



Griffin-Hammis Associates LLC
Center for Social Capital

State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies adopt Customized Wage & Self-Employment

Griffin-Hammis Associates (GHA), and its not-for-profit arm The Center for Social Capital (CSC), is currently working with three innovative state VR agencies as they adopt Customized Wage and Self-Employment strategies to better serve individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Florida VR adopted a progressive self-employment policy a number of years ago and worked with CSC to develop the Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant (CBTAC) certification program for its vendor agencies. Over 100 people have now been certified through this program that provides extensive training, technical consultation on businesses, and resources such as spreadsheets that integrate the impacts of earnings on Social Security benefits. For more information on CBTAC visit www.cbtac.org

In Texas, the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), has mounted a statewide effort to increase the use of customized self-employment, including authorizing Discovering Personal Genius (DPG) as a preferred assessment strategy. DARS works closely with CSC as they develop new self-employment policy and milestone funding processes. Meanwhile, CSC is training VR Counselors in self-employment using both asynchronous on-line classes through Essential Learning (visit griffinhammis.com for a link) and a rigorous on-line self-employment course developed and monitored by CSC staff through the RRTC at Virginia Commonwealth University (www.worksupport.com). DARS vendors, such as the network of community rehabilitation programs across the state, are receiving classroom training and materials through the state, the University of North Texas, and CSC.

And, the state of Ohio's Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) last year launched a very aggressive change program aimed at increasing access to employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities. This effort includes statewide certification of vendor staff in customized employment methods from Discovering Personal Genius to using Resource Ownership and other economic development strategies. Griffin-Hammis Associates assembled a team of consultants and trainers who helped develop demonstration sites statewide, who provided immersion training in customized and self-employment techniques to VR Counselors, and who provide policy and practice outreach to state administrators as well as community organizations.

Over a thousand VR Counselors, Community Rehabilitation Program staff, and various stakeholders are receiving intensive training in self-employment and customized methodologies for wage employment. Policy, funding, and procedural approaches have been amended, and a commitment to serving one person at a time drives these efforts in each of these pioneering states. For more information on Customized Wage and Self-Employment, contact Dave Hammis, Cary Griffin, or Beth Keeton through www.griffinhammis.com or www.centerforsocialcapital.org