Transformation Project Final Report

State of Oregon Department of Human Services – Office of Developmental Disabilities
DASPS 2214 – Transformation Project
Final Report for Contract #: DASPS 2298-14

Full Name: Washington Initiative for Supported Employment
Legal Status: 501(c)3 nonprofit incorporated in Washington State
Corporate Headquarters:
100 King Street, Suite 260
Seattle, WA 98104
Oregon Office Address:
514 NW 11th Avenue, Suite 207
Portland, OR 97209

WISE Executive Director: Cesilee Coulson
Email: cesilee@gowise.org
Phone: 206-786-0239

Oregon Director of Technical Assistance: Brandi Monts
Email: brandi@gowise.org
Phone: 360-878-7071

Oregon Program Manager: Robyn Hoffman
Email: robyn@gowise.org
Phone: 503-927-5639

Legend and Synonyms

Customer: Persons, individuals or people with IDD or disabilities and consumer of services
CIE: Community Integrated Employment
DHS: Department of Human Services or "the Agency"
EF: Employment First
EOS: Employment Outcomes Systems
ES: Employment Specialist
FTE: Full Time Equivalent
HCBS: Home and Community Based Services
IDD: Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
ITC: Initial Transformation Consultants
LIFT: The Portland Metro accessible public transportation provider
OA: Organizational Assessment
ODDS: Office of Developmental Disability Services
OELN: Oregon Employment Learning Network
ORA: Oregon Resource Association
OTAC: Oregon Technical Assistance Corporation
PASS or PASS Plan: Plan to Achieve Self-Support (Social Security Work Incentives)
PA: Personal Agent
Project: Employment First Training and Technical Assistance
QA: Quality Assurance
RFP: Request for Proposal
SC: Service Coordinator
SME: Subject Matter Expert
SP: Employment Service Provider
SW: Sheltered Workshop: services in facility-based, warehouse, plant or other segregated environments
T/TA: Training and Technical Assistance
TMPP: Trainer Membership Pilot Program (Train-the-Trainer)
TP: Transformation Strategic Plan
Transformation: Transition, downsize, closure or conversion
TTAT: The WISE Training and Technical Assistance Team
VFTF: "Voices from the Field" – A video series supporting the SP's to create marketing videos
VR: Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services
VRC: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
WA: Working Agreement
WISE: Washington Initiative for Supported Employment or 'We'

Transformation Project Final Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Transformation Project Final Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2014, the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) submitted a response to the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS or "the Agency") Request for Proposal (RFP) #2214-14 to provide Transformation services for the Office of Developmental Disabilities (ODDS) – Department of Human Services, Employment First office. Employment First (EF), a national approach to services for Developmental Disabilities, is summarized as follows:

> "A critical priority for the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), is to invest in systems change efforts that result in increased community-based, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities. This priority reflects growing support for a national movement called *Employment First*, a framework for systems change that is centered on the premise that *all* citizens, including individuals with significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life.

> Under this approach, publicly financed systems are urged to align policies, service delivery practices, and reimbursement structures to commit to integrated employment as the priority option with respect to the use of publicly-financed day and employment services for youth and adults with significant disabilities. ODEP defines integrated employment as work paid directly by employers at the greater of minimum or prevailing wages with commensurate benefits, occurring in a typical work setting where the employee with a disability interacts or has the opportunity to interact continuously with co-workers without disabilities, has an opportunity for advancement and job mobility, and is preferably engaged full-time. Many states have formally committed to the *Employment First* framework through official executive proclamation or formal legislative action."

Led by legislative priority and an Executive Order issued by the Governor, the State of Oregon resolved to pursue Employment First (EF) and sought third-party expertise to provide Technical Assistance and Training (T/TA) in support of EF in Oregon that was initially referred to as "Transformation." Transformation is the downsizing and closure of facility-based or sheltered workshop (SW) services while prioritizing and creating integrated, competitive employment (jobs in local communities) for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) receiving SW services. Ultimately, WISE was awarded a T/TA contract to initially support 16 Oregon Employment Service Providers (SPs) in the transformation process.

As this first round of transformation project organizations complete their initial grants, it is clear that the effort is beginning to transform the service delivery system in Oregon to one that

emphasizes community employment. Within the Service Provider pool supported with Training and Technical Assistance from WISE, 69 people obtained jobs meeting the Project criteria, and facility-based employment decreased by 233 people. While these direct service outcomes may be perceived as good first steps, the most important results of the Transformation Project may lay ahead. Difficult changes in organizational structure and culture take time to achieve and most of the SPs are just now positioned to make greater strides toward transformation goals.

The following report provides the details of the Training and Technical Assistance (T/A) component, the deliverables, and the results. Conclusions and recommendations are also included. These conclusions, briefly stated, are:

- Flexibility and innovation is essential for successful transformation of Oregon SPs. For state agencies, this means we have far more to gain from encouraging entrepreneurial approaches from providers than from attempts to standardize services. For SPs, this means a focus on creating a unique and flexible strategic plan rather than using a template for the kind of change that is required. For consultants and trainers, there must remain an emphasis on a flexible approach that responds to the changing circumstances of SPs.
- It is important for all participants in this process to not get lost in procedural improvements, to not wait for the questions to all be answered or all the staff certified, before shifting resources to identify jobs. The focus of staff, board, and regulatory agencies, must remain on outcomes, on finding and retaining jobs.
- A frequent assumption is that once a person finds a job of their choice, and receives proper training and follow-up, the job is secure. It is of course not true: jobs are not forever. State agencies and decision-makers must create and/or protect ongoing supports that can quickly respond to a person's changing employment situation.

The T/TA services within the project were all completed, including all of the process and outcome objectives. Quality transformation takes time and the united effort of stakeholders at all levels. We believe that this project has established a solid foundation upon which the participating service providers can transform to community employment organizations.

Transformation Project Final Report
FINAL REPORT DASPS 2298-14 TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

GENERAL PURPOSE AND APPROACH

The purpose of the RFP award was to develop, approve and initiate the implementation of a strategic Transformation Plan (TP) that would result in the transformation of Employment Services for individuals with IDD currently served in facility-based employment services. Transformation is intended to:

- Decrease use of facility-based employment services.
- Increase integrated community-based employment services.
- Focus on achieving integrated, competitive employment for individuals with IDD, as measured by the achievement of:
  - Target number of integrated employment placements;
  - Target number of hours of employment-per-week.

In the Project's beginning, the general approach was to guide the awarded service providers (SPs) through the efforts of Initial Transformation Consultants (ITCs), Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and the WISE Training and Technical Assistance Team (TTAT). This guidance consisted of proposing, summarizing, and reviewing outcomes and deliverables, and by recommending strategies, processes and features to EF, ODDS and, as appropriate, DHS. Finally, WISE staff provided oversight on consulting, funding, and general project management. The ITCs, SMEs and WISE staff completed all training and consulting activities.

The Project's Outcomes and Deliverables consisted of the following:

- Initial Meeting(s) with Service Providers (SPs)
- Organizational Analysis (OA)
- Strategic Transformation Planning (TP)
- Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Plan
- Working Agreement (WA) with SPs
- Monthly Reports
- Interim Progress Reports
- Final Report
- Weekly/Monthly Update Calls & Visits
- Data compilation and feedback

Project History and Approach

WISE's fundamental approach to training and technical assistance is to supplement highly trained staff with content experts, engaging both in an ongoing process in which mentoring and review of results are critical features of T/TA.

Transformation Project Final Report

Initial Project Teams. The initial Training and Technical Assistance Team (TTAT) was comprised of three ITCs, four SMEs, six WISE staff members, and approximately eight additional consultants and SMEs. One ITC advised WISE and EF staff on the creation of initial organizing and reporting documents, flowcharts, staff and Service Provider (SP) data collection. Additional WISE consultants were selected premised upon their expertise and experience delivering T/TA related to Transformation. As the Project evolved, additional improvements in the SP data collection process were necessary and subsequently implemented.

Communication: Communication has been frequent throughout the Project, involving the TTAT Team, the Agency, two Oregon State employees representing EF, and three ODDS staff. Communications were conducted through email, text, phone, teleconference, face-to-face meetings, document sharing, and tours.

A preliminary plan for communication was drafted as noted in the various Core Team Kick-off documents and implemented. Further into the Project, this plan was used to identify and improve communications issues, strategies and recommendations.

Structure. During the initial RFP distribution, the Agency also issued a separate RFP to the Oregon SP population seeking SPs willing to adopt/implement a Transformation experience within their organization. Ultimately, 25 organizations were selected through the RFP process – 16 were assigned to WISE and 9 were assigned to Living Opportunities, an Oregon-based service provider and T/TA organization. SPs were selected in a staggered two-year format: for WISE, the schedule included nine SPs in group one and seven SPs in group two. Each awarded SP was granted financial incentives for participation in the Project and a second set of incentives for attainment of agreed upon placements into integrated, community-based jobs.

