**Employment First Initiative Stakeholder Meeting**

**Thursday, 2/23/2023, 1:30pm**

**Discussion:**

1. Introductions from stakeholders
   1. Introduce name and agency with a brief overview of your agency and your role in employment first in Kansas.
      1. Martha Gabehart
         1. Executive Director of KCDC
      2. Anthony Fadale
         1. State ADA coordinator/oversees compliance
         2. Integrated employment
      3. Steve Sandoval
         1. CDDO in Finney County
         2. Provide options with a network of area providers
      4. Daniel Decker
         1. Director of Rehabilitation Services
         2. Network of counselors, providers, and vendors across the State of Kansas
      5. Jeanie Combs
         1. Independent Living Specialist with Three Rivers
      6. Adam Burnett
         1. Director of Core Services at Resource Center for Independent Living Osage City
      7. Angeline Anderson
         1. Director of Day and Employment Services at JOCO Developmental Supports
      8. Angie Reinking
         1. Executive Director of The Arc of Douglas County
         2. Admin of SACK
      9. Colin Olenick
         1. Self-Advocate/legislative liaison.
         2. Works for SACK
      10. Latoya Curry-King
          1. Community Employment Team leader at JoCo Developmental Supports
      11. Erin Sanders Hahs
          1. STEPS program manager-Pilot project under the working healthy umbrella-statewide.
      12. Holly Rivera
          1. KDADS new IDD waiver manager
      13. Jacquelyn Anderson
          1. Project Coord for SACK
      14. Noelle Kurth
          1. Researcher from the University of Kansas- research on Medicaid in Kansas
      15. Nick Wood
          1. Associate Director at InterHab-helped pass employment 1st
      16. Rocky Nichols
          1. Executive Director of the Disability Rights Center of Kansas.
          2. Member of employment first commission
      17. Madeline Beham
          1. Minds Matter in Overland Park Kansas
      18. Sherry Vaughn
          1. Executive Director of NAMI Kansas
      19. Tami Allen
          1. Co-Executive Director for Families Together
      20. Susan Weidenbach
          1. Kansas Department of Commerce, Workforce Services. I represent Lt Governor/Secretary David Toland on the Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns and the Employment First Oversight Commission. I have led employment of individuals with disabilities initiatives at Commerce for about 15 years.
      21. Cheryl Laaker- Sunflower Health plan- Coordinator for Project SEARCH.
2. Intro of NEON Subject Matter Experts
   1. Lisa Mills, Ph.D.
      1. Worked in Kansas. 20 years of work on Employment. Sub-minimum wage reform. Got involved in an infrastructure grant in Wisconsin. Worked with a variety of states in LTSS about how they can support integrative employment. Also, new waiver options that are focused on employment. Interested in moving away from fee per services. Working on rate structures, Work with the LIED center as well as Mark Gold and Associates.
   2. Amy Gonzalez
      1. Been in the field for 20 years, the first 10 was direct service as a case manager working with the Latinx community, a guidance counselor at a community college, then became a vocational rehab counselor helping folks with IDD to gain employment. Build capacity. State Director if Employment with the state, got the grant and worked on a strategic plan. Left and went to ODEP. In 2019 became an independent consultant focusing on grantees support individuals to gain employment, etc.
3. NEON Technical Assistance Award Update
   1. Questions or Feedback for Subject Matter Experts?
      1. Nick Wood- Current state of Employment First in Kansas. Discussion around definitions. Many advocating for a Community Support Waiver. Under an 1115 budget neutrality cap. There have been pilot projects, etc. but nothing will work as well as a new waiver will. High enough rates are not included to support employment. The rate needs to be raised, but flexibility is needed. Especially on the requirement for face-to-face interventions. Need new definitions for supported employment. KDADS has landed on an adequate rate, but we do not have a new definition yet. InterHab has submitted a new definition.
         1. State can apply for the new waiver this fall. Implementation would need to coincide with the new managed care RFP.
         2. Noelle Kurth- Just noting that other waivers, in addition to I/DD, are impacted by Employment First.
      2. Lisa M- Is the timeframe for moving to the BC at the point of renewal?
         1. September or October, current contracts extended through 2024 while the new arrangement is implemented.
      3. Lisa M- Do you recall what states for definitions?
         1. Missouri-did a rate study for supported employment
      4. Rocky Nichols- Agree with Nick on supported employment rates. Employment First Oversight Commission has memorialized where we are on employment first. If you want to recommendations/lay of land/etc. reading the reports would be a great starting point.
         1. Big problem is that Kansas was the first state to pass Employment 1st into law, but it has not become a reality and changes have not happened to completely enact it, systemically.
