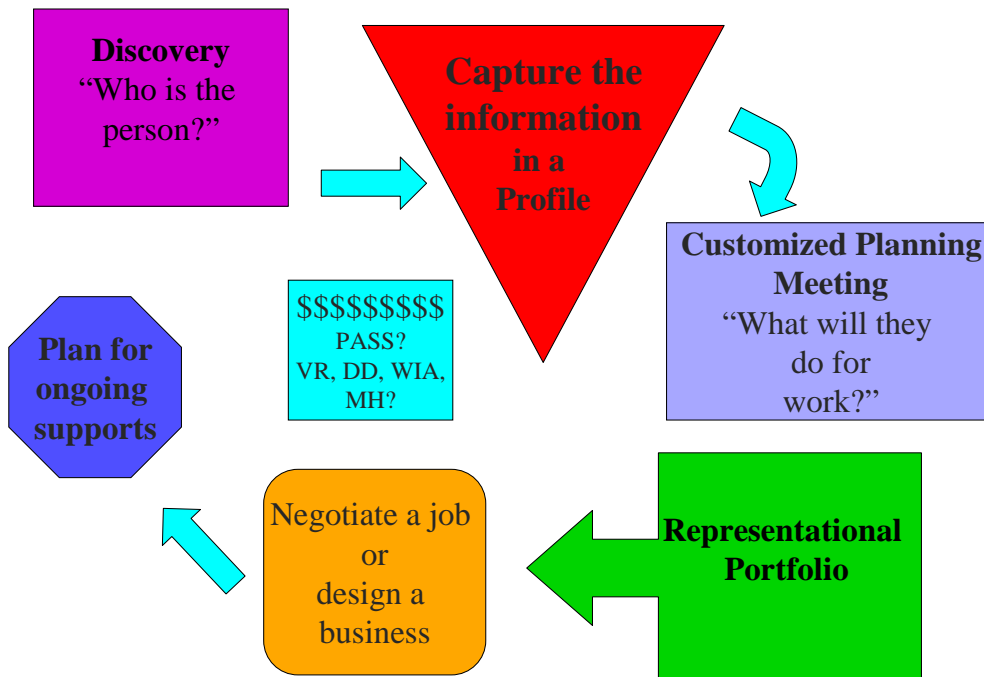
Representational Portfolio: a narrative and/or pictorial representation of an individual job seeker utilized by job developers to custom tailor employment on the person's behalf and to explain customized employment to employers.

SSA Work Incentives: (such as PASS plans) can be used by students or adults to pay for any service, item or piece of equipment needed to reach a vocational goal.

Self-employment: another strategy for customizing an employment opportunity for individuals who choose this route.

Additional information about the Graduate to Work and Eastern Montana Graduate to Work Projects (including past newsletters and the Social Security Question and Answer Forum), other Rural Institute transition projects and the employment strategies described above can be found on the Web at: www.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/transition.

Model Diagram



Resources:

Training and Technical Assistance for Providers hosted by the Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
www.t-tap.org

NCWD - National Center on Workforce and Disability/Adult, based at the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMASS, Boston

www.onestops.info

Montana Vocational Rehabilitation:
www.dphhs.mt.gov/dsd/govt_programs/vrp/vrs/

Montana Developmental Disabilities Programs:
www.dphhs.mt.gov/dsd/govt_programs/ddp/index.htm

Upcoming Trainings

October

- 10/17/05, 8:30-12:00, On-Site Training: "The Vocational Profile: A Strategy for Capturing Discovered Information" - Miles City

November

- 11/15/05, 1:00-2:30, Teleconference: "An Overview of Customized Employment"
15 sites - To Be Determined*

* If you are interested in hosting a teleconference site please contact Kim Brown at: brown@ruralinstitute.umt.edu

Who Are We? Getting to Know the EMGTW Team

The 2005-2006 Eastern Montana Graduate to Work Project will be implemented by a partnership of three agencies – we'll introduce them in this newsletter. Future newsletters will offer readers a chance to meet the individual players from each of the agencies.

The University of Montana Rural Institute Center for Excellence in Disability Education, Research and Service

634 Eddy, Missoula, Montana 59812

Established at the University of Montana in 1979, the Rural Institute works on behalf of people with disabilities of all ages to support full participation in community life. We train professionals, provide services directly to people with disabilities, share our knowledge with others, and conduct research to develop solutions.

Because we respond to priorities set by federal and state agencies, the focus of our training, services, and research changes and evolves over time. Projects address timely disability issues including: aging; assistive technology; community and economic development; infant and toddler development; education; employment; health promotion; independent living; medical ethics; Native American culture; school and community inclusion; Social Security; rural issues; teacher and service provider certification; transportation; and vocational rehabilitation.

Eastern Montana Industries

PO Box 759, 805 South Haynes Avenue, Miles City, Montana 59301

Eastern Montana Industries (EMI) is committed to providing vocational and residential services to assist people with developmental and other disabilities in achieving their highest levels of productivity and independence in the least restrictive setting possible. Examples of services we provide include: vocational evaluations; work services; extended employment; job search assistance; transportation; intensive day services, job readiness training; supported employment; group homes; community supports; and supported living.

In addition to its Miles City operations, EMI runs a satellite program in Glendive, Montana.

Montana Vocational Rehabilitation, Miles City Office

114 North 7th, Miles City, Montana 59301

Montana Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) provides a wide range of services to individuals with disabilities whose disabilities, either physical or mental, prevent them from getting or keeping employment. Qualified rehabilitation counselors provide services that include but are not limited to: assessment; career guidance and counseling; medical and/or psychological services; and training on the job, in the classroom, or through job coaching. MVR also utilizes rehabilitation technology to address vocational barriers in assisting eligible individuals in maintaining or regaining suitable employment.

In southeastern Montana, two rehabilitation counselors provide services to eligible individuals in Carter, Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, McCone, Powder River, Prairie, Richland and Wibaux counties. The counselors travel to these areas to meet individually with consumers on a regular basis. One focus of this extensive travel involves working closely with school districts to identify eligible students with disabilities who are transitioning out of high school and into adult life.

More Trainings

December

- 12/5/05, 8:30-12:00, On-Site Training: "The Representational Portfolio: A Tool for Representing Individuals in Need of Customization and Negotiating on Their Behalf for Employment" - Miles City

February

- 2/14/06, 1:00-2:30, Teleconference: "Self-Employment for People with Disabilities"
15 sites – To Be Determined

April

- 4/11/06, 1:00-2:30, Teleconference: "An Overview of SSI/SSDI"
15 sites – To Be Determined

You can register for a training by emailing Kim Brown at least ten days in advance at:

brown@ruralinstitute.umt.edu

**The Rural Institute:
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