



OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES (VESID)  
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**To: Diana Jones Ritter, Chair, Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council**

**From: Frank Coco, Chair, MISCC Employment Committee**

**Re: Employment Committee Recommendation to the MISCC**

**Date: September 3, 2009**

The Employment Committee applauds your most recent efforts to focus the MISCC towards measurable benchmarks for agency progress and your commitment to developing an implementation plan for New York State. Accordingly, the Employment Committee is focusing our recommendations towards the development of an implementation plan.

Our primary recommendation is for each State agency to share data from each of the last two completed program years (e.g. State Fiscal Year) in the following areas:

- Annual aggregate funding totals and sources (including Medicaid) for segregated agency day and employment-related programs;
- Number of people with disabilities served in each program during each State Fiscal year;
- And wherever possible, average length of stay data by program to demonstrate the length of time people received these services (e.g. by timeframe category, 6-11 months, 1-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-10 years, 11 years or more); and,
- The number of individuals each year who exited each segregated program and obtained paid employment earning at least minimum wage (employment outcomes) as a result of participating in services.

Where possible, each State agency should also report to the MISCC the amount of federal and/or State dollars invested to support people with disabilities in a range of work and employment settings, including integrated settings. This transparency creates an opportunity for the MISCC to analyze how these funds could be directed or redirected to support more people

moving towards integrated employment consistent with the following vision, values and principles.

### ***Vision***

*All people can work. New York State, in partnership with the whole community, will exercise leadership to advance prospects for employment and economic self-sufficiency of all individuals with disabilities. Resources will be directed or redirected to realize this vision of integrated competitive employment. Individuals with disabilities will have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the economic vitality of the workforce. Employers will view individuals with disabilities as valued employees in their recruitment and hiring efforts.*

*Key values and beliefs include:*

- *All individuals with disabilities can work with the proper supports and services.*
- *Work is an expected activity for working-age individuals with disabilities and should be the first consideration when providing supports and services for people with disabilities. Integrated work in the community is the preferred option over segregated supports, services and/or day programs.*
- *New York State policy must support the promotion of integrated employment and develop coordinated systems that enable individuals to achieve real gains in economic self-sufficiency while at the same time ensuring safety nets for ongoing access to the essential benefits and services that make work possible.*

### ***Principles***

The MISCC Employment Committee envisions a future in which individuals with significant disabilities live, learn, work and participate fully in the community. This vision requires a commitment to action consistent with the following principles related to employment:

- *Employment and career goals are based on informed choice and the preferences of the individual.*
- *All individuals with disabilities can work with appropriate supports and services.*
- *Work is an expected activity for working age individuals.*
- *Employment should be the first consideration when planning and providing supports and services for people with disabilities.*
- *Employment is integral to a person's recovery, habilitation and/or rehabilitation.*
- *The goal of employment services is competitive wage or self employment in an integrated setting.*

- *Services or supports for employment start when an individual expresses an interest in work.*
- *Ongoing supports are available for as long as necessary.*

### **Conclusion**

Our hope is that the MISCC will seriously consider the immediate implementation of the following two recommendations:

1. The MISCC will formally accept the vision and principles developed by the MISCC Employment Committee and use these to guide its actions in developing and carrying out a MISCC Implementation Plan for New York State.
2. The MISCC will request the above data sets from all MISCC State agencies for initial review at the October 2009 MISCC meeting. As a result of this process, State agencies will be able to set concrete, measurable goals that can be reflected in a detailed New York State MISCC Annual Implementation Plan.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to transformational systems change for individuals with disabilities in New York State.

c: Rebecca H. Cort  
MISCC membership