         2. Need an actual implementation plan of the law that is already passed.
         3. Glad to have the NEON grant and experts to help. Looking forward to the RFP.
         4. Christina- The RFP has been edited and sent back to Procurement. The last three recommendation reports have also been sent to our SME to review.
      5. Lisa M- Where is the legislature now as far as supporting the implementation plan?
         1. Rocky N- Always been supportive of it as a concept. The legislature is still supportive; however, they do not take the initiative to fund and implement. This is left to the administration. With the broad support it is a matter of focus, integration, and initiative with existing resources. Getting started will help with having everyone onboard for implementation.
      6. Cheryl Laaker- Sunflower Health plan- Coordinator for Project SEARCH. Kansas has struggled with how to get braided funding. Building in flexibility to allow braiding of funding can help support individuals.
      7. Amy- the Federal government has created some resources regarding changes going on right now and braided funding. Will send the resources to Christina.
      8. Noelle Kurth- Does anyone know what role, if any, Employment First will have on the State Plan Amendment this year?
         1. Martha Gabehart-No, I haven't heard. That might be a good question for this group of KDADS employees.
      9. Erin Sanders- STEPS program is a new initiative. We are also trying to incorporate the goal and the mission that is employment first. We are relatively new, not sure what everyone knows about the program. Support and training for employing folks successfully. Enrolling providers, provider capacity, need feedback on that. Would like to find what is going to work for the consumers that choose to enroll in our program. Trying to figure things out while working and trying to grow. Would be interested in braiding funds, provider networks, provider capacity. TO help develop our program into something useful across the state.
      10. Lisa M-Is there any alignment across the state?
          1. There does not seem to be an easy mode of alignment across the state.
          2. Lisa-How do you start to define the experience for an individual with a disability in Kansas? It sounds like it is still fragmented. The different supportive programs need to come together to discuss the practicalities of coming together and ironing out funding structures, provider network, etc in a coordinated way.
      11. Amy- Is there anyone that you want in a partner that is essential, but is not included in the group already?
          1. Have worked with KU/Families Together/Collaborating with other departments has led to some misunderstandings about what the program wants to accomplish. Not sure if that is a matter of the different systems being siloed. There are hiring issues and taking on a new program may be too much for them.
      12. Nick- Would like Nancy Scott to be included in the group.
          1. Under the 1115 they would take this section of code and implement it as a statewide program. We have not been able to do this under the budget neutrality cap. STEPS was allocated 500 positions when it was expanded to include folks off the waiting list. Since then, they have served a little over 40 people, but it has been difficult to find providers to participate and provide employment. Participants may have been discouraged from using the STEPS program because it is based on your MCO care coordinator. It features involuntary disenrollment. There are like 8 different reasons that you can be involuntary disenrolled.
          2. Erin-Disenrollment is reserved more for things like Medicaid fraud or if the participant stops working with providers. Does not all come down to the MCOs as to what services are needed. There is also a referral process with the STEPS staff.
          3. Nick- The original idea was to develop a Medicaid offramp. The idea that time limited services. The state will probably keep a skinny 1115. Only allowable as a pilot under the I like waiver that you can only do under an 1115.
          4. Erin- With the current 1115 coming to a close, we are in the works for the STEPS program becoming an alternative plan a state plan amendment. We are in the process of drafting that to submit for 2024.
      13. Angeline- I agree with Nick, from the provider side we were excited about the STEPS program especially the transportation portion. The ability to braid funding would be great especially with VR services. We didn’t want to give up one for the other.
          1. Erin- We do not discourage individuals from utilizing VR services for their employment. The STEPS program could potentially be used to wrap around other services. Liz Long is the new Nancy. We are more than happy to work with someone with an open VR case.
   2. 2-day in-person conference-Washington DC
      1. Christina and Mitzie are going to the NEON conference at the beginning of March.
   3. South Central Kansas Employment First Summit
      1. Thursday April 6th in Wichita
      2. Register by March 24th
   4. General Questions: [Christina.Ferguson@ks.gov](mailto:Christina.Ferguson@ks.gov)
   5. For Future Projects: <https://Kdads.ks.gov>