What we have accomplished so far: 4 Unit Course "Introduction to Direct Support In the Developmental Disabilities Sector" at the College of Alameda

California – Except for CPR/First Aid and Universal Precautions almost no requirements for training in community based services

- And no funding for training

How we got there

- Started with one small/medium sized agency testing the College of Direct Support.

Small Pilot Projects, tried a bunch of different things over a few years

Tried to get $ from Workforce Investment Board

- Completely Shut us down
- Not interested in the low wages of the field.

We finally got organized

- Labor/Management workgroup made up of DSPs and Managers as well as the union rep.

- Looked at job descriptions, thought about needed competencies, matched them with CDS courses.

- Analyzed current career ladder, made modifications to increase opportunity.

Went back to the workforce investment board

- Showed how training would help move people up a career ladder that would result in higher wages

- By using the competency based College of Direct Support that is accredited by the NADSP, there was no question about the quality of our training.

- This time we got the funding

Very sucessful

- 2 cohorts of 15 each.

  - CDS lessons – OJT with Supervisor – Portfolio type assignments
  - All received raises
  - Most received promotions
  - New supervisors in Agency started to come exclusively from within the agency instead of hiring from the outside.

Key is development of partners

- Labor Union (SEIU)
- Local political representatives were pulled in to support our efforts to get funding from the WIB

DSPs said they wanted college credit

Brought in more partners

- Other agencies, both providers, as well as, advocacy organizations
- Got support from the Career ladders Project of the California Community Colleges

Meeting with President of college of Alameda

- She was very interested in the participation of the community – but again the problem of funding

Targeted unemployed workers for the training because that's where the money is

- Received a Grant from the Chancellor's office of the California Community Colleges

- Intro course (using CDS as the text)
- English reading and writing course
- Computer literacy class
- Internships with Providers
- At first Student's were very unhappy with not having a hardback text book; complained bitterly – by the end they were true believers; many students came up to me and told me how much they appreciated my using CDS.
- 80 % of those who completed program received job offers

- Bureaucracy of school very challenging, without the support of the president it would have been very difficult.
- – need to really support this population – with bus vouchers, etc. Big need for case management.
- Need to be hard core on basic employment skills – not place if they cannot get to class on time or if have attendance problems.

Internships only as good as the agency

- High quality agencies who provided a high quality experience and who expected a lot of their interns had higher rates of hiring program graduates.

Money still an Issue

- Currently President of College funding Program
- Plan to approach WIB for funding

Partners are key to success

- Need to put work into developing further and maintaining the network of partners.

- No need to limit group just to folks who like each other, people are willing to work together toward a common goal even if they don't like the idea of working together.

- In other words, Lot's of complaints about SEIU. But in the end, people got over it. And it was a good thing because both the Workforce Investment Board, the funding we received, and the College President's support may not have occurred without the union's support.

Moving Forward

- We want to create classes for incumbent workers

- 2 unit hybrid online/in-class Positive Behavior Support Class is our next goal.

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