Core Team Kick-off. Initially, the Agency/WISE contract was executed with a series of required deliverables according to an established timeline. The Core Team Kick-off took place in December 2014. Initial documents were created for approval by the Agency and presented at the event.

In January and February of 2015, the ITCs began to work directly with the SPs as summarized below:

- *Initial contact* was made by the ITCs and phone interviews were scheduled with the SPs to explain the Project's purpose and process, coordinate the emailing of introductory documents and flowcharts, and schedule the initial meeting and Organizational Analysis (OA). SPs were encouraged to include individuals with IDD receiving sheltered workshop services, key staff, board members, families, stakeholders, and other involved persons in these initial meetings.

- The *initial meeting* was made to fully explain the Project and process; answer questions and concerns; explain documents, flowcharts and Working Agreement (WA); and schedule the Organizational Analysis (OA).
  Writing of the OA was completed following these initial meetings.
- The *Working Agreement* (WA) was defined, drafted and executed with the SP and was submitted to the Agency for their records.
- The *Organizational Analysis (*OA) draft was submitted to the SP for approval.
- The *Initial Transformation Plan* (TP) was developed with the SPs, engaging WISE staff/consultants as needed, and was submitted to the SP for review and approval.
- The *Training and Technical Assistance* (T/TA) Plan was drafted, recommending consultants appropriate to the individual needs of each SP to the WISE Oregon Program Manager.
- Once drafted, the T/TA Plan for each provider was submitted to the SP for approval.
- When approved by the SP, the T/TA Plan, OA, and TP were all submitted to the Agency for approval. As the Project evolved, the ITCs developed the OA, TP, and the T/TA Plan at the same time, and submitted these to the SP simultaneously.
- Once approved by the Agency, the TP and T/TA were implemented. During implementation, the following activities were concluded:
  - T/TA was provided for the SP and scheduled additional T/TA as needed.
  - Consultants began working with the SPs.
  - SP agencies' *Strategic Plans* were revised or modified to incorporate Transformation and align these plans with the new transformation strategic plans.
  - Any necessary ancillary plans were produced with/for the SPs, such as communications plans/policies.
  - Progress was regularly reported to the Agency.
  - Additional T/TA was provided as new needs arose.
  - Service providers were supported in efforts to complete and submit Interim Reports to the Agency.
- The *Final Report* was completed with the submittal of this document. Final reports of the SPs were reviewed as part of the process of completing the WISE Final Report.
- *Futures planning* was provided by WISE staff for service providers next steps for transformation whether or not they were awarded grants for phase 2 of the project at the point of the project end.

To bring everyone on board, support initial activities, and fully announce the Transformation Plan to the Oregon SP base, start-up funds were used to provide a two-day Transformation Kick-Off event held at Oregon Gardens on March 19 and 20, 2015. The event was facilitated and managed by the ITCs, WISE staff, and Living Opportunities staff and consultants. The agenda

addressed specific goals of the Oregon EF efforts, Transformation, organizational culture, planning, problem resolution, questions and answers, coordination with the ORA, and small group function and activity. To promote further cooperation and communication among all parties, WISE included ORA, Living Opportunities, OTAC, and Griffin-Hammis Associates as partners on the Steering Committee.

Key Activities and Events: A summary of general implementation dates & key events and activities follows. (Group 1 refers to is the providers that began T/TA on January 1, 2015, Group 2 starting on July 1, 2015.)
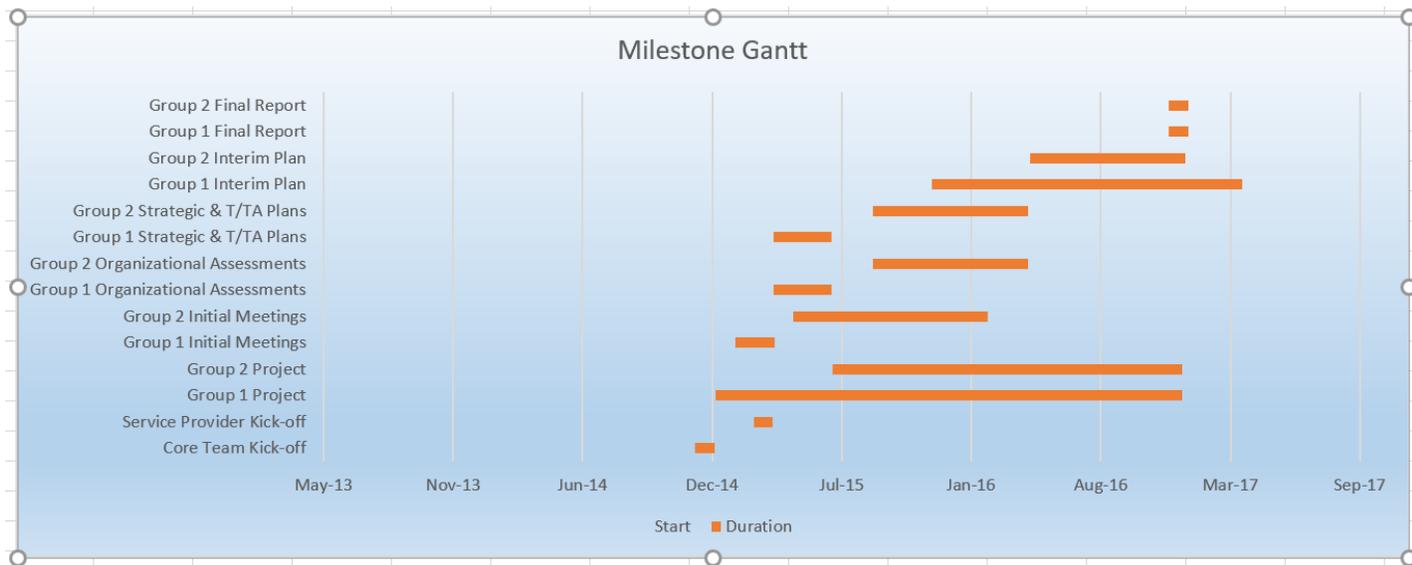
Note: During the projects implementation, WISE ensured that Transformation Training and Technical Assistance would complement and not conflict with WISE's existing T/TA contract, in particular OELN.   The OELN was designed to meet Oregon Core Competency standards, provide information needed to pass the Certified Employment Specialist Professional exam, and teach basic core strategies and information regarding community-integrated employment.   Any large group trainings, hosted by Transformation were opened first for transformation providers and then to the full EF list to maximize training access across the state

Additional in-house, small and large group trainings were also planned and implemented. WISE management made every attempt to respect costs, time, travel and individual organizational needs since each SP is normally at a different evolutionary place regarding Transformation.

Priorities for Training and Technical Assistance. As the Project evolved, certain T/TA experiences became priorities and training was directed to those priority areas. For example, hands on training using the agency's own job seekers was well received and service providers indicated it was very beneficial. Providers often requested that the trainings be repeated in other areas where they provide services, or repeated when staff changes occurred. The training and technical assistance section provides additional detail about the training and technical assistance prioritized for service provider leaders, middle management, employment specialists, and others.

> **"Without the on the ground coaching I do not believe we would have been as successful. …Employment Specialists thought this was the best training they had. "**
>
> **-Alternative Services, Inc.**

Initial Issues, Challenges and Solutions. Like any endeavor of this magnitude, there were a series of challenges that required solutions as the Project progressed, including:

Time Needed to Shift Mindsets

- Most SPs sought a template to follow for Transformation initially, but with experience the perception grew to recognize that Transformation requires a thorough and individualized approach that impacts each organization differently. This focus on a defined set of steps (or the search for a defined set of steps) created initial delays.
- Board, staff, and stakeholder leadership required sufficient processing and discussion in order to adopt the full buy-in of the EF and Transformation process versus adding or expanding community integrated employment to the existing array of services (such as SWs and day programs).
- There were significant, authentic concerns from SP leadership, staff, board members, parents, state employees, school districts, and families regarding safety and full inclusiveness within the Transformation process, especially for individuals with significant disabilities. Many organizations paused efforts to obtain community integrated jobs while engaged in these internal and local debates and discussions. They needed encouragement to start and build skills initially with those with fewer barriers to employment, before tackling those they were having trouble visioning in community employment.
- Belief regarding the capabilities of persons with disabilities contributed to delay in seeking jobs. This included in some cases jobs that were viewed as underutilizing a person's skills, as well as concerns that there would be difficulty in fading supports.
- For several SPs, as they met the requirement to become VR vendors, there was a focus on job placements for VR versus job placements for Transformation. While some providers readjusted their focus over time, this impaired their ability to meet transformation job goals.

- Initially, it appeared to the TTAT that jobs being developed lacked quality standards established by the Project: (a) Sufficient hours of work (20 – 40 hours per week); (b) a livable wage; (c) alignment with the individual's skill base and employment plan; (d) alignment with individual needs and supports; (e) alignment with what the individual clearly stated they want to do; and (f) upward mobility in the job. Over time, service providers learned to customize jobs for better job placement matches.

Leadership Communication
- There were consistent complaints, especially from the SP base, about changes to and revisions of standard rules and public policy/operations, definitions of services, implementation and timeline expectations, and funding base revisions required or requested by the Agency and supporting funders. These changes eroded confidence in funding and service stability and caused delays as SPs sought to understand and implement plans.
- The Agency's policy changes and communications led SPs to focus on training and credentialing requirements as a priority rather than obtaining jobs.
- There were insufficient initial conversations both statewide and with/among the individual SP organizations regarding Transformation and the challenges/solutions that accompany a major system change. Clear leadership in Transformation is a critical element for success, but three SP organizations recognized this in their final reports as one of their biggest obstacles to transformation.
- There were several challenges in coordinating the various funding, licensing and managing of individual placements. Put simply, all essential parties, ODDS, VR, CDDPs, Brokerages, and SPs were not on the same Transformation page, which resulted in an interruptive Transformation process and in some cases, gatekeepers becoming roadblocks in initiating Discovery, job development, job retention and fading.
- SPs reported confusion related to the funding of the community employment process and activities and having to spend large amounts of time in problem-solving funding confusions with gatekeepers.

Recruitment, Retention, and Staff Responsibilities

- Staff turnover was a consistent and real issue, with most SPs reporting a direct-service staff turnover rate of over 50% annually. Many organizations also experienced turnover in employment team managers and executive staff. Ninety-three percent of organizations identified this turnover in their final

> 93% Service Providers said Recruitment is a challenge

reports as an obstacle faced and eighty-seven percent of organizations reported spending grant funding on recruitment, staffing, and wages.

- It appeared that SPs experienced challenges with transitioning existing staff to employment along with hiring, training and retaining additional new hires focused on employment.
- Since most of the SPs provided multiple programs and services (both residential and day programs in addition to sheltered employment), competing staff responsibilities other than Transformation were a challenge.
- Since many providers initially chose to continue operating SWs while attempting to grow community employment, there were inherent conflicts in staffing coverage, communication, job priorities and funding.

Initial Approaches Enhancing the Project. Some of the key efforts to solve problems and to enhance the Project that were essential included:

Overall Approach

- **Fearlessness** in bringing up any subject, no matter how seemingly insignificant, that would challenge, hinder or impede successful Transformation;
- Being tireless in pursuit of **clear communication** and working toward system change together;
- Providing for clear and consistent messaging **focused on integrated employment**;
- Consistently **clarifying system change** clearly, concisely and quickly to maintain momentum;
- Developing a **T/TA culture of responsiveness** to issues at hand and providing a nimble approach in quickly revising what is not working for an individual SP;
- Developing a sense of **confident urgency** with those involved in Transformation…it should not and *cannot* take forever (Example: Pathway to Employment was never intended to result in a years-long process);
- Gently but firmly moving toward board and executive leadership **decisions to fully Transform**;
  o Focus on the urgency of the **HCBS Timeline** and Planning Processes;

Coaching & Mentorship:
  o Taking time to mentor individual SPs to make corporate, organizational, and/or departmental level **decisions versus instructing what to do**;
  o Increasing the amount of corporate (leadership & board) T/TA and coaching that is focused on **organizational culture change**;

o Conducting **tours** for staff and board members, sharing stories and peer mentorship related to the Transformation process;

o Consistent focus on the **Transformation and T/TA Plans** – rather than setting them aside;

o Coaching on **team-building/development and managing a mobile workforce**;

o **Board/Stakeholder presentations and discussions** regarding Transformation;

o Implementing **hands-on practical training using Agency jobseekers** for onsite staff;

> 27% of Service Providers report spending grant funds on rebranding/marketing efforts

o Consulting on and support with communicating Transformation to all parties and **developing a communication plan**;

o Coaching, teaching and providing opportunities for **networking** – among both fellow peers who are Transforming and those who have successfully Transformed;

o Consistently providing for feedback, advice and consultation in developing adequate **quality standards** in developing robust jobs for people;

o Mentorship that in some fashion, **allowed those** at any level of the organization in an SP **who could not or would not accept EF values to seek alternative employment or role** within the organization;

o Consistently clarifying that a staff member, family member, or SC/PA does not dictate a person with disabilities' capabilities or dreams; (Example: Discovery and Job Development should be **person-centered regardless of limitations others may perceive exist** for an individual.).

Project Implementation

The Project has been fully implemented. The following paragraphs will address the Transformation Project rollout, implementation and process. Here are a few points for consideration:

Roles

● As the Project evolved, WISE **hired additional Oregon-based staff** to meet the Project's challenges and needs. This has allowed us to improve
   o Focus on individual SP needs,
   o Efficient information and feedback gathering, and
   o Overall consulting costs.

- Currently 5 Oregon-based staff members represent **3.0 FTE onsite staff** supporting the Transformation effort. **Administration/Management** of the project totals **.65 FTE**.
- Project evolution has resulted in the use of **several key consultants rather than a diverse multitude**. For example, based upon SPs' interest, needs and demand, value-added marketing training/events and job development was expanded and surpassed original expectations.
- The importance of **onsite Transformation coaching** cannot be overstated.
- **Coordination** with existing T/TA contracts and partners in the Transformation effort has enhanced the process –Living Opportunities, ORA, OTAC, etc.
- **Approach and evolution of communication** between the participants:
  o Initially, SPs rarely communicated with each other and did not know that other SPs were doing similar work in the local community.
  o Provided networking opportunities, information sharing and shared contacts.
  o Facilitated organizations to be resources for each other regarding specific topics.
  o Encouraged job lead sharing, local SC/PA/VRC problem-solving, etc. through EF teams.
  o Worked with ORA to facilitate data discussions, information sharing and problem-solving.
- A quality assurance analysis of **what we've learned** was completed when all of the initial transformation project leadership changed at ODDS and a new team was hired. The analysis was discussed at a meeting at the WISE Portland office in January 2016.
- We pride ourselves on competent, fearless self-evaluation. Therefore, we embarked upon a thorough **evaluation of the quality** of the Project by interviewing 10 service providers in August 2016. Larry Rhodes, PhD led and implemented this evaluation, a summary of which follows:
  o <u>Title</u>: Challenges to Transformation
  o <u>Interviews</u>: Ten Oregon Employment Providers involved in Transformation
    ▪ Interviews were conducted with managers from the ten organizations receiving Transformation awards supported by WISE after approximately a year into the Transformation process.
    ▪ Interviews commenced on May 2, 2016 and concluded on June 14, 2016. All participating service providers reviewed the draft of the interview results to confirm that the report reflected the views of these participants and to ensure the completeness of the content. WISE released the report in August 2016.
  o <u>Purpose of Interviews</u>: To elicit feedback for quality improvement, give SPs an opportunity to self-report on their progress toward Transformation and contribute to a better understanding of the perceived challenges for all stakeholders.

Transformation Project Final Report

- o Approach: Organizations chose persons to participate in confidential interviews, selecting those with "hands-on managerial control" of the implementation of Transformation activities who were knowledgeable about both daily operations and managerial issues related to the project. Interviews were conducted in person and broad, open-ended questions were asked to allow free expression, such as:
  - *The Transformation to integrated, community-based employment is a complex undertaking: What have been your greatest challenges to date in this process?*
  - *What has worked best for you in your transformation efforts to date?*
  - *What feedback do you have for WISE?*
  - *How might WISE be more helpful?*
  - *As the state begins another round of grants, what advice might you give based upon your experiences?*

  The interviewer followed up with more focused questions to further clarify and understand the initial responses.
- o Results: Challenges were identified and grouped into six subject areas, or "themes," including staff turnover, financial, communication/systems, finding jobs, qualifying staff and organizational resistance to change. Managers identified the most significant challenges facing the transformation projects as:
  - Turnover, typically attributed to low wages. Turnover rates were higher than 50% in a year in some agencies. Often the turnover was a key staff member such as the person in charge of community employment, or the person who had just received extensive training necessary for building the program.
  - Concern whether funding will be stable and/or adequate during and after transformation. Low wages, a result of funding issues, was also perceived as a major challenge contributing to turnover: wages are almost universally considered too low for the expectations of the community employment jobs, and that they could not compete with brokerages and counties.
  - Effects of loss of workshop income: Funding stability was again expressed as a major concern impacting transition in the long term, as service providers recognized that closure of the workshop meant loss of a stable source of income which according to some managers was used to offset the higher costs of community employment.
  - Internal resistance to change;
  - A lack of consistency and clarity of communication from the state. The interviewees identified many procedural or "system" issues beyond that of clear communication. One provider, for example, said they were spending a "huge amount of time figuring out how to get paid" and that sometimes getting paid entailed doing things that were counter to best practices.

- ▪ <u>Slow start</u> but picking up the pace: Most managers felt that after a year, they were "just now getting going" after recovering from initial turnover and resistance and after receiving training for new staff. Some SPs were celebrating notable benchmarks in transforming to community employment, such as ending the practice of subminimum wage certificates and closing SWs.
- ▪ <u>Flow of services</u>: Conceptually community employment services are a system in which people "flow" from vendor to planning team to discovery service to Vocational Rehabilitation to vendor to long term support. In reality is that there are wait lists, major time gaps between these services in some areas, and different expectations from agencies that make the flow anything but smooth. This is both costly to the provider, and difficult for the person transitioning to community jobs.
- ▪ <u>Project T/TA</u>: Managers were complimentary of the assistance offered through the project by the WISE staff, trainers, and consultants. There were suggestions made that training be more frequent and/or closer geographically to the provider, but that the content was excellent and well presented. One provider summed it up with, "We didn't have a program built yet. There was no roadmap. The WISE team was very helpful."

Training and Technical Assistance. Following is a summary of T/TA experiences provided during the course of the project and events by target audience, by timeline, and a Gannt chart of longer term training and consultation. T/TA is provided by both staff and consultants, often with a mix of both.
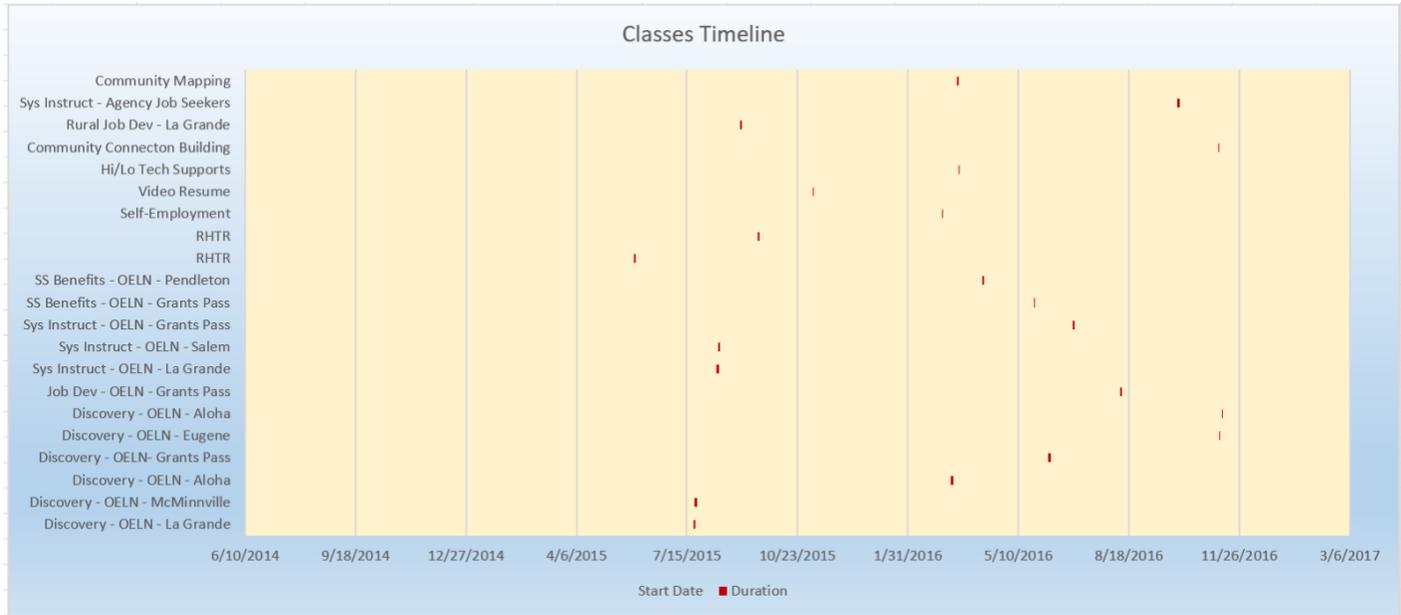
Transformation Project Final Report

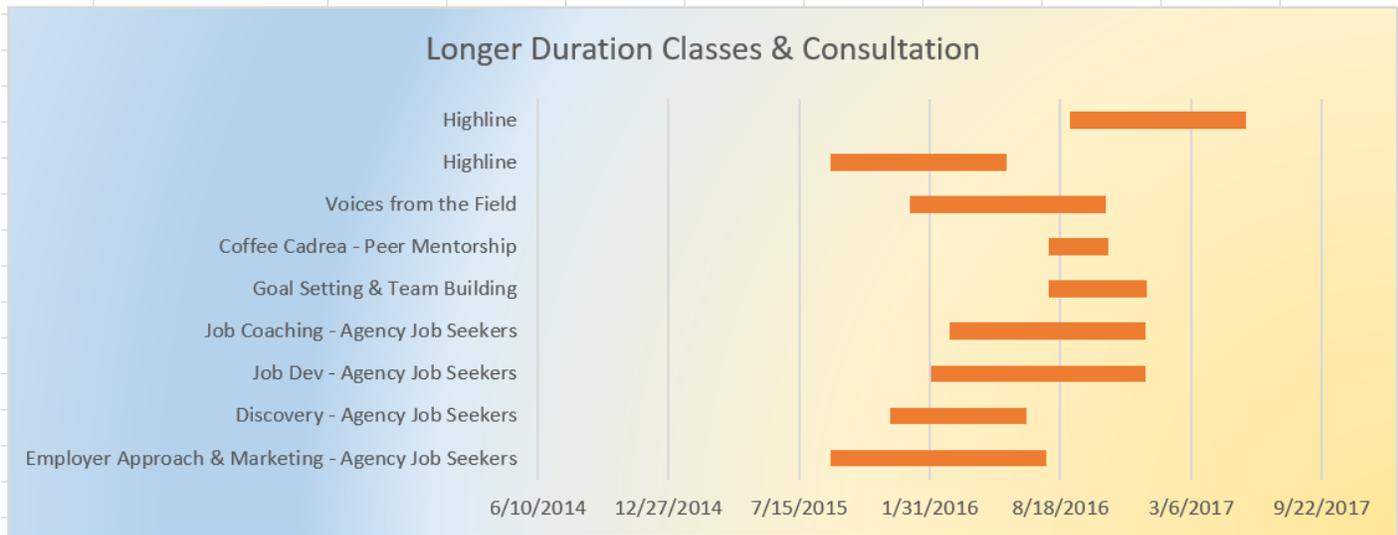|	TRAINING OR TOPIC	TYPE	# of SESSIONS
Leadership	Recruit, Hire, Train & Retain	Class	2
	Organizational Change	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Commitment to Transformation	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Transformation Leadership	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Communications & Marketing	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Strategic Plans	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Office Buildings & Spaces	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Sales of SP Businesses	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Budgeting	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Mindset Shifts (Volunteer, Social Enterpris	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Board Meetings & Discussions	Consultation, Meetings, Presentatior	Varies
	Etc.	Coaching & Resources	Varies
Mid-management	Recruit, Hire, Train & Retain	Class	2
	Team Selection	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Team Development	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Staff Assessment & Expectations	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Managing a Mobile Workforce	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Importance of taking ES Training	Coaching & Training	Varies
	MIS Assessment and Selection	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Training Requirements	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Website Content & Development	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Transportation	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Rates	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Networking	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Job Placement Numbers for CIE to pay for	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Systems Change & Policy	Coaching & Resources	Varies
	Goal-setting & Team Building	Facilitated Planning & F/U Consultation	
Community Employment Specialist	OELN Content	Class	23
	Specialty		
	* Self-employment	Class & Consultation & Resources	1
	* Video Resumes	Class	1
	* Hi/Lo Tech Supports	Class	1
	* Community Connection Building	Class	1
	* Rural Job Development	Class	1
	* Job Development for people with crimina	Consultation & Resources	3
	Agency Specific using own jobseekers		
	* PCP & Discovery	Class & F/U Consultation	19
	* Job Development	Class & F/U Consultation	16
	* Employer Approach & Marketing	Class & F/U Consultation	16
	* Job Coaching	Class & F/U Consultation	16
	* Systematic Instruction	Class & F/U Consultation	2
	* Community Mapping	Class & F/U Consultation	1
	Goal-setting & Team Building	Facilitated Planning & F/U Consultati	6
	Employment Consultant Certification	College Class	9 months
	Coffee Cadres	Peer Mentorship	12
Indiv. &	Transformation Communication	Consultation & Support	Varies
	Informed Choice	Consultation	Varies
	Story-telling and Sharing	Consultation & Support	Varies
SC/P A/	Problem-solving & Communication	Consultation	Varies
	Planning Participation	Consultation	Varies
	Regional Employment Specialists Roles	Consultation	Varies
Employ er/ Commu	Voices from the Field	Videos	13
	Employer Outreach Events	Consultation	Varies
	Sharing Job Leads	Consultation	Varies

Transformation Project Final Report

Local classes were provided across the state to provide OELN content resource in local areas more frequently than available with scheduled OELN classes to ensure forward motion toward obtaining community employment positions and transformation was not delayed as SP waited for local training to be available. Specialty classes were also held to meet identified needs locally.

Classes Timeline

Class	
Community Mapping	
Sys Instruct - Agency Job Seekers	
Rural Job Dev - La Grande	
Community Connecton Building	
Hi/Lo Tech Supports	
Video Resume	
Self-Employment	
RHTR	
RHTR	
SS Benefits - OELN - Pendleton	
SS Benefits - OELN - Grants Pass	
Sys Instruct - OELN - Grants Pass	
Sys Instruct - OELN - Salem	
Sys Instruct - OELN - La Grande	
Job Dev - OELN - Grants Pass	
Discovery - OELN - Aloha	
Discovery - OELN - Eugene	
Discovery - OELN- Grants Pass	
Discovery - OELN - Aloha	
Discovery - OELN - McMinnville	
Discovery - OELN - La Grande	

Timeline axis: 6/10/2014, 9/18/2014, 12/27/2014, 4/6/2015, 7/15/2015, 10/23/2015, 1/31/2016, 5/10/2016, 8/18/2016, 11/26/2016, 3/6/2017

Start Date ■ Duration

Longer duration classes and activities were arranged to provide skill building for the fundamental skills required for finding supporting persons in community jobs.

Transformation Project Final Report

Longer Duration Classes & Consultation

Category	Timeline
Highline	(bar: 12/2016–5/2017)
Highline	(bar: 8/2015–11/2015)
Voices from the Field	(bar: 1/2016–9/2016)
Coffee Cadrea - Peer Mentorship	(bar: 10/2016–12/2016)
Goal Setting & Team Building	(bar: 10/2016–1/2017)
Job Coaching - Agency Job Seekers	(bar: 3/2016–1/2017)
Job Dev - Agency Job Seekers	(bar: 2/2016–1/2017)
Discovery - Agency Job Seekers	(bar: 11/2015–6/2016)
Employer Approach & Marketing - Agency Job Seekers	(bar: 8/2015–8/2016)

Axis: 6/10/2014 12/27/2014 7/15/2015 1/31/2016 8/18/2016 3/6/2017 9/22/2017

Projects. As new needs were identified that would benefit from a different approach than training and consultation outlined in the SP T/TA plans, projects were developed to meet those needs.

Goal Setting and Team Building Project**.** Due to slow progress toward meeting job placement goals, T/TA on goalsetting and team building was implemented with service providers. Val Morgan, SME met with community employment teams at service provider locations to set individual and team goals and provided follow-up consultation on implementation and progress.

Voices from the Field Video Project**.** WISE engaged SPs on the Voices from the Field (VFTF) project during the grant period. The project created marketing videos of individuals formerly employed in SWs in CIE positions and their employers for SPs marketing use. WISE and Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition partnered to complete the videos using iPhone technology and iMovies to demonstrate SP ability to create future videos.

Coffee Cadres. Most SP community employment managers did not have mentors within their organizations that they could utilize to ask questions and work with to develop systems. They had also not connected with other organizations for these needs. In addition to consultation provided by SMEs and WISE staff, the Coffee Cadre Project connected managers with local SME leaders from other organizations with similar roles and personality matches for 3 months to assist with initiating these relationships.

Transformation Project Final Report

Data Collection. WISE continued to review and revise data, methods for gathering information, and qualitative feedback. Actual data sources may be reviewed via link. The following is a summary of process and outcome data sources used by the project:

- General Project
- Service Provider
- Quality Assurance
- Classes
- Projects
- Financial
- Communication

Implementation Results, Challenges and Solutions

Training and Technical Assistance Results: Fifty-six percent of SPs report that they met all of their T/TA Goals. The remaining service providers indicated that progress was still needed in only a few areas. Of the goals that were not completed, they were either related to an inability to access training because it was not offered (i.e. Discovery train-the-trainer), or when it was offered, the agency was unable to participated (i.e. Systematic Instruction train-the-trainer Trainer Mentorship Pilot Program), or they are prioritizing it for the future (i.e. purchase of a Management of Information System).

Job Outcome Results. The SPs report a range of results in meeting their target jobs from facility-based employment, with 1 agency meeting outcomes, 2 exceeding their target, and 3 with less than 10% their goal met. Overall, the SPs averaged 44% completion of their target outcomes by the conclusion of their initial project award. A total of 224 community integrated employment positions were obtained by SPs during the course of the project with 69 of those meeting the criteria for the project (i.e. in SW at start of project, CIE, minimum wage or better, in the job 90 days, not SP owned/operated/controlled position). The following table documents The Agency Jobs Results:

COMMUNITY INTEGRATED JOBS!	90 day placements between 1/1/15-12/31/16									90 day placements between 7/1/15-12/31/16							TOTAL/ AVERAGE
	CCS	Eastco	Garten	Mentor	MV Advancements	Rise	Shangri-la	TVW	WITCO	ASI	SERP	CSI	Exceed	Willamette Valley	Bethesda	Sunny Oaks	
Facility-based Non-employment Services	0	7	73	218	66	16	70	42	0	43	35	15	36	43	32	26	722
Community Employment from Facility-based Employment	4	2	4	14	11	0	2	8	4	1	6	1	12	0	0	n/a	69
Community Employment from Facility-based Non-employment	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	6
Community Employment Other	3	0	0	26	21	0	13	6	0	2	0	0	72	0	13	0	156
TOTAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT COMMUNITY JOBS	4	2	4	14	11	0	2	8	4	1	6	1	12	0	0	0	69
TOTAL COMMUNITY JOBS	7	2	4	40	32	0	15	14	4	2	6	1	84	0	13	0	224
GOAL - Facility-based Employment	15	4	25	35	9	8	7	9	4	5	5	9	15	2	3	0	155
% of GOAL Achieved	27%	50%	16%	40%	122%	0%	29%	89%	100%	20%	120%	11%	80%	0%	0%	n/a	45%
GOAL - Facility-based Non-Employment	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	4	8	0	5	1	3	27
% of GOAL Achieved	n/a	0%	n/a	n/a	100%	n/a	n/a	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	n/a	0%	200%	0%	22%
% of Facility-based Employment Individuals Employed	n/a	4%	3%	10%	15%	n/a	2%	12%	12%	2%	75%	5%	12%	0%	0%	n/a	8%

WISE adjusted its strategies to respond to the data throughout the project, for example by increasing marketing consultations and training opportunities in response to low job numbers, or by increasing coaching/mentoring when critical staff changes slowed implementation progress. The QA Survey and What We've Learned document discussed above are consistent with Service Provider Interim and Final Reports in concluding that service providers were very positive about training content, while wishing that it could be more readily available because of its importance when staff turnover occurs. A sampling of comments follows:

- Scheduling and locations of OELN classes was the most challenging;
- Difficult to train new staff members in a timely manner—mandatory training can be two months apart;
- Biggest challenge around training is cost and availability—the hidden costs of travel and accommodations if the class is not held locally;
- Staff stretched too thin when others are gone for training.

One key indicator of change in the structure of SP services is the growth that has occurred in staff dedicated to community employment services, including discovery, job coaching, and job

development. Data appeared to be inconsistently reported by service providers (i.e. some reporting true FTE while others reported number of positions and some reporting the same person in multiple categories) so percentage of growth was used as the measure for this data. Overall, SPs have reported 56% growth in FTE staff positions devoted to community employment with 72% growth overall in Discovery. The following table breaks out percentage of growth overall as well as by role (Discovery, Job Development, and Job Coaching) by Service Provider.
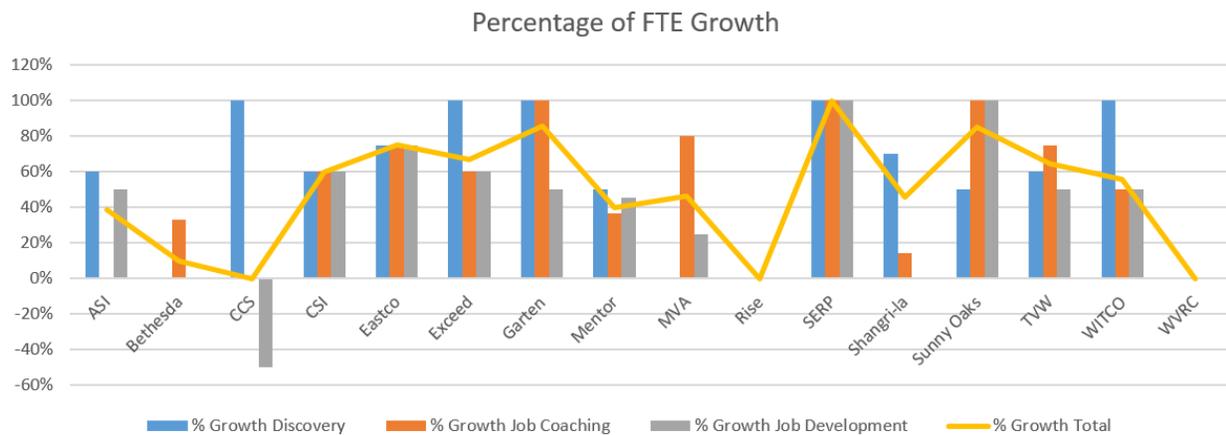
Another indicator of change is the volume of people supported in facility-based employment. The following graph shows the numbers of people supported at the start of the project and now for each SP. Of note is that some SPs accepted new admissions to the SW during the project timeline. Overall there was a reduction of 233 people in SW which represents a 28% decrease.

Service Provider Perceptions. In addition to the interviews of the Group 1 SPs that were conducted after a year had been completed, SPs' perceptions were solicited in their final reports. Their responses to questions of successes and challenges are by and large consistent with the analysis of the T/TA team. The variation between providers demonstrated the importance of customized T/TA for each service provider. We emphasize several points from these final reports in our summary of challenges and solutions and conclusions and recommendations sections. A few areas of commonality arose and are highlighted.

- Providers' perceptions of success: The final report comments reported below are representative of the providers' assessment of their greatest successes. One provider said, "Our greatest success was achieving our first placement for the grant." Others reported similarly:
  - Achieving the placement goals from the sheltered workshop;
  - Getting managers and many staff committed to the changes;
  - People being successful in their jobs, and the agency's support in creating that success;

- Providers' perceptions of key next steps: Providers suggest a wide range of next steps for their agencies, from adding more community staff to phasing out sub-minimum wages or ending workshop services. All suggest the importance of continued access to training and technical assistance. More training was requested of nearly every kind of training provided in this "Phase 1" project. A few additions were also requested. The suggestions will guide Phase 2 Transformation Project T/TA efforts.

Summary of Challenges and Solutions. We believe a thoughtful consideration of the Project's challenges and solutions is important – even critical – to the future planning, implementation and success of EF goals. While we have mentioned key issues earlier above, we summarize our findings, opinions and feedback regarding challenges and options for solutions below (the Challenge is the first bullet and the Solutions follow as sub-bullets):

Changes in Executive Director, Board President, Board Members, Community Employment Management:

- Provide outreach to new leadership as source of information and resource for Transformation, organizational change and organizational management;
- Facilitate and/or consult for decision-making discussions;

> 100% of SPs indicate board is now in support of Transformation
>
> 94% state the same about SP leadership

- Facilitate and/or consult for organizational change communications and meetings;
- Clarify state and national perspectives on ideas generated (i.e., reverse integration, training programs, volunteers, new office space for staff, etc.);
- Leadership, mentorship and consulting;
- Coach at the executive and management levels.

Lack of buy-in from leadership:
- Consistently provide for clarity on the state and national perspective, as well as the future of employment;
- Consistently pursue honest, open and direct communication and discussion;
- Share examples and success stories;
- Engage in tours of organizations who have successfully transformed;
- Consult about how change is not about "leaving people behind" and how important the inclusion of people with significant disabilities is;
- Track progress consistently – allow for time to celebrate and see it work.

Attempting to figure out "another way" other than community-integrated employment; i.e., clinging to the traditional mindset:
- Clarify state and national perspectives on ideas generated (i.e., reverse integration, training programs, volunteer, social enterprise, self-employment, etc.);
- Facilitate and/or consult for decision-making discussions;
- Leadership mentorship and consulting;
- Focus on teaching/coaching staff how to obtain and retain community-integrated jobs;
- Consult about how change is not about "leaving people behind" and how important the inclusion of people with significant disabilities is.

Delays in deciding the organization did not have appropriate staff in key positions:
- Establish honest, open and direct communication and discussion;
- Training and consulting on what to look for in Transformation using Recruit, Hire, Train & Retain framework;
- Sharing stories about necessary staff changes in other organizations.

Changes in community Employment Specialists:
- Training and consulting in the Recruit, Hire, Train & Retain framework;
- Share information regarding prevailing wage rates and what the rates are based on
- Train and develop community Employment Manager;
- Provide advice to look outside of the Developmental Disability field (i.e., Sales) to pursue new staff and not to wait for experienced staff to appear;
- Share stories regarding necessary staff changes in other organizations.

Fiscal and Rate Concerns:

The future will be difficult if ongoing support is cannibalized.

-SERP

- Focus on the difficulties of running successful Transformation and facility-based employment programs at the same time;
- Discuss balancing staff deployment with available funding;
- Engage in discussions regarding the time needed to develop experience versus hiring new staff to complete the Discovery and job development processes, as well as to fade from job coaching while keeping forward momentum;

- Facilitate and consult on data keeping and tracking to provide information for evaluation and recommendation;
- Train and consult on efficient and effective discovery, job development and job coaching methods;
- Encourage hiring and training staff ahead of actual need to minimize necessary overtime and need for job developers to stop job developing to coach;
- Work with SP on the pursuit of multiple funding sources (i.e., ODDS, VR, school, Work Source, grants, PASS Plans, business revenue).

Social Services versus the traditional business mindset:
- Provide training and consulting about the importance and use of data keeping and tracking;
- Provide training, consulting and mentorship regarding cost/revenue analysis;
- Focus on decision-making based on vision and values – doing the right thing, not just "doing things right";
- Consult on decision-making related to service delivery;
- Consult on employer value-added job development.

Data Tracking and Analysis:
- Share stories about necessary (and successful) staff changes in other organizations;
- Provide resources and consulting on MIS;
- Provide training, consulting and mentorship – focus on cost/revenue analysis;
- Provide information regarding future planning.

Transportation (critical issue, especially in rural areas):
- First, acknowledge the challenge, do not allow anyone to pretend it does not exist;
- Nurture discussions regarding the challenge of using public transportation and ways to limit/eliminate employment impact;
- Discuss resources for public transportation and independence training;
- Discussions regarding creative alternative options: ridesharing, co-worker rides, Uber/Lyft, obtaining a license/vehicle, PASS Plans, etc.;
- Engage community connections to consult on creating new options.

Lack of belief that everyone can work, how much people can work, and/or how people can work independently:

- Share individual/employer success stories;
- Provide for the rich sharing of experiences where people with disabilities are working successfully;
- Provide "Voices from the Field" video creation and sharing;
- Follow-up T/TA regarding customized SP training and consulting;
- Provide Systematic Instruction Trainer training and consulting;
- Provide T/TA regarding documentation and stories for each SP from different perspectives – i.e., individuals, families, and employers.

Inappropriate Job Matches:

- Provide T/TA and mentorship focused on customized SP training and consulting;
- Provide discussion regarding the pressure to reach goals and right job fit;
- Provide T/TA and discussion regarding job sharing leads to meet employer needs when someone that fits these needs is not available.

Revisions in the Transformation Process. The following are examples of revisions made to both the transformation process and to training as the Project evolved:

- Revisions to the Project Process:
  - Initial Transformation Consultants: Initially, the lead ITC oversaw other consultants and the communication with ODDS/EF. The Initial Transformation Consultants were the primary contact for all consulting and all plan and report writing. Now, the Lead ITC is a resource for other ITCs and T/TA final report writing and the ITCs' role has changed to being the primary contact for organizational change consulting and plan writing.
  - WISE Staff: The initial role was for a single staff person to manage contracts and fiscal aspects of the project. Now, executive staff, management and the program manager are responsible for communication with ODDS/EF with support from ITCs. One program manager is responsible for coordination of contract matters, fiscal management of the project, and consultant coordination. One primary staff serves as contact for each SP. Finally, staff provide support with interim and final report writing for SP and T/TA reports.
  - Full Transformation Timelines: Initially there were no HCBS or State Timelines for Transformation. The focus of discussions across stakeholders was to do the right thing because it is the right thing. WISE continues to discuss full Transformation even if an organization has not set that as a goal advising and encouraging the organization to plan to meet full Transformation.

Transformation Project Final Report

By the conclusion of the Phase 1 project, HCBS and State had established timelines for Transformation, in which the discussion focus shifts. The Government recognizes Transformation is the right thing and begins to insert policy to that effect. WISE both supports the organization to meet state and federal deadlines, while continuing to stress the provider should do the right thing because it is the right thing

- Training Evolution:
  - Initially, training began with OELN content trainings as well as group trainings that organizations requested to meet new training requirements. WISE provided agency-specific training using organizational jobseekers. Over the life of the project, agency-specific training using organizational jobseekers changed to be scheduled as soon as possible, and to be repeated when staffing changes. OELN content and group trainings occur as requested.
- Evaluations Used and Implemented that have guided changes in training and process management:
  - Observation
  - Information Gathering & Review
  - Discussion
  - SME Assessment
  - Class Evaluations
  - QA Survey
  - Data keeping, tracking and analysis

The Tipping Point: What has and has not worked?

In this report, we have commented consistently regarding challenges, issues and solutions. We focus briefly now on a review of what has and has not worked:

- What has worked:
  - Organizational Change coaching, mentoring and pursuit of excellence;
  - Mentoring emphasizing self-reliance;
  - Agency-specific training focused on individual jobseekers;
  - Keeping people focused on moving forward toward "getting the jobs", regardless of challenges or systems change;
  - Focusing on Transformation Jobs; aligning other placement activity such as VR;
  - Working hard to align all the partners with Transformation; move forward together in the same direction so as not to inadvertently sabotage jobs, slow progress and create needless frustration for those doing the work, including sharing in the work, values, belief in success.

Transformation Project Final Report

- <u>What has not worked</u>:
  - Delay in agency-specific training using individual jobseekers – now a focus early on;
  - Slow movement in decision-making to full Transformation – earlier stronger; conversations and expectations were needed – HCBS timelines helped to move forward;
  - Insufficient staffing to accomplish goals – provide additional T/TA to/for SPs to ascertain early on how many staff they need;
  - Delays in letting staff go that are not ready for community employment – a quick and direct assessment and communication regarding the need for staff revisions;
  - Frequent system changes, as each change resulted in a delay and a "hunkering down" effect – focus on continuing movement toward CIE as that did not change
  - Focus on obtaining jobs through VR for people that did not meet Transformation goals – encouraged a focus on Transformation Jobs from the beginning and on aligning marketing and job development efforts.

- <u>What we have learned</u>:
  - We urged parties to keep moving forward regardless of actual system changes, funding uncertainties, and other perceived roadblocks. This is one of the greatest challenges of the work and, in our opinion, the most authentic;
  - Honest, clear and open communication is essential, not only between the T/TA providers and SPs, but all Transformation partners, including the funding, licensing, accreditation and certification bodies in Oregon.
    - SPs consistently requested that information sharing and problem-solving discussions include all partners in the same room at the same time.
    - Continuity is critical to the success of the efforts made. Clear roles and responsibilities, communication and well thought out Working Agreements must be in place from the beginning.
  - It remains important to have the following difficult conversations early and often:
    - Making the decision to fully transform is the right decision and communicating it clearly and early is important
    - Ensure the right people are brought on board quickly to speed progress;
    - Mixed messaging slows progress;
    - Establish the importance of efficient addition of key staff to meet timelines;
    - Determine individual integrated employment as the best way to invest time/money;
    - Focus on Transformation Jobs must be maintained during change;
    - Clear planning is key, no matter how challenging;

- An exclusive focus on community-integrated employment moves progress forward more quickly, rather than substituting such "initial steps as jobs that rely on volunteering, working for provider owned/operated/controlled businesses, or reverse integration;
- Focus on finding jobs and fading from the beginning – success speaks the loudest;
- Keep emphasizing the message that moving forward toward transformation is essential;
- Job numbers make transition work, by reinforcing vision, strengthening financial position, and supporting skill development, organizational change decision-making, and organizational communications.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The report above contains many thoughts and conclusions about what providers need to do to continue moving forward with transformation, or where Training and Technical Assistance efforts should focus. This section speaks to our recommendations to the broader community-- particularly the State Agencies and decision-makers.

Training & TA Expert Resources: The Technical Assistance and Training resources for the Transformation Project were delivered by two organizations, WISE and Living Opportunities. The Project benefited from the different approaches of the two agencies. As a local provider that had a history of successfully transforming to community employment, Living Opportunities primarily used its own staff as mentors, coaches and subject matter experts. WISE has built a national reputation for training and technical assistance on transformation topics, transformation team management, and community integrated employment skill building. Its resources include managers of organizations that have transformed agencies or that are leaders in community-integrated employment training and coaching. WISE utilizes locally, regionally and nationally known subject-matter experts for training and coaching. For the Transformation Project, both WISE and Living Opportunities enlist a hands-on approach for skill acquisition. Both organizations partnered together on larger group events and transformation presentations. Service Providers supported by Living Opportunities were included in large training opportunities organized by WISE.

WISE recommends keeping the transformation project and funding sufficient and flexible to allow for these complimentary approaches. WISE and Living Opportunities were selected as training and technical assistance providers for the Transformation Project because they are expert resources in transformation. They should be provided with the flexibility necessary to continue developing best practices for Oregon systems and to adjust consultation and support to the needs

of individual service providers.   Additionally, we feel we could provide a more integral role in systems change planning efforts and decision-making early in the process.

We also suggest sufficient funding for additional opportunities for combined gatherings as these have been especially appreciated and productive according to service providers. Opportunities for service providers from this phase of the transformation project to be a resource to the next phase of providers would be especially helpful.

Cultural Change vs. Task Implementation Strategies: Organizations must develop and transform the culture of who they are as well as what they do in order to undergo transformation. Each organization is unique, having differences in communities, staff members, organizational histories, people and material resources available to them, and obstacles to overcome. Each of these differences influences the transformation process, timelines, and outcomes. The implications for the Project were that training and technical assistance needed to be flexible and fluid, just as the Service Providers needed to make continual adjustments. Our conclusion is that organizations that changed fundamental processes and sought out different resources over the course of the transformation project are better positioned to meet transformation outcomes and make greater changes going forward.

Additionally, each agency needed to take the lead in the Transformation process and make decisions and create processes with advice, coaching and mentorship in their own way. Without full ownership of the process, true cultural change would not exist. Essentially it is the difference between change on paper because of being told to and change because it is the right thing to do. Transformation was never intended to be complete by the end of the project timeline. Ownership of the

> **Some of the most helpful strategies were active listening, mentoring and brainstorming ideas on how to overcome obstacles, deal with change, and sharing examples of how others have made the transition into community-based services.**
>
> **- Exceed**

process whether in setting agency transformation goals, providing consistent communication, problem-solving, or creating a staff on-boarding system is key to true transformation

WISE recommends a greater emphasis on cultural change as the measure of transformation. In our experience, most organizations that have transformed from sheltered to community employment services have done so over approximately a 10-year timeframe. Over the course of this project, we have seen major mental changes accompanying implementation of community integrated employment practices. Here are several of the more important of these:

- Organizations who were not planning to ever discontinue sheltered employment are looking for people to buy their businesses and closing workshops;

- A team leader who thought there were no jobs in the entire county closed all sheltered employment;
- Those who were struggling to envision jobs for people are now looking not only to transform employment services but also DSA;
- Many organizations have at least doubled the number of staff members they have involved in community employment services.
- Some Boards that somewhat tentatively agreed to the grant but did not support "leaving people behind," are now fully supportive and driving transformation.

WISE believes these indicators of transformation may be far more significant going forward than the number of people CESP certified, the cost-per-placement, or even the number of jobs obtained after one or two years into the process.

Toolkit vs Template: Many organizations approached transformation by seeking a template, checklist or clearly defined strategy to follow. While creating a list and checking it off seems clear, fast, and measurable, it is neither practical nor does it result in transformation.

It is natural when you do not know the necessary steps to complete a process to seek out steps to follow. However, the variety of service provider responses in the SP Final Reports demonstrates that each organization needed a customized approach to training and technical assistance. Overtime, WISE helped SPs to understand that what they needed was a toolkit of resources so that they could have examples and ideas for which to create their own processes. Some of the resources included in this final report are examples of tools provided. Consultants and WISE staff shared other tools. We also helped to connect SPs so that they could share tools directly with each other.

We would suggest fostering a broader understanding that transformation is completed not by completing a checklist, but by creating cultural change with the benefit of a toolkit. We will continue to build our own toolkit as well as sharing the toolkit being created by The Institute for Community Inclusion and the tools of others in the future.

Innovation vs. Compliance: Many changes to Oregon rules and regulations, processes, and requirements occurred since the beginning of the transformation project. The response of Service Providers when changes happened was to pause to figure out what compliance looked like before proceeding on the path to transformation. Each change resulted in further delay in reaching milestones and outcomes. Over a year after the project had begun, Service Providers were all suggesting that, in particular, constant changes to Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) were making transformation more difficult. Said one, "Everyone gives us different regulations; a dizzying array of messages are emanating from the state."

Tremendous training and technical assistance efforts went into encouraging innovation driven by a focus on the ultimate goal of community-integrated employment. Those organizations that focused first on how to creatively obtain jobs were able to use training and technical assistance to figure out innovative ways to meet compliance at the same time. For example, MV Advancements used consultation and resources to devise a 60-day onboarding, training and mentorship plan. They needed staff members to be up to speed quickly because they were getting people into jobs, rather than putting off getting people into jobs until they felt staff members were ready.

> **Without the T/TA support, our ability to recruit, hire and train Employment Specialists and Job Coaches would have been much more difficult, particularly the training portion. When we started the transformation, it took up to 12 months to get an employment specialist productive. Now, we have been able to on-board and train new employment specialists, so they are productive within 60 days. This is critical to our future success of placing individuals with more significant disabilities.**
>
> **-MV Advancements**

WISE has avoided the approach of telling service providers what to do and then checking to ensure that there was follow-through. Coaching organizations to innovate, and to create solutions with the resources at hand, will in the long run create a more sustainable change and an agency-centered transformation that will be responsive and effective in addressing the problems encountered, including funding and cash flow issues faced by the Service Providers.

In addition to Service Providers being innovative, all involved in transformation should reinforce the need to be flexible and innovative, including state decision-makers and consultants. As providers shift the fundamental services they provide from sheltered and non-work to community employment, there is much more to gain from an entrepreneurial approach than from creating a standardized set of procedures that all must adhere to. Credentialing is important for demonstrating basic skills but does not address most of the issues that have been identified during the transformation project. For service providers, this means creating a strategic plan that draws from the SP's unique situation and community, and that focuses upon finding and maintaining jobs rather than on following a template and checking off items. Rather than having a template to guarantee transformation, SPs need to change strategies that are not working to produce the desired outcomes.

Quality vs. Quantity: At a broad level, the project has reaffirmed our belief that quality Transformation of an organization from a highly structured sheltered environment to a community job placement/support organization, takes time—just as it would within any other business organization going through a quality-oriented structural change. Truly building capacity for community integrated employment takes time because quality must be the standard.

Employment specialists and service provider leadership not only needed knowledge gained from classroom and online training, but also required hands-on consultation to learn how to practically apply knowledge and build skills. That practical application focused on the service provider's own job seekers or staff is what resulted in the ability to provide quality performance. Building these skills takes not only practical training and consultation but also time and practice. Many organizations received this support only to need it again as they worked through the difficult and time-consuming process of identifying the right leadership and community employment team members.

WISE believes that creating quality change leaders and employment specialists and managers will provide far greater outcome results in the long term. Increasing Oregon's capacity to develop these change leaders and skilled practitioners will also propel Oregon forward toward full transformation and provide a base for continuing to grow and develop future leaders and practitioners.

Focus on goal numbers over true transformation normally thwarts quality processes and goal attainment. Organizational change is at the heart of Transformation and EF. We must nurture and foster the approach and process – not demand it with any consequences attached. Clear expectations are good. But in the end, quality must be the keystone of the work we do.

Assumptions vs. Reality: The Project began with some basic assumptions that were errant. These had and continue to have an impact on job placement outcomes. The largest errant assumption held by most service providers was that employment specialists stay in their jobs once they are trained. It would be faster and more effective to first determine if someone is the right person for the role whenever possible and then train them to take on the position. Unfortunately, despite consultation, most service providers believe that their existing staff are the exception and are a "right" fit for the new employment specialist role. However, what frequently occurs is that someone accepts the position and receives training—then they or the service provider decides it is not the role for them. When that staff member moves on, it is causing delays in outcomes as the "right" new person is recruited and trained. This sometimes happens several times before a position stabilizes, resulting in some cases in delays of more than a year. Only a few agencies have felt their cash reserves were adequate to begin hiring staff in anticipation of the need for staffing depth that would minimize the impact of these changes on outcomes.

Another errant assumption has been that people receiving supports will remain stable in their jobs. Service providers have been learning that people do not always remain in the same jobs and that whether or not they experience disability does not change that reality. Job loss can occur due to poor job match and over time training and consultation can improve skills which

diminish those types of job losses. However, work environments and the jobs within them change continually. Employees need to be able to learn and change as well or job loss occurs. Training and consultation is helping employment specialists learn how to increase or reestablish employer engagement and coach the supported employee through any occurring changes or new learning needs. As service providers realize how frequently this occurs the concerns heighten about lack of on-going long-term job coaching with Oregon's current rate system. When the Service Provider maintains a relationship over time with an employer, employment specialists can reengage much more quickly and easily, and the employer is more likely to reach out to the SP when needs arise.

WISE believes in taking a direct and honest approach to any of these errant assumptions. When they arise, we have spoken directly with service provider leaders and boards, ODDS leadership, and others. We will continue to challenge assumptions that leave people out of community integration and employment opportunity, and will seek greater opportunities to partner on problem-solving efforts and decision-making that ensures no one is left behind.

Data Sharing vs. Data Reporting: While the majority of service providers provided raw data for reporting to DHS through the DHS Employment Outcomes Systems (EOS) database and other methods, they were not skilled at using data and or sharing the information it provides. Training and consultation was provided around development or purchase of management information systems and the kinds of data to be collected. Many organizations did not have information systems in place or the systems were insufficient for their needs. Following this, consultation was provided on evaluation of data and how data could be used to provide information for decision-making both within their organization and to the Oregon IDD systems. Effort has been made to build service provider collaboration through data sharing; however, it has faced obstacles such as the inability to obtain data from DHS, and the time required to do duplicate data collection and reporting.

WISE believes that greater partnership on data sharing and efforts to avoid duplication of efforts would provide better understanding of data and accuracy, use of data in decision-making for individuals, families, service providers, SCs/PAs, and employers, and ability to inform systems change needs and effectiveness.

New Providers: WISE recommends that funding, training, and technical assistance be provided to develop new community employment service providers, particularly focused on geographic areas in which there are not sufficient provider resources available or willing to undergo transformation. The provider pool is not sufficient to meet the needs of those in sheltered employment, DSA, VR, and schools needing supported employment.

Increased Core Competency Training: Service Providers consistently requested more OELN training locally throughout the project. Since this was something that was a significant area of delay in moving forward with job placements and transformation until completed, WISE offered many OELN content classes during the course of the projects. While this met the short term needs and allowed SPs to progress at the time, a long-term plan is needed to offer training with greater frequency in more locations. Classes in the Willamette Valley area filled every time they were offered, even when OELN classes had occurred within a few months of the class. We would recommend OELN or other core competency class offerings be held with greater frequency, especially in the Willamette Valley area.

Despite these additional classes offered through the Transformation Project, 93% of SPs reported

> 93% of Service Providers reported spending Transformation Grant funds on Training and Travel for Training
>
> 87% Service Providers said Grant Funds were spent on Recruitment/Staffing/Wages

they spent Transformation Grant funds on training of staff and travel for training. Another contributing factor to the need for increased core competency training is that of community employment team growth and turnover of staff. 87% percent of SP indicated that they spent transformation grant funds on recruitment and hiring of new staff. While this is not unique to agencies participating in the Transformation Project, it does highlight the need for more training availability.

Required EF Training for All Parties: Service providers consistently requested that all parties receive training in the same room at the same time for Employment First. Additionally, tremendous consultation, support, and problem solving focused on how to work with key stakeholders and gatekeepers that did not have the same information or understanding of the community integrated employment systems, processes, and their roles. Informed choice giving around employment was also a key issue.

Service Coordinators, Personal Agents, VR Counselors, residential staff and families often became barriers or caused significant delays in initiating, limiting, or derailing employment for individuals and providers obtaining payment for services related to community integrated employment. Through coaching and mentorship, SPs made progress with some but not all parties. The state Better Employment Services Together (BEST) trainings providing training to SCs, PAs, VRCs and ESs were good classes, but Service Providers indicated that those stakeholders who did not understand the importance of these EF issues already, did not attend. Therefore, little forward movement resulted from the classes.

Mandatory training for all SCs, PAs, VRCs, and employment providers is essential so time can be spent on providing services rather than trying to work through human roadblocks to start or be

paid. Training that includes residential staff, families, and individuals would be immensely beneficial.

Service Provider Next Steps: We plan to focus efforts with existing providers in the following areas and will weave these into training and consultation with new providers with a greater emphasis than in the previous phase.

- More direct conversation and goal setting about the HCBS and Oregon deadlines and who and what is needed to accomplish compliance by the deadline;
- Shift from WISE staff and consultants as mentors to the importance of creating a sustainable onboarding and mentorship process;
- Creation of standards for performing staff for the agency and training to expectations;
- Systematic Instruction and fading;
- AT/IT and low-tech options for maximizing independence for those with more significant disabilities.
- Per Service Provider request in final reports, increased focus on Job Development for people with sex offense and criminal histories and VR processes in training

Summary

We conclude this "Phase 1" of transformation efforts with the realization that the service providers that have been engaged in attempting to change the culture and basic service approach of their organizations remain committed to that change. The Project employment outcomes, set largely as guesses by providers, were not fully met, but the foundation for change has been established. The service providers are positioned to make substantial strides toward achieving these desired results in the coming months.

WISE fulfilled its T/TA objectives, delivering mentoring, training, and consultation that both completed project goals and expanded what is known about challenges and effective strategies in promoting widespread systems change. WISE possesses a significant history of providing T/TA for EF Transformation and is widely recognized as a leader in the field of Disability Services. However, this is its first project of this magnitude. While confident in our ability to provide state-of-the-art services and supports, we are grateful to ODDS Employment First (EF) and the Agency for their facilitation and ongoing cooperation of this learning experience.

At the core of human existence is belonging. This need for inclusion is the underlying premise that drives the goal of Employment First, since having a valued job is a fundamental part of being included. This project has promoted the value of belonging, of choice, of employment first. It has engaged service providers in steps toward transformation of their organizations, yet recognizes that a long, difficult process still lies ahead. Much remains to be done to improve

skills, and to continually reinforce commitment among all involved. Innovation at all levels is still required for our ultimate